

Three Years

in

Africa

Three Years In Africa

Press Reports of Swami Venkatesananda's Tour of South Africa, Madagascar and Mauritius

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A Word From The Editor

The book that you are about to read contains some very happy recollections of the visit to South Africa and elsewhere of one of the greatest philosopher saints that touched these regions, Swami Venkatesananda. He set foot on South African soil in June 1961 upon the invitation of the Divine Life Society of South Africa. During his stay in the country he had made a great impact with the S. African audiences of all colour and creed.

I was blessed with the privilege of accompanying the revered Swamiji in his first S. African tour which took us to the length and breadth of the country. His lectures were attended by dignitaries and the lowly. Halls were filled to capacity. He spiritually captivated thousands and helped to place the Divine Life Society on a high pedestal. In this manner, the message of Vedanta was broadcast in almost every corner of the country. Thrilled with his clear and scholarly exposition of the scriptures, I soon found myself acting as his press attache, for I could not resist the taking down of notes as he spoke, spicing his talk with anecdotes and brilliant wit and humour. There was depth in his message and I felt that S. Africa as whole should share it through the medium of the press who cooperated, to use Swamiji's oft repeated phrase 'wonderfully well'. Little did I realise at that time that these together with others would one day be collated to form an inspiring record of the memories recalling the Swamis visit to the African soil.

Such was the popularity with which the Swami was received that he had at times to fulfill as many as three engagements a day. At times we became concerned about his health, but the Swami seemed to have an inexhaustible fund of energy, and would do anything to please the aspirations of seekers.

In his first appearance in Durban, hundreds were turned away for want of accommodation, and this experience was repeated in Johannesburg, Kimberley, Cape Town, Port Elizabeth and East London. Crowds would follow him wherever he was scheduled to speak, some traveling miles from the remote dorps and villages. Many came with their problems on meditation, asanas, ailments, or the explanation of some phenomena, and Swamiji would find a comforting answer for them all. Scholars and students of philosophy posed searching questions on Reality or the unknown, and one would find himself awestruck as Swamiji would in a jiffy transcend to the loftiest regions in his discussions. And if it came to trivialities, one could always rely on the Swamiji for his down-to-earth approach to spiritual problems.

'Be good, do good' was the simple advice he gave to all. In these two spiritualised activities, one would find the panacea of all his worldly ills. His scholarship and his simplicity mixed in him very well, and this won for him a wide circle of friends among the intellectuals and the illiterate. Parliamentarians, Principals of Universities, Professors, Mayors, Councilors and the street sweeper, all revered him alike.

Swamiji had the privilege of being invited to Rotary Clubs, Universities and to symposiums, and to speak over the Radio - privileges considered rare in South Africa.

The popularity of Swamiji soon made him the 'flying missionary'. The demand to hear Swamiji put him constantly on the hop, living from Durban to

Johannesburg, and before he could complete his itinerary, preparations were being made for Cape Town or other such centers. No centre seemed to have had enough of him, and even though he has been for almost three years, while writing this preface information has come through of a move to invite him again depending on him receiving the necessary visas.

Swamiji has in these tours given discourses on the Gita, conducted classes at which many students attended the courses. In Durban and in Cape Town, he conducted recitals of Devi Mahatmya or the Durga Saptashati in the original Sanskrit, often reciting chapter ex tempore to the bewilderment of the local priests. He has demonstrated Hatha Yoga in all its intricacies in the principal towns, where large European audiences have attended. His activities in Cape Town have been filmed to serve as a permanent record. He has charmed audiences with his devotional Kirtans. Wherever Swamiji has been, he has added to his list of admirers and followers. In him the Divine Life Society has found a remarkable teacher and missionary spreading the message of Swami Sivananda. Apart from blazoning a trail of spiritual consciousness in the country, he will be remembered for his practical work at the headquarters of the Divine Life Society in South Africa, which is situated in New Germany Road and at the foot of the Reservoir Hills in Durban. Here he took charge of the printing of an abridged version of 'Gurudev Sivananda', a biography by him of the Master. Later he successfully carried out the formidable task of printing the monumental work of Swami Sivananda, the 'Srimad Bhagavad Gita', a feat which the Divine Life Society in South Africa could never have even dreamed of. The printing of the Bhagavad Gita and its distribution has been considered as a remarkable achievement and an epoch-making event. The first copy was hailed at a special thanksgiving ceremony at which hundreds of people were present.

The Swami has by his stay in S. Africa given added stature to the movement which is flourishing. The Divine Life Society in South Africa is very grateful. While Swamiji was in South Africa, a request was made for him to visit East Africa, which he did in January 1963. From here he proceeded to Madagascar where he did some pioneering work in bringing to the inhabitants the message of the East. His fame reached the tiny island of Mauritius, where the Swami broke fresh ground, winning many friends, admirers and devotees for the Divine Life Society. All his talks in these places and even those in Australia which preceded his South African visit received the attention of the press, and it is through the courtesy of the various papers that this work has been made possible.

B. Rambiritch

CHAPTER ONE - THE FIRST WHIRLWIND TOUR OF SOUTH AFRICA

Mainly from the Report of Dr. B. Rambiritch of the Indian University, who accompanied the Swami on his tour.

An Address of Felicitation

Presented to Swami Venkatesananda on the eve of his departure to Colombo, en route to Australia and South Africa Wednesday, 8th March, 1961.

Blessed Swami Venkatesananda. Respected and adorable Gurubhai.

In presenting to your glorious self this Address of Felicitation, we, the members of the Headquarters of the Divine Life Society and the students of the Yoga-Vedanta Forest Academy are but giving a rather inadequate expression of the great honour you deserve as one of the foremost disciples of Gurudev Swami Sivananda, and an outstanding leader of the Divine Mission.

Blessed Swamiji, since you offered yourself at the feet of our great Master, in September, 1945, there has hardly been any among us who has excelled you in the spirit of dedicated, self-effacing service, matchless, unswerving devotion, and tireless, substantial endeavour in carrying out the commands of Gurudev, and playing a leading role in fructifying his noble Mission as the most willing and efficient instrument.

Indeed, we might even say unhesitatingly that hardly any of us has equaled you in the colossal output of work in the dissemination of the message of Gurudev through shaping and augmenting the flow of his priceless literature all over the world. You have done this in a most self-effacing manner, and never have you allowed the slightest lapse of self-assertiveness in executing the directives of the Master.

It was you who was instrumental, largely and effectively in propagating the teachings of the Yoga-Vedanta Forest Academy through most of the literature produced by it, including its journal, the Yoga-Vedanta Forest Academy Weekly, since its very inception in 1948. Gurudev had merely to say the word, and it was carried out; he had only to give the teachings, and they were forthwith propagated; he had just to give you his manuscripts and they were immediately edited and put into print in record time.

Few have worked in such close co-operation and attunement with the Master as your blessed self. Never have you questioned the wisdom of his command; never have you failed to maintain the spirit of detachment and humility in submitting to his will; never have you asked anything for yourself in your fifteen years of service at his Feet.

Respected Swamiji, it is not necessary for us to measure the extent of your unparalleled role in, not only disseminating the Gospel of the Master, but especially in making the warmth and the richness of his personality felt by thousands of seekers through a number of works that you have written on him. Most of those who are associated with our Master already know you through your unique work, Gurudev Sivananda, besides, of course, thousands of those who had the occasion of coming into personal contact with you, here at the headquarters

and during your recent sejour in South India.

As early as ten years ago you had distinguished yourself as a brilliant chronicler of the Master's dynamic spiritual awakening tour of India and Ceylon. Even before, you had proved yourself an asset and a tower of strength to the Divine Life Society. Indeed, you shall always continue to be so, even though the Mission of Gurudev might take you to distant places.

The network of the Divine Life Society Branches in South Africa is perhaps the best organised and most dynamically useful in spreading the teachings of Gurudev than anywhere in the world. In you, Swamiji, the South African Divine Life Society will find a priceless asset as long as you stay there, and in whichever centre you go to work for Gurudev, we have no doubt, you would prove yourself a great tower of strength and a dynamic instrument of his will, and thereby would also be doing as great a service to the headquarters as you have been.

Adorable Swamiji, please allow us to wish you bon voyage and a very useful period of divine service in South Africa, in co-operation with such glorious selfless workers as Swami Sahajananda and others, after having done similar service during your short visits to Colombo and Western Australia with the assistance of Sri S. H. Sabnani and Sri R. T. Werther, respectively.

May God bless you, and may the grace of Gurudev be always upon you.

We remain, Your Gurubbais, Residents of Sivananda Nagar, Members of the D.L.S. Headquarters. Students and Staff of the Yoga-Vedanta Forest Academy.

March 10th, 1961 - Swami granted visa to visit South Africa

The Divine Life Society of South Africa has just received news from the Union Government that their application for a visa for Swami Venkatesananda to stay in this country for six months has been granted. Swami Venkatesananda will leave Bombay by the 'Kampala' on May 15 and arrive in Durban on June 6. This was disclosed to the Graphic by Mr. V. Sinivasan, one of the founders of the movement in this country.

It is learnt that elaborate arrangements are being made by all the branches throughout South Africa to welcome this 'senior-most disciple of Swami Sivananda'. The Society's headquarters at Reservoir Hills, Durban has already commenced work on the new building which will accommodate the Swami. The building, which will be called 'Ananda Nivas', is being erected through the donation by Mr. D. N. Maharaj.

The Swami is the personal secretary of Swami Sivananda. He is a qualified Doctor of Homeopathy, an accomplished singer and musician. He is at present touring India, delivering lectures on the Gita and teachings of his Guru.

Swami Venkatesananda was born on 29th December, 1921, in Dhanur Rasi, Neena Lagnam. According to a book on the 'Life of Swami Venkatesananda', the writer says that the child's birth was attended by certain significant and peculiar circumstances. Unlike ordinary children, the child never cried when it was born, but remained silent. At the time of the birth, the child's grandfather remarked to the doctor attending the delivery, 'This is not an ordinary child. I foresee a great and an exceptional future for this child'.

One day when the child was three years old, he was taken to a local temple where

he saw the image of Lord Vishnu. He questioned his grandfather about the image. When he returned home, he mounted up a hay-stack under which some grain was stored, and getting atop, he assumed the posture of the image he had seen, and began to call out repeatedly, 'O Lord, come to me'.

At the age of 15, he was put to school and he grew up into an intelligent student. In his 18th year, he entered government service. He was soon transferred to the capital of India where he became Personal Assistant to a highly influential Secretary to the Government of India.

In 1945, at the age of 24, this Swami cut himself off all bonds that bound him to his secular life, and renounced a promising career for the life of the Himalayas. After two years of austere life at the Ashram, he was initiated into the holy order of Sanyasa. He was one of the first batch of disciples that received 'Sanyasa-Diksha' on the birthday of his Guru. Thus did Parthasarathi, for that was his name, become Swami Venkatesananda Saraswati.

According to one who stayed at the Sivananda Ashram in India for many years, the visitor is a lucid and good writer. He has written and edited several books, such as Bhagavad Gita for Students, life-sketches of Swamis Krishnananda, Chidananda and Satyananda, and several others.

Because he is a good writer, he has been appointed Editor of the Yoga-Vedanta Forest University Weekly.

Swami Nischalananda, leader of the Ramakrishna Centre in South Africa, welcomed the news of the visit and told our reporter that the Ramakrishna Centre would be anxiously awaiting his arrival. We will arrange a special function on the occasion, he said.

Swami Nischalananda added that he was very closely connected with Swami Venkatesananda and met him frequently while in India.

2nd June. 1961 - Swami due on June 6th

Sri Swami Venkatesananda, described as the 'Crest-Jewel' of the Divine Life Mission, and one of the foremost disciples of his holiness Sri Swami Sivananda is on his way to South Africa on a lecture tour. The Swami will arrive in Durban by the 'Kampala' on June 6.

The Divine Life Society of South Africa has drawn up a comprehensive itinerary for the Swami's lecture tour of the Union. He will visit all the main centers as well as branches of the Society. Religious and cultural organisations are also expected to make use of him. Prior to his departure to South Africa, Swami Venkatesananda spent a short while in Western Australia, being the guest of the Divine Life branch at Perth, led by Dr. Werther. Here he delivered a sermon in a Christian church, addressed a Jewish congregation and spoke to university students, 1-fe also appeared on the television. The Swami is well versed in the Gita and other scriptures and has moved very closely with Sri Swami Sivananda, having been his personal secretary for over twelve years. The Divine Life Society will accord bun a public reception at the Avalon Theatre on Sunday, June 11. at 2.30 p.m. A prayer service will be held in his honour at the Sivananda Ashram, Chic Estate, Durban, on the evening of the Swami's arrival. This function will take place at 6 p. m.

June 6th, 1961 - Arrival in South Africa

Swami Venkatesananda, a disciple of Swami Sivananda, a Saint of India, was garlanded when he landed in Durban from the liner 'Kampala' today, to undertake a lecture tour of South Africa. He will lecture on Yoga and allied subjects. The Swami is also an authority on Hatha Yoga, which concerns itself with the development of the body. He is the guest of the Divine Life Society of South Africa.

June 9th, 1961 - Sivananda's Message to South African Republic

Swami Venkatesananda, Swami Sivananda's secretary and senior-most disciple, arrived in South Africa on Tuesday and, in a Press statement, said: 'My Master Sri Swami Sivananda, who represents the Spiritual heart of India today, sends his best wishes to the people of South Africa.' Of a very pleasant disposition he spoke to many people that had gathered to welcome him.

When asked by our reporter how long he would be remaining in this country, he replied jovially, 'For as long as the government allows'. At a brief interview with the press he shook hands with our reporter and gave the reporter of another weekly some flower petals that he had held in his hand.

In a statement the Swami said that he came as a messenger of goodwill from the heart of India. 'I assure you', he continued, 'that the heart of India is still spiritual and it throbs with cosmic love based on the understanding (in the words of my Master) that God is one, Religion is one, Life is one, and that Oneness is the Truth, the true Indian knows no ill-will or hatred'.

This is the third country that he is visiting 'in order to spread the message of my Master - a message of peace, goodwill, universal brotherhood and spiritual inwardness.'

The other countries were Australia and Ceylon. The Swami added that a large number of people in both these countries showed great interest in the teachings of Swami Sivananda.

Swami garlanded

At the docks he was garlanded by the Tongaat Branch of the Divine Life Society and by the officials of the headquarters of the movement in South Africa. Men and women, boys and girls, and even little children fell on their knees to kiss the feet of the distinguished visitor. Women carrying babes in their arms even knelt down so as to receive his blessing.

Before being garlanded, Mr. Narandas, of the S. Africa Divine Life Society, conducted a short prayer. After the Ceremony Swami Venkatesananda sang a kirtan.

Some of those present to meet the Swami were Mr. M. Perumal, president of the Divine Life of S. Africa, Mr. V. Srinivasan, one of the founders, and Mr. S. R. Padayachee, known as 'Father' to members of the Society of Umkomaas.

A function was held at the Sivananda Ashram, Clare Estate on the evening of his

arrival.

June 9th, 1961 - Hundreds at Dock to Welcome Swami

Hundreds of people gathered at the quayside on Tuesday morning to welcome the 39-year old disciple of Swami Sivananda, Venkatesananda.

Dressed in saffron-colored robes and carrying the traditional begging bowl of a Hindu monk, Swami Venkatesananda was garlanded by leading officials of the Society, after which he led the quayside gathering in a Hindu hymn in praise of his Master, Swami Sivananda.

Many men and women fell at the Swami's feet to receive his blessing.

The pleasant-countenanced, jovial and modest Swami, who looked far too young for his age, told 'The Leader' that he has come to this country as a 'messenger of goodwill from the heart of India.'

This is the message of his Master to South Africans:

'Peace and happiness, the lost treasures of man, are within himself. God, the fountain of peace and bliss, dwells in the heart of all beings. Ignorance of this truth drives man to seek for them in wealth, power and sensual pleasures. Man's insatiable desire for worldly enjoyment is the cause of mental unrest and disharmony which in turn leads to conflict in society and tension everywhere. The remedy lies in turning man's gaze away from worldly goods and goals and reminding him that happiness is within himself.

The urgent need today is for the spiritual truths to be broadcast, for man to be awakened to the vital role of religion in his life and to the nature of that religion - and this will have as its very first fruits a turning away on the part of man from the mad rush for wealth and power, and a consequent easing of inner and outer tensions.

World peace and individual salvation accrue from this spiritual inwardness. Religion shows the way.'

June 9th, 1961 - A Refreshing Breeze

At a time when the newly born Republic of South Africa stands aloof and almost completely isolated by all nations of the world because of her racial policies and when hatred and strife between the different sections of the population in the country is reaching alarmingly serious proportions, the message to the new Republic of South Africa from Sri Swami Sivananda, the spiritual leader of millions of people, comes as an illuminating light to dispel the morbid atmosphere which permeates the length and breadth of our country.

This alt-important message of peace, goodwill and universal brotherhood brought to this country by Swami Venkatesananda, the foremost disciple of Swami Sivananda, should move all South Africans to spare some time for the self-examination of the ideals and values they hold. Such an examination would reveal that materialism has driven man to seek wealth and power and fleeting pleasures which are the basic causes, not only of the problems of this country, but of all nations.

Man has become so engrossed in the accumulation of worldly possessions that he

has spent little or no time in spiritual pursuits from whence peace and happiness really comes. All the great religions preach this need for the spiritual awakening of man.

During the coming weeks, Swami Venkatesananda will deliver his message of tolerance, patience and understanding in various parts of the country. It is to be hoped that this message made for men of all religions and creeds will sow the seeds for the easing of 'inner and outer tensions and that eventually the right knowledge will lead man to his own salvation.'

The Divine Life Society of South Africa must be congratulated for having brought into this country so eminent a personality as Swami Venkatesananda. It is to be hoped that the spiritual truths which he would broadcast to make man realise the vital role which religion has to play in his life will be received by all men of all races, religions and languages.

We welcome Swami Venkatesananda to the shores of South Africa and hope that his stay in this country would be a pleasant one for him, and that it would at the same time bring a spiritual re-awakening in our people.

June 12th, 1961 - Swami's Reception

Swami Venkatesananda, a 40-year-old robed Hindu monk and philosopher, yesterday enthralled an audience of about 3,000 Indians at the Avalon Theatre, Durban when he spoke on Yoga and Hinduism.

In the picture, he acknowledges his reception with clasped hands as a mark of respect for his audience.

The Swami, who comes from Rishikesh in India - headquarters of the Divine Life International founded by Swami Sivananda - is on a two-month lecture tour of South Africa.

Speaking in English, softly at first, but more firmly later, Swami Venkatesananda pleaded with his listeners to show love and affection 'not only to your friends but also for those who hate and despise you.'

June 12th, 1961 - 2,000 hear lecture by Swami

More than 2,000 people packed the Avalon Theatre, Durban, to hear Swami Venkatesananda of India give his first public lecture.

The 39-year-old Swami told the audience that South Africa was spiritually hungry and, in the quest for spiritual happiness, the people looked elsewhere to find it, rather than by 'gazing within themselves'.

Renouncing worldly goods and pleasures in order to find 'true happiness' did not mean that man must throw away his wealth and possessions. 'What we must cultivate is a spirit of detachment from worldly things as they belong to the world and not to man,' he said.

June 16th, 1961 - Renounce Worldly Pleasures

Fifteen minutes before Swami Venkatesananda was to have addressed the meeting, the Avalon Theatre was packed to capacity with people filling every

available space. The foyer, the passages between the seats, alongside the walls and the gallery, together with the 1,215 seats that were available must have taken at least a crowd of about 2,500 to 3,000 men, women and children.

Commencing punctually at 2.30 pm. Mr. A. Narandas, the President of the Divine Life Society of South Africa conducted a brief prayer. Thereafter Mr. M. Perumal, Chairman of the Society, appealed to the male members of the Society to give up their seats to the other members of the audience.

The Swami spoke for 70 minutes without showing any signs of tiredness. During the course of his lecture he urged his audience to renounce worldly pleasures 'because they belong to the world, not to you'. Several times this learned scholar made humorous remarks as a result of which the crowd burst into laughter. Although a great percentage of those that attended were Indians, there were many Europeans, Africans and Coloureds. A number of the Europeans were seen singing the kirtans with the rest of the people.

Itinerary

Swami Venkatesananda will visit practically all the major centers in the country and is expected to stay here for at least two months. It is, however, learnt that his stay may be extended if State permission is granted.

June 16th, 1961 - Packed Cinema Hear Swami's Formula For Happiness

Swami Venkatesananda, an acknowledged exponent of the Vedanta philosophy, told a packed audience of more than 2,000 people in the Avalon Theatre, Durban, on Sunday, that man in his quest for truth and happiness, mistakenly looked externally for them, instead of 'gazing within himself.'

The 39-year-old Swami was giving his first public lecture in this country, under the auspices of the Divine Live Society of South Africa.

Several hundred people had to be turned away for lack of space in the cinema, and those who managed to get inside and were unable to find seats, stood huddled together on the sides and in the aisles.

All listened attentively to his speech which ranged from discussions on serious branches of Hindu philosophy to humorous anecdotes that had a pungent jibe at the rich and their 'miserable existence'.

Beginning his hour-long lecture with a kirtan, the youthful Swami said that South Africa was hungry spiritually, and that the hunger was created and promoted by disillusionment.

'By seeking happiness elsewhere instead of looking for it within ourselves, we have been cheated by ourselves - by maya or ignorance. It is only when we are ignorant that we seek for the fulfillment of our desires in wrong quarters. We should know where to seek to find what we want.

The worldly things belong to the world and not to man. It is not right that one should throw everything away to become a yogi. The right thing would be to let others benefit by giving the goods away to charity.

Man can attain his true goal in life through selfless service. He must be more concerned with the good of others than that of himself. He must work for the

happiness of others. We must love everyone and see the divine in every face.' The rich also came in for a dig from the Swami. He said that while the pious monk, without any possessions in the world, enjoys sound sleep, the rich man struggles to get a wink of sleep, because of the worries centered on his wealth. The rich were even afraid of their own song, and he appealed to the wealthy in the community to use their riches for the benefit of those who need it most.

June 16th, 1961 - Educate for 'clean hearts', says Swami.

The aim of education should be to teach human beings to have a clean heart, the visiting hindu monk from India, Swami Venkatesananda, told students and lecturers at the Indian University College at Salisbury Island, Durban, yesterday. He said that powerful forces, which often opposed each other, were constantly pulling mans hands in different directions, but a person with a clean heart would soon overcome the forces and go on his own sure way.

To have a clean mind was not enough, because these people somehow found themselves in hell, perhaps by being led up the wrong path. It must be strengthened by faith in God.

The Swami told me afterwards that, at the suggestion of the rector of the college, he would try to obtain specialist lectures in India, who might be interested in accepting posts at the university.

The Swami's visit was described by Professor S. P. Olivier, the rector, as historic, for this was the first time, he said, that a prominent Indian called and addressed the students.

June 21th, 1961 - Big Impact

Another visitor who draws large audiences wherever he lectures is Swami Venkatesananda of the Divine Life Society. A gifted speaker who leavens the philosophy he gets across with sparkling humour, the Swami is certainly creating a tremendous impact.

I hope that one of the results of his visit will be to draw all sections of the Indian community together, both as far as it concerns itself as a group, and also with the other racial groups in the country. We are, after all, one people with one country, whatever our different racial origins or religions or languages.

Poor taste

That a branch of the Natal Indian Congress should have attacked the Swami because of his visit to the tribal university is distressing and merely shows a marked absence of maturity, and a failure on the part of the authors of the attack to see matters in their proper perspective. For a man with a religions or philosophical message must always be ready to carry it to whomsoever is prepared to listen. And the fact that he visited the tribal college gives no indication whatever whether he supports or opposes such an institution.

In any event, if Swami Venkatesananda gets an opportunity to lecture to Dr. Verwoerd, his duty is to do so. People like Dr. Verwoerd need moral lesson,

perhaps more than some others do.

July 14th, 1961 - Congress Disclaims Responsibility For Letter To Swami Venkatesananda

The Natal Indian Congress (Sydenham Branch) in a letter to the Graphic has disclaimed responsibility for the letter addressed to Swami Venkatesananda. This letter was published in the Graphic a few weeks ago.

Mr. C. Naicker, the Congress Branch Secretary, states in the letter 'that the attention of the Natal Indian Congress (Sydenham Branch) has been drawn to a report appearing in your issue of 'The Graphic' dated 23rd June. 1961, to the effect that an open letter was addressed to His Holiness Swami Venkatesananda by my Branch regarding his lecture to students and staff of the Salisbury Island Tribal college'.

'I am directed to inform you that the letter in question was not issued on the authority of my Branch and my Branch therefore disclaims responsibility for the said letter,' says Mr. G. Naicker's letter.

A few other highlights

Besides the foregoing press-publicized meetings, the Swami had a number of other interesting engagements during the first month of his stay in South Africa which was jam packed with continuous lectures to different audiences and visits to several homes.

Asherville, the home of the Indian elite and intellectual, received the Swami on several evenings and enjoyed his company. Supper was always preceded or succeeded by Satsang, at which a lively discussion developed, on all sorts of topics. The Swami always had a ready (and often humorous) answer to the question shot at him.

The Swami also visited and lectured at all the Branches of the Divine Life Society in Natal; as also most of the Schools and Colleges in Natal, including the Sultan Technical College, Sastri College, Teachers' Training College. He also addressed the Natal Indian Teachers' Association.

The Rotary Club, the Theosophical Society, the Y.M.C.A. and the Andhra Maha Sabha also welcomed and heard the Swami.

From the 15th June, the Swami delivered a series of lectures at the Natal Tamil Vedic Hall, on Yoga and Vedanta.

August, 1901 - Swami in the Swim

A German druggist, Klaus Peter Langheim, took the sacred vows of renunciation and became Swami Krishnananda. For the first time in South Africa a White man had been initiated into the holy order of a Swami.

He is quiet-spoken, simple, aged 29. This was his life's ambition achieved.

More than 3,000 of all races trudged and drove down the dusty road to the sprawling grounds of the Yogananda Ashram in Cavendish, near Durban.

Hours before the ceremony, cars wedged two deep turned the narrow road into a

winding traffic jam. Banks of loudspeakers carried the proceedings to people in every corner of the grounds.

The ceremony was simple, colorful and moving. It was performed by Swami Venkatesananda of the Divine Life Society in India, who is now touring South Africa.

The initiation was preceded by the opening of a free milk and food scheme at the Ashram for the poor of the area. Then beautiful Kumari Sulochana, graduate of a famous Indian academy, weaved through an intricate classical dance. Peter Langheim, with a crop of rich brown hair, and wearing white shirt and cloth, was led to the platform by women carrying flowers. He sat with folded legs.

To prayer chants, Swami Venkatesananda clipped off a handful of the brown hair and handed Peter the flame-colored robes he will wear for the rest of his life. The two lay prostrate before the framed portraits of the great religious masters. To the music of flute and drum, Peter Langheim walked to a swimming pool. His head was shaven. Men and women chanted. A women disciple held the hair in a white saucer. A young follower asked for a lock. He clutched it in his hands. This was the culmination of almost a lifetime's ambition for Peter.

June 24th, 1961 - Celebrated Indian Lecturer

Swami Venkatesananda, one of the foremost exponents of the 'Divine Life Philosophy', a distinguished disciple of Swami Sivananda, is now on a lecture tour in South Africa. The Swami, aged 39, is a renowned philosopher and an outstanding spiritual author. He has made most impressive tours of Australia and Ceylon. He has already addressed huge audience in Durban. Some of the bodies which had the privilege of listening to the enlightened Swami are Durban Rotary Club, Durban Jewish Club, Natal University and several prominent organisations.

June 25th, 1961 - 'Suffer Little Children'

Swami Venkatesananda was a surprise guest at the The Lakehaven Home for orphans of the Durban Indian Child Welfare Society. The Swami entertained the children and sang kirtans (hymns). And here he is surrounded by happy kids.

July 4th, 1961- Swami Venkatesananda Opens His Tour of South Africa

Estcourt: Amidst a gathering of all races, Swami Venkatesananda opened his tour of the important centres of South Africa at the New Era Theatre in Estcourt at a function presided over by the Mayor Mr. G.V. Bulman.

Speaking on the topic 'Religion for the Modern men', the Swami emphasized the need for religion in one's daily life and how it was to be achieved. There was need for simplicity in all our actions. To talk of God in high philosophical terms was empty.

Life had a more important purpose than eating and amassing wealth. These traits were animalistic in man. Another evil which characterized the modern man was his wrongful use of leisure. He urged that one should take time by the forelock and engage in pastimes that were healthy and profitable spiritually.

The cause of most of our sufferings lay in our desire to possess. A monk owned nothing; yet he was provided with all he required. 'When we hold on to things, we hold onto misery.' The concept of 'mineness' should be eradicated from our minds. We could overcome most of our troubles if we devoted our lives to the welfare of others.

While Prayer was necessary, it was not an end in itself. Love for fellow beings had in it the germ of producing lasting happiness.

He complimented the Mayor for the interest he had taken in the welfare of the community. 'Service and Love will assure us the peace we seek.'

The Swami was introduced by Mr. R.V. Ramiah, who acted as his host during his stay in Estcourt.

July 21st, 1961 - If All Mayors Were Women, Life Would Be Happier, says Swami

Ladysmith: Swami Venkatesananda recently toured Northern Natal. Extracts from some of the stirring addresses he made have been received from Dr. B. Rambiritch, who was traveling with the Swami.

'If all our Mayors were women our society would be happier,' said Swami Venkatesananda to a mixed audience of about 800 Hindus, Muslims and Europeans at the Sanathan Vedh Dharma Sabha Hall in Ladysmith.

He was paying a tribute to the Mayor of Ladysmith, Mrs. Ruby Galley, who introduced the Swami and welcomed him on behalf of the community.

In a soul-inspiring talk on 'Yoga in Daily Life', the Swami said that Yoga did not mean the performance of super-human feats, such as sleeping on a bed of nails or feeding on a diet of broken glass.

It was a way of life, non-sectional, belonging to no creed. It is not a religion, but a path to reach God. 'We may have our own ways to God, but yoga appeases the hunger of the soul, and it embraces all the practices which lead us to God.'

He that has attained Him has need for nothing else. He is not shaken by any adversities, since he is united with God.

The Swami emphasized the need for harmony of thought, word and deed, the three forms in which we expressed ourselves.

Senator C.C. Henderson paid a moving tribute to the Swami for the lesson he had for all. It was possible to equate life with religion. He saw that there was a basic similarity between Hinduism and Christianity.

Dr. A.H. Sadar, in complimenting the Swamiji, was optimistic that with his presence our communities will discover the divine in all beings whether they be white, black or brown.

July 5th, 1961

Dundee: The eradication of evil habits as a necessary step to the realization of the Supreme was the theme of a lecture delivered by Swami Venkatesananda at the Millsite Theatre at a short service organised by the Ramakrishna Centre, Dundee Branch, on July 5th. Evil practices were a product of the desire for the gratification of the senses and had the effect of enslaving the mind. 'Because our senses have been made to act with outgoing tendencies, we seek pleasure in

externals, instead of seeking it within. Where habits are not controlled, the will power is sapped. The development of will-power to control the base in us helps us to discover the God within. The Ocean of Bliss is within us, but unfortunately we seek it elsewhere.'

The function was presided over by Mr. S.R. Jugat.

Newcastle: The ultimate aim of all living things was the attainment of union with God and though it may be avoided in one birth, it has eventually to come, so why not achieve that in this existence, said the Swamiji, when he addressed the community of Newcastle on July 5th, at the Tamil Association Hall, at a function organised by the Newcastle Branch of the Ramakrishna Centre. He was talking on 'Self-Culture through Yoga.' There was need for a culture of the heart.

The acquisition of a lot of learning was not important. The ability to use such learning in situations determined one's wisdom. The path to God was simple, but what mankind generally sought was a complication. Such simple practices as the repetition of the Lord's Name, pranayamas, meditation, and sankirtans were the marks of true culture that brought communion with God.

'The mind is like a ghost. If kept idle, it will destroy us. It is full of samskaras acquired in the course of our numerous births. Our existing habits are but the externalisation of the residual potentialities of the lives we have already lived.

These vasanas as they are called, must be cleansed by spiritual practices.

'It is a man's inner personality that gives him the radiance to the face. An angry man puts on an ugly appearance. What gives real beauty is the inner divine quality. A depressed man will drag others into the depths of gloom. Beauty is not to be acquired by paint but through the cultivation of divine qualities. Lord Krishna was beautiful, not because of the rotundity of his muscles, but because of his divinity within.'

Mr. A.K. Naidoo presided. Kirtans were rendered by the devotees.

July 7th - In the Transvaal

At a reception organised by the Johannesburg Branch of the Divine Life Society on July 7th, Swami Venkatesananda, in a message to the members, exhorted them as leaders of the movement, to set the example of divine living so that other's may follow. He emphasised the need for detachment from the worldly things and attachment to things Godly. All activities should be spiritualised.

Another quality essential was sincerity. Though we were likely to encounter with some failures in the beginning, even so, we must not give up trying to be sincere. We must search constantly to find out whether we are truly sincere.

It was essential to embody in our lives the teachings of Swami Sivananda. This little 'self' must be rid of its egoistic nature, and must be offered to God. Members were asked to take a dynamic part in the movement. The mere repetition of the Lord's Name was not enough. This must be supplemented with selfless work. Speaking in Hindi, Swamiji said that the work of the Divine Life did not end with prayers or reading the Gita, but with service. Share the fruit of the Divine Life Movement with others. Bear insult and injury. Kill the selfishness within. The thought that God is within all should occupy the minds of all. Give to others what

you have, for in giving is the secret of abundance.

Swamiji was officially welcomed by Mr. Les Pearson who paid a glowing tribute to the work done by the Swamis in South Africa. Swami Sahajananda was doing some solid work in Durban with the press; Swami Brahmananda in Pretoria was bringing relief to the suffering through his homeopathic dispensary, while Swami Athmananda had started a vegetable garden to provide members with their vegetable requirements at Honeydew Farm.

The function was presided over by Mr. Chotoobhai Patel who introduced the Swamiji and officially garlanded him. Several Europeans were also present.

August 4th, 1961 - Swamiji Continues to Attract Thousands on South African Tour

Johannesburg: Swami Venkatesananda is continuing his tour of South Africa, and thousands of people of all races have already heard him. These reports from Pretoria and Johannesburg have been prepared for 'The Leader' by Dr. B. Rambiritch, who is accompanying the Swami.

Amidst a gathering of almost a thousand people, Swami Venkatesananda was accorded a rousing welcome on July 8th at a reception organised by the Transvaal Regional Council of the Divine Life Society of South Africa.

The chairman, Mr. Les Pearson, in a moving tribute to the qualities of the visiting Swami spoke of his simplicity and loving nature, which were so characteristic of the Divine Life Society.

The Swami who was welcomed by an arthi dance performed by the pupils of the Patidar Gujerathi School, thanked the Council for the reception.

Prefacing his speech with verses from the Bhagavad Gita, he said that whenever there was a decay of righteousness and adharma (unrighteousness) was on the ascendant, God descended upon earth in order to install dharma in the human heart.

Dharma, he said, could not be adequately defined. Broadly, it meant righteousness, though it embraces a lot more in concept.

In this world, there were two approaches to life. One was the material, and the other spiritual. In the former approach, the existence of God was denied. God is replaced by wealth which instead of being used to promote happiness, becomes the object of worship. To such people, sensual pleasure is considered the highest attainment. To the spiritual man, there is only one aim in life, and that is how to attain Him. What is needed in modern society is how to reconcile these two contrasting approaches to life. Wealth should be shared in order to bring happiness to others.

God exists within us but he is sought for elsewhere. This body over which so much care and attention is placed is really something that is perishable and therefore transient. There is need for us to devote more time to seeking him through spiritual practices. God is the monopoly of none. He is the birthright of all. Swami Sivananda integrates life with God. We must live in Him at all times. Detachment from worldly objects is a key to happiness. We are most happy when we are asleep, when we are not in contact with any objects. This can be acquired in our waking state if we are not attached to material things. We can, through

selfless service, forget this mundane world, and yet live in it. We must strive to promote the happiness of others. We are most happy in the presence of those whom we love. If we love all then we shall be in a continual state of happiness. We are miserable because we shut our hearts to others.

Swami Sivananda is the very personification of charity. He started the movement at Rishikesh penniless, yet the Society today has assets to the value of three and a half lakhs, and he continues to give out freely. Our hearts, not the mines, should be filled with gold.

Advocate Mr. U.D. Mistry paid a tribute to Swamiji and the work done by the D.L.S. in Gujerathi.

Pretoria: Pretoria, the Capital city of South Africa, welcomed Sri Swami Venkatesananda at a colourful ceremony organised by the Menlo Park and the Pretoria Branches of the Divine Life Society, on July 9th 1961.

The Swami was garlanded by almost all the religious and cultural organisations of the city.

In a speech of welcome, Swami Atmananda of the Sanyoga Branch of the D.L.S., said that Swami Sivananda had sent Swami Venkatesananda to be amidst us in order to fan the flame of the Society, that was set alight by Swami Sahajananda. 'The Swami is already established in that something which we are still seeking,' Sri M. Penimal, the Chairman of the Divine Life Society, in thanking the people of Pretoria for their interest in the movement, said that the light that was lit on the banks of the river Ganges at Rishikesh, now illumines the world. 'The S. A. D. L. S. has, through your assistance, been able to spread the message of the Divine Life Society throughout the country.' he said.

Sri Narsi Manga, speaking on behalf of the Pretoria Hindu Seva Sainaj, expressed the hope that Swamiji's stay in the country would be an inspiring one as they were rich materially but poor spiritually.

Swami Venkatesananda, in reply, said that it was a compliment to the city to have so many cultural organizations. Pretoria was rich spiritually in that it had two ordained Swamis in the persons of Swami Brahmananda and Swami Dayananda. Speaking on the steps that led to God-realisation, the Swami said that the first need was to eradicate the egotistic nature within us. The 'I-ness' must be wiped out from our everyday life, and its place must be taken by a complete surrender of the self. Before we can become liberated yogis, we must learn to be non-egoistic. We must renounce all our desires and attachment to sensual pleasures. People fear the very thought of renunciation because we have not learnt the real meaning of this term. It really means to renounce something that belongs to you. If one reflects a little, he will realise that nothing really belongs to him, not even this body, for it is part of the earth to which it must eventually return. We must, therefore, renounce this sense of possession - this egoism. There is no need for us to run away from this world. Love and Charity are also important steps in God-realisation. Swami Sivananda's greatest mantra is 'Give'.

Practical work of a selfless nature is necessary to pulverize the ego, the bar to the kingdom of God. Spontaneous overwhelming generosity which is the trait of Swami Sivananda must be implanted in all. Vanity must be eradicated by surrender and humility.

People die of heart-failure, a common malady among the rich. The heart fails when there is disappointment, when our bank fails, when something this heart holds dear, fails. In the material world, our heart is attached to money, the cause of much misery. Share with others what you have and happiness will be ensured. The function was presided over by Swami Brahmananda.

A Tribute to The Master

The residence of Mr. and Mrs. Kavin of Westcliffe was the venue of a moving welcome reception that was accorded to Swami Venkatesananda by the Sanyoga Branch of the Divine Life Society, on July 11th.

In welcoming the Swami, Swami Athmananda, the European Swami who was initiated into the holy order of Sanyas by Swami Sivananda in 1959, and now is in charge of the Sanyoga Ashram at Honeydew, said that the Swami was here to inspire us in our search for the truth. We have been privileged to spread the message of Divine Life in South Africa, and we have faith that the world can be conquered through the brotherhood of love.

Swami Venkatesananda, in his address to an audience of over a hundred European members of the Society, said that a hundred years at the feet of the Master would seem only a few moments. Such was his grace that time passed unnoticed. Such was the power of love which he showed to all. Happiness is something that can be endured for long, but misery is something that cannot be endured even for a moment. In the presence of a sage, there is no time or space because he is one with God. He who knows the ultimate truth, who has experienced Samadhi, and in whom the self is burnt out, is God.

Whenever a sage is born, he comes upon earth for a divine purpose. When we receive such a great one in our midst, we must not look for something supra-phenomenal. They come to us human beings in order to instill love in us. Had they taken a superhuman form, we would be scared. As human beings, they share our joys and sorrows. The mission of the D.L.S. is to spread love. Divine Life means Love. God loves all. We must also love all. There have been sects who have practised compassion, but this they have done with motives, sometimes selfish in nature. If love was selfless, then we would have a perfect world.

One look at Swami Sivananda and one feels there is an immediate transmission of love. The question 'Are you all-right' has become absolutely commonplace with him. With us it has lost its meaning. With him, even if you are not well, you feel at once well. As a result of our being selfish, we have lost God. When selfishness is removed, God will automatically manifest in us. Swami Sivananda has oft times demonstrated this even as a doctor in Malaya. It is a peculiarity of Swamiji's to help all in distress. His compassion is spontaneous.

This mechanistic age has made man, in order to be happy, seek it in as many mechanic things as possible. Consequently, mechanisms have become the curse of the age. In the hospital, a patient is just a number 'Patient No. so and so' rather than being known by his name.

Swami Sivananda's compassion knows no bounds. People suffering from contagious disease and refused sanctuary elsewhere, will be whole-heartedly received by him. This mechanistic age has so completely enveloped us that it has

made us unhappy beings.

Happiness is not to be derived from the accumulation of material things, but by turning our attention to God. If there is an upsurge of desire for material things ill our heart, we must combat it. The power of lust does not allow us to see good sense. To quench that fire of desire is a hard path.

We must guard ourselves against the influence of mechanistic civilisation.

Curiosity mongering is not a desirable trait. Do not question, but practice and realise God for yourself. Expand your personality through the power of love. One good act can purify the soul and help blow up selfishness. Mans wicked and vicious mind conjures tip philosophy to suit the occasion when it is in reality displaying cowardice. The spirit of is a noble trail. One should not wait to be asked to serve. One should not stop doing good even if the immediate reaction is bad. Love should be extended to all created things. It should become our second nature. See that 'the One self dwells in all.' When a thorn enters one foot, the other immediately stops walking and the hand rushes to the aid of the foot. It does not stop to question. Even so, we must not delay in serving. The practice of meditation must be accompanied by service.

The Swami then consecrated a temple which has been constructed by Mr. Kavin in his spacious garden at Westcliffe.

On The Gita

Addressing an audience of over 500 Europeans and Indians at the Mahatma Gandhi Hall, Johannesburg, at a lecture organised by the Transvaal Hindu Seva Samaj, Swami Venkatesananda, speaking on the subject 'Glimpses of Yoga', said that the Bhagavad Gita was a sublime scripture that compelled the attention of great teachers. 'I have seen this scripture come alive in Swami Sivananda; therefore, I believe it is not impossible, if we made a sincere attempt to put this holy scripture into practice.' He exhorted the audience to go about in their daily duties by putting the teachings of the Gita into practice.

Much scientific progress has been made in this age. The question is: have we gone forward in our path to realise God? have we regressed or progressed? There is fear the world over. Is there a way of life in the world which points the way to free us from the worldly fear? Fear is the first and foremost of the neuroses from which man suffers. This anxiety in us must be taken out from us. The scriptures promise to liberate us from fear. There is need for us to change our angle of vision. The end and beginning of life is a mystery. Unless we solve this we shall always be living in misery. Let us seek reassurance in the Gita. We fear things over winch we should not worry.

The roots of Indian culture are being shaken. We are so close to wisdom with the presence of saints and sages there, but the roots are being eaten up by sense indulgence. Most of the time we are interested in the things of the world.

The Bhagavad Gita and the Sanathan Dharma have exalted man as the one to he taught, reformed and shaped into a divine being. In order to save ourselves we must change our heart and our angle of vision. We should look upon man as a manifestation of God. The central teaching of the Gita is expressed in the words of Lord Krishna, who says: 'He who constantly thinks of me, being at heart ever

united with me, his welfare I will look after.'

We must ask ourselves the question: have we ever endeavored to put this into practice before we can question God's failings? When the practice of religion is neglected, then man falls into trouble. If all of us looked to God, then we should never have to fear anything. It is because we are concerned too much with material things that we have been led into misery.

We must be prepared to learn good from anyone. Dattatreya revealed that he had as many as 24 gurus (teachers) and one of them was a vulture from whom he learnt that misery was due to the attachment to a piece of meat which caused several crows to harass him. When he let go the meat from his beak, he was left alone. This vulture had taught Dattatreya the value of renunciation.

Our hearts must be fixed on God before He can respond. Some of us try to shut God in a temple so that we can have freedom to do what we wish. But we forget that God is the sun and moon and therefore He cannot be shut out.

God is present in all. Even among gamblers, He is the intellect. Says He in the Gita: 'I am the gambling of the cheat ...'

When something is stolen from us, how do we react? This is also Gods doing for our good. If we can look upon all as God, fear will take leave of us and happiness will reign supreme.

If we acquire the wisdom of Gita, we will want nothing more. There is no profit greater than this. He who is rooted in this wisdom has no fear of calamity. No misery can shake him. Even in suffering he will rejoice, for he sees in it the destruction of his karma. A transformation takes place in his heart. He rejoices in the service of mankind, faces adversity calmly. The path of yoga saves one from coming into contact with misery.

'The Gita does not belong to the Hindu or India. It belongs to the world. It is not a new religion but a parliament of religions. None of the scriptures that have been ascribed to the Hindus should he shied away from by the others. They are universal. We should live the scriptures. Merely reading and understanding is not enough.'

The function was presided over by Advocate Mr. D.U. Mistry.

Farewell Reception

At a farewell reception earlier organised by the Johannesburg branch of the Divine Life Society, the Swami said that the mind should be attached to the soul and not the body, if we desired the peace we sought.

We were guilty of acquiring a lot of material things which modern civilisation gave the world, but never found time to use them. We are more interested in acquiring things, not in using them.

Mr. Bhanabhai Patel presided at the function.

July 5th, 1961 - Hindu Monk Arrives in Kimberley

Swami Venkatesananda, the Hindu monk and philosopher, said in an interview yesterday that during his stay in South Africa he had found that the people - both Whites and non-Whites - were eager to learn of a spiritual way of life and were

interested in Yoga. He said that throughout the world, there was a 'spiritual awakening'.

The Swami, who has been widely acclaimed throughout his world tour, arrived in Kimberley yesterday afternoon. He is on a three-day visit to the city and is a guest of the local branch of the Divine Life Society.

July 15th, 1961 - Diamond Fields Advertiser

Tomorrow Swami Venkatesananda will give a public lecture in the City Hall at 8.30 pm.

July 18th, 1961 - Breathe Tension Away

Sri Swami Venkatesananda from India, who is visiting South Africa, suggested that if all towns and cities had women mayors, the people of those places would be better looked after. 'After all,' he said, 'the Mother always has the interests and welfare of her children at heart.'

In thanking the Mayor, Mr. L. Jawno, for his hospitality and the interest he had shown, and while apologizing to him for seeming rudeness, the Swami maintained that Woman's ready sympathy and understanding are the ideal qualifications for mayoral responsibilities and duties.

At this civic tea-party, the Swami certainly made me think.

'How many of you,' he asked, 'find it difficult to sleep? How many of you have a bottle of pills standing next to your beds?'

From his observances all too many of us are too complex and too overwrought. 'Life is not like that,' he said. 'Life is simple, it is we who are to blame for making it complex; we, who are conditioned by modern civilization, do not want simple things.'

'As an example, few of you know how to breathe properly - 'if you breathe slowly and deeply, you will find it eases tension like magic.' Try it,' he advised, 'and you will remember me long after you otherwise would.'

July 28th, 1961 - Kimberley

Swami Venkatesananda now on tour of the Cape Province, paid a most successful visit to Kimberley where he was most enthusiastically received. He spent two days in the city as guest of Mrs. T.V.S. Pillay, Chairman of the Divine Life Society, Kimberley Branch.

The jam-packed program included a visit to the diamond processing plant, lectures at both Hindu temples, one lecture to a packed audience at the City Hall, and various social calls.

At the City Hall, the Swami was welcomed by the mayor, Councilor L. Jawno. Swamiji's visit to Kimberley has definitely brought Vedanta teachings to the forefront here.

A civic tea party was held in the honour of Swamiji by the Mayor and Mayoress and some of the leading citizens, both white and non-white, of Kimberley were present.

August 4th 1962

At a colorful reception organised by the Kimberley Branch of the Divine Life Society of South Africa at the City Hall, Swami Venkatesananda was officially welcomed on behalf of the community of Kimberley by the Mayor, Mr. L. Jawno. In paying a tribute to the Swami, he said that the Swamiji's good reputation and message had preceded him to the diamond city and the meeting was significant in that the day also marked the 90th birthday of the city.

Speaking on the subject 'Religion for the Modern Man', the Swami said that like diamonds, God was also hidden deep within us and it was necessary to crush tons of evil mass in order to discover the divine. It was time we subjected ourselves to introspection and examined ourselves to see if we were living aright. Life had a deeper purpose than mere eating and living.

In order to render the soul pure, it is necessary to keep it free from unwholesome and profane influences.

Much time is spent in the care of the body, very little of the soul. Every minute of our existence is precious. But we are wasting time in vain unnecessary attention on transient things. It is necessary to devote more time to the culture of the spirit. All religions were so many different ways to dig the diamond that made one spiritually rich.

Yoga means the recovery of the soul, and this is to be achieved through very simple practices such as service to and love for one's fellow beings, and meditating upon the Lord's Name. We must eradicate all selfish desire if we wish to be in the grace of God.

God dwells in all beings and if we could find the hidden God within us then we would have found peace. If love is enshrined in the hearts of all, then there would be no destitute, hungry or diseased in our midst.

Mayoral Tea Party

At a Mayoral Tea Party given in honour of Swami Venkatesananda and attended by the Deputy Mayor and members of the City Council, the Swami said that it was a tragedy of modern civilisation that it was necessary for man to resort to tranquillizers and drugs in order to induce sleep. Sleep was God's gift; and because man had shifted himself from the centre to the periphery, of his existence, allowing the mind to be occupied with matters of a material, temporary and passing nature, he was not able to enjoy this heavenly gift.

'Standing precariously at the periphery, man is whirled in this merry-go-round called the world, and he loses his head, gets worried and feels insecure. The mind is in a whirl all the time; there is no peace and there is no rest. 'He can have this rest only if he can restrain the mind,' said the Swami, and appealed to those who heard him to utilize the Yoga breathing at least to tranquillize their minds and enjoy freedom from tension which was ruining the health and peace of the modern man all over the world.

The technique consisted of steady, slow, graceful, rhythmic and deep breathing in and out. The ancient Yogi had discovered that mind and breath had an intimate

connection; hence when the mind was tranquil, the breath was slow and steady, and when the mind was disturbed by violent emotions, the breath was heavy and laboured, too. He applied this law conversely and worked his way to the mind. By steadying the breath and controlling the breathing, he obtained control over the mind

This practice had to become second nature. Otherwise, the mind had its own uncanny ways of evading control. Everyone felt that he was the master of his mind, till a temptation came along and proved it was otherwise. To illustrate this, the Swami gave all amusing story of how a King who wanted to show his Ministers that his pet cat was more obedient than they was outwitted by a wise minister who tempted the cat with a rat; and the cat forgot the King, the Court, Ministers and obedience, and jumped at the rat.

Hence the need to cultivate goodness in our daily life, deliberately keeping a watch over the evil tendencies that might lurk in the mind and ensuring that they had no chance to manifest themselves, and deliberately being good and doing good, so that, aided and strengthened by the practice of concentration and meditation, goodness will blossom into godliness, and with the path to God-realisation being made smoother by this godly life, meditation itself would be deeper and would lead us soon to the Goal.

Swami said that he had been specially commissioned by his Master, Sri Swami Sivananda, to spread the Gospel of Goodness - the four words: 'Be good, do good'. The real diamonds were the true seekers, not the stones emboweled from the depths of the earth, said Swami at a reception at De Beers Siva Subramaniam Temple in Kimberley, on July 16th. Real seekers were rare; but they were valued not because of their rarity, but for their sincerity of purpose and true devotion. Commenting upon a recent statement made in the press on the subject of padapuja, and the drinking of the water with which a devotee washed a Guru's feet, the Swami said he pleads guilty of the offence, if it is an offence, and he will do that a hundred times if he has the opportunity to do so. We are ready to see evil in a purely devotional practice; yet we condone a number of unhygienic practices which modern society commits daily. We may wash our bodies three times a day, but it will not equal one dip into the Bhagavad Gita. A Guru is the remover of ignorance. But for him, we will not know that we are in the darkness. He is the person who shows the path to God. It is God's own grace that descends upon earth in the person of the Guru. Within the form of the Guru, the Lord Himself dwells. radiating the light and power. That being to us is Swami Sivananda. In him that power is effulgent. When we worship him, we worship the ultimate.

Speaking on the subject of prostrating before a guru, the Swami said that man has reached such a state of civilisation that it has virtually become physically impossible to bend or kneel. The man who wants to learn is humble; he who wants wisdom bends. We bend before less important people when we want material favours done. Spiritual power is acquired by prostrating before the Guru.

Mr. C. N. Naidoo, head of the temple, in a speech of praise to the Swamiji, offered the temple to the Kimberley Branch of the Divine Life Society to hold its prayer services.

Hindu Vedic

At a prayer meeting organised by the Hindu Vedic Sabha, Kimberley, Swami Venkatesananda said that we should learn to leave our petty prejudices, jealousies and quarrels outside a temple, in addition to shoes and hats. Shoes had a usefully lesson for mankind, in that they symbolised selfless service.

Where there was no temple existing, there was sure to be moral decay, and all seekers should abandon such a place.

It is useless seeking refuge in the Lord when the world has renounced you, in advanced old age.

A shrine is like a powerhouse which helps to step up the spiritual current. The fact that God was not confined to the idols in the temples is unquestionably accepted by every devotee, since even in a temple he closes his eyes when worshipping despite the existence of images.

The glory of Hindu culture lay in its absolute freedom of worship and concept of divinity. We must attend worship and commune with God. If we are established in God, we can feel his presence anywhere.

The mind should be kept holy by radiating holy thoughts. Some initial training is necessary for the achievement of this and this is provided by temples and shrines. God is one, but the concept of a variety of deities is inevitable and variety is also the spice of religion.

We should come to the temple to be relieved of our worries; it is essential, therefore, that we leave our worries outside the temple door.

The purpose of entering a shrine is better served if we meditate upon good virtues.

Mr. G.N. Naidoo, in paying a tribute to the work of the Divine Life Society, said that the movement had brought about a real spiritual awakening in the country.

Mr. Krishna of the Pretoria Branch of the D.L.S., who presided, said that some of the great teachings of our scriptures such as, 'be good, do good', 'uphold good and never be selfish', were ingrained in the Swamiji's personality.

July 19th. 1961 - Indian Sage Praises South Africans

Cape Town: People in South Africa - both non-White and White - are more keen to learn about the mind and the spiritual side of this age than are the people in other lands, Swami Venkatesananda, of Sivananda Ashram, Rishikesh, India, said on his arrival in Cape Town last night.

Here to tour the Republic, the Swami told me last night at the headquarters of the Divine Life Society of South Africa, Cape Town branch, who are his hosts: 'I think that people here - as in Europe - have seen what damage and destruction can be brought by 'civilization' wrongly used, and now they want to look around and see if perhaps there is not something else which could do better for them than say cars, radios, and other 'benefits' of modern living.

'True, in South Africa, people have not seen so much of war havoc as the people in Europe. But who knows, perhaps they can visualize trouble ahead and are looking for a spiritual way to avoid it.'

Crowds had gathered in the Salt River house to bid welcome to the Swami, who clad in a long, orange robe-like tunic, sat in a crowded room joking and laughing with his visitors.

Tomorrow the Swami will be welcomed by the Mayor, Mrs. J. Newton Thompson, in the mayoral parlour at the City Hall.

That night he will lecture at the Rondebosch Civic Centre, and on Sunday will be at the City Hall. After his lecture on Sunday - at which the Mayor will preside - the Swami will give practical demonstrations and short count in Yoga.

July 22nd, 1961 - Welcome

Swami Venkatesananda, Madras, is now in Cape Town in the course of a world tour. I am told that he is the foremost disciple of the founder of the Divine Life Society.

The objects of this society are to propagate divine teaching, serve the poor and the sick and practice love, truth, and celibacy.

I not know much about it, but apparently he is well-known in Europe and in Australia. He has lectured to Christians and Jews and appeared on television. I wish him a happy and fruitful stay in Cape Town.

August 11th, 1961 - Swami Reaches Cape On His Triumphant Tour of South Africa

Swami Venkatesananda of the Divine Life Society, India, continues to attract thousands to his meetings on his triumphal tour of South Africa. For these reports from the Cape, 'The Leader' is again indebted to Dr. B. Rambiritch, who is accompanying the Swami.

Kenilworth: Speaking to a private gathering of Europeans on July 19th, at a residence in Kenilworth, Cape Town, Swami Venkatesananda said that Yoga was not a new religion with dogmas and other strings with which to tie ourselves, Yoga meant 'divine life.' It was our way to God. Whatever our concept of Ultimate Reality, Yoga leads us from where we are to where we ought to be, i.e. the Ultimate Reality.

Life would be meaningless if there was no purpose behind this citation. There is a power, an ultimate reality behind this creation. It is called God by some, Jehovah by some, Christ by some, Allah by others, and Atma or Krishna by still others. We may adopt any name for the sake of convenience. Yoga is a systematised way through which all of us can walk. Each of us have our own path, but when we reach Him, we will find that all of us have striven to reach the same goal of oneness. This path is Yoga.

There is a spark of divinity in us which makes us see, think, and act. We are essentially all one, but our ignorance makes its feel that we are different from others. From this ignorance comes the desire of acquiring things for selfish ends. We have gone on living and existing and we shall continue to do this because we are lost from our centre of existence. We have lost sight of our purpose of existence.

The Reality is hidden within us. Through ignorance, we seek Him elsewhere. It is

when we are in difficulties, when we get knocks and blows, it is then we turn our attention towards God. Some pain is necessary to awaken us into consciousness of the existence of God. Wise men learn from the experience of others, the mediocre from their own experience, while the fool will learn from none. We must walk the path of Yoga if we wish to attain our goal. Yoga is a universal path with no gates. It is thrown open to all. Whatever be the aim of life, Yoga helps in the perfect control of the mind. It enables one to derive the maximum benefit that God has given us. Yoga enables us to acquire mastery of mind and do our tasks and achieve success. The power so acquired should be used to realise God. The gaining of mastery of the mind requires time and zeal as well as devotion. God-realisation does not come easily, but at the very outset of the practice of Yoga, you will find peace of mind and relief from tension. The gift of Yoga is to get rid of entanglement of mind that is caused by modern civilisation. When we have the mind under control, we will not be subject to violent emotions. We can control and prevent bad thoughts since we will have all the strength of spirit. We must take to its practice. It is not something that can be argued, but like the sense of taste it must be experienced.

Gandhi Memorial

Addressing a gathering of the pupils of the Gandhi Memorial School, the Swami, alluding to the life of Bapuji, said that one who could control his mind was a Mahatma. To acquire greatness one must discipline the mind, be good, do good and uphold good.

Those who did not have the right knowledge were like children. It is not enough to grow in the material world. We must also grow in the spiritual world. We can preserve the goodness in us by keeping company with the saints. One rotten orange can spoil others in the lot; even so, good people can be spoilt by one bad person. Many films, novels and comics have a bad influence. We must choose good books to read. Among these are the Ramayana and the Bhagavad Gita. Such books give its an ideal in life to be followed.

We must be truthful and must have the courage to speak it always. We must be ready to admit our faults however painful the circumstances. We must pray to God for virtues. We must not be led into temptation.

Newlands: At a satsang held in Newlands, in Cape Town, Swami Venkatesananda said that the one who had tasted the divine nectar needed no further explanation on religion, the one who did not, to him no explanation was possible.

Sadhana should become one's swabbava, i.e. his inner disposition. It did not matter whether it took the form of singing the Lord's Names, Japa or some selfless service. Even when we reached sainthood, this attribute in us must be allowed to flourish.

God does not only live in heaven, or in a Yogi. Wherever His devotees are, there He is sure to be found. Those who dwell in Him are forever in a state of bliss. Worry is caused by the mind, the little devil in us. It must be fully occupied with spiritual thoughts. Mere upadesha - advice from a sage is not enough. This must be supplemented with active spiritual work.

The function was organised by the United Hindu Association and was presided over by Sri Vasana.

Rotary Club: Addressing the members of the Cape Town Rotary Club at their luncheon meeting on July 21st, 1961, Swami Venkatesananda paid a glowing tribute to the Rotary ideal of brotherhood, and said he was happy to be among those who subscribed to this ideal. To him the Rotary Wheel symbolised the Dharma Chakra of Lord Buddha, the Wheel of Righteousness which Buddha set in motion.

Righteousness led to peace. Both Yoga and Christianity, which are not two different or opposing religions, but which are the echoes of each other, proclaim: 'Blessed are the peace-makers.' Peace was our essential nature, according to Yoga. Though this is so, how is it that all our attempts to establish peace in this world only led from war to war?, asked the Swami, and commended in answer, Lord Jesus's commandment: 'Seek ye first the Kingdom of God, and all other things will be added unto you.' It was because mankind, instead of seeking the Kingdom of God, sought after material riches, as the life's one end aim, that there was unrest in this world. Modern man had exalted things of the moment to the status of eternal truths; the scale of values is perverted. Hence the unrest. The Swami pleaded that people should hold God as their goal, and assured that then the daily activities of man would find their appropriate places in his life.

The Swami felt that the notion that the world was passing through an era of intellectualism was wrong, and that it was the cloak under which atheism, materialism and selfishness hid themselves. He quoted Lord Jesus again and said, not everyone who said, 'Lord, Lord' would find Him, and not everything in this world can be understood by the finite mind, and said that we should 'be good, do good, cultivate brotherhood, goodwill, and compassion' in a practical way, in our daily life. That is what mankind needs today: practical life of religion. Once again he paid a tribute to the Rotarians whom he characterised as the leaders of society, and pleaded that the leaders should themselves be embodiments of goodness, and guide their flock along the path of goodwill and brotherhood to their goal of peace, godliness and the Kingdom of God.

The meeting was presided over by the Rotary President, Mr. F. Heymann.

August 11th, 1961 - Thousands Hear Swami's Message of Hope

Swami Venkatesananda of the Divine Life Society, India has already returned to Durban after his triumphant tour of the Transvaal and Cape where audiences of all races listened with rapt attention to his message of inner peace and happiness. As readers of the 'Leader' have shown such interest in the Swami's tour and lectures, reports of his meetings at Cape Town and East London are given below. Once again, the reports come by courtesy of Dr. B. Rambiritch, to whom tribute must be paid as a true and faithful chronicler of a historical tour.

Mayoral Tea Party: If we all regarded ourselves as brothers and sisters in the family of God, then we could have the peace we desired, said the Swamiji on July 21st at a Mayoral tea party given in his honour by the City of Cape Town, and

attended by City councilors and dignitaries of the Peninsula.

Preparation for the life of hereafter is the fundamental principle of the religion of India. Accordingly, death is faced without fear for it does not really kill. The soul is immortal and is therefore indestructible.

If life has been virtuous upon earth, there is no need to fear death. Man becomes undivine and animalistic when he has lost sight of the principles of life itself. The end and aim of some is to make the best use of life while it lasts.

If one examined the purpose of life, he will see that it has a greater mission than mere eating and drinking. Animals also live and procreate, but man is endowed with the gift of intelligence and the power of discrimination. With the faculty of understanding we can realise what we essentially are.

Even animals though guided largely by instincts are good within the limits of those instincts. Man can choose, and if he wants to behave instinctively, he can do so and can be worse than animals. It is, perhaps, for this reason that animals are afraid of man.

Pointing to the Mayor's dog, the Swami said that a man with all one's loving affection shown to him for years, will forget the good and quickly remember one wrong done to him, whereas one instance of love shown to the dog will be remembered by him through his existence despite the fact he may have been subjected to ill-treatment a number of times. This defect in man is due to egoism. Unless we do good to the entire creation, it is useless existing upon earth. Let us regard all as children of God. Serve all - love all.

Preaching is not all, we must practice 'being good and doing good'.

The Mayor, Mrs. Joyce Newton-Thompson, in thanking the Swami, said if all international gatherings to promote peace had a sage to address them for a few minutes before their deliberations in order to remind them of the purpose for which they had assembled, then perhaps they would not lose sight of their mission, and peace of the world would be ensured.

Cape Town City Hall: Addressing a crowd of about 1,500, among them about 500 Europeans and several Muslims, Malays and Coloureds, on July 23rd, the Swami said that it was glorious to find so many hearts beating in unison in spiritual quest, in quest of something eternal, something that was permanent. Man has been seeking after this truth birth after birth, and that quest should not cease until we reach the goal. To forge in us this truth, sages and saints have come into our midst to awaken us to our real nature. When time and again man forgets his true divine nature, it is a blessing that God Himself should come down. This is God's guarantee that we should not stray away from Him.

Praising the Mayor, the Swami said that if we had mothers as Mayors and rulers of the world, this world would be a better place. It was impossible for man to imitate a mother's grace. A child may stray away from the mother, but years later, if he returns, he will find the same love awaiting him from the mother, with not a ray of animosity or anger. God is pleased with one stray sheep returning to His fold than a host of devotees. If we have strayed or neglected Him, we have, in an indirect way, caused His re-appearance.

That fountain of joy, that ocean of bliss, God, is within us. Illustrating his point with the story of the man who hid his purse under the pillow of his fellow

traveler, the Swami said that God purposely hid the spirit within man and his profane and selfish mind sought for it in externals. When he created man, he put in him a bit of restlessness. It is for this reason that the mind turns for bliss to other objects.

Happiness was not to be found in external objects. If that was so, then man should be most miserable during his sleep state, and yet our experience is that we are most happy when we are asleep. In sleep we forget our identity, we are at peace with ourselves. This experience is granted to it to remind us that happiness is within us. With restlessness, the Creator also put in us the power of discrimination. Restlessness is an activity of the mind, and God has given us the power to control, restrain and direct the mind. This power is called Yoga. Because of sensational mongering, some newspapers have come to regard Yoga as a kind of sensation. Yoga does not mean the performance and exhibition of super-human feats. These feats are possible by other methods than Yoga.

Happiness through material things is temporary. Do we still wear that smile when our wealth is taken away from us? Modern man has bound his happiness up with his bank and when the bank fails, his heart fails. The Yogi who has his heart attached to God is not shaken even if the world fails. We should, therefore, not allow our happiness to depend upon an external event. This is true Yoga. Even the theory of Karma is an auxiliary to Yoga. It is there to assist it. We are not tranquil because we are all mixed up. Our heads are in the clouds. The theory of Karma should not bother us. It is true that what we have sown in the past must be reaped now. But let us worry over sowing something good now for the future. Our failures and miseries of the present should be regarded as opportunities for eradicating our past Karma. Yoga enables us to withdraw from the cosmic play that is going on, and to take our place in the cosmic consciousness. In the heat of this cosmic play, it is not possible for man to know his wrong. Yoga helps him to realise what those errors are.

We are essentially divine. But there is an inexplicable power within us, the power of evil. However calm and cool we may look outside, this evil goes on within us. It is He who can guide humanity along the path of righteousness. It is a grave blunder of humanity to drive our Yogis to the caves and forests. Their rightful place is in society, in order to help it to take an abiding interest in religion and in all righteous activities. The Yogi's whole religion is an integral part of life. All facets of life - social, domestic, political, national and international, should be based upon the religious spirit. The Yogi is one who can adapt well in society. The ultimate aim of a Yogi is not only to discover the Self within him, but in all. The discovery that the Self is omnipotent and omnipresent, not only in human beings, but in inanimate beings also. There is not a speck of dust which is not permeated with God.

We read of accidents in the press. One cause is the disturbed state of mind. When we are in a fit of anger, we fail to recognise even a loved one. When a mind is cool and calm, one is most efficient. Few carry on their normal day to day activities, whether at business, office or the workshop, for the sake of God. The Yogi works only for God. The motive power in modern world is profit for selfish ends. The man of God also engages in the same kind of activity, but without attachment. He works for the welfare of all beings. Saints may also be engaged in works of an

external nature. What is important is whether they are attached to the world. If more and more people took to this path, the happiness of society would increase more and more.

The Swamiji then gave a course of practical demonstration in pranayama and meditation.

Dr. B. Rambiritch, traveling with the Swami, paid a tribute to the people of Cape Town for the interest they had shown in the Swamiji, and thanked them for the manner in which they had received the Swamiji.

University of Stellenbosch

The Swami was also invited to tea by the Registrar of the University of Stellenbosch when a number of professors and deans heard him talk on the universality of Yoga. He said Christians need not be afraid to follow this teaching as it was not sectional and did not require the change of one's faith. The Swami answered many questions from the professors.

Mowbray: Speaking on the concept of Guru Bhakti at the Mithra Hall, the Swami said Guru Bhakti was fundamental to spiritual aspiration. The concept is not exclusively a Hindu ideal. All over the world we are taught 'Acharya devo bhava'. Christian religious mission had done the world a signal service in encouraging people to take up the task of teaching. Anyone who gave knowledge was God. Our respective apparatus can only be opened if we feel that there is darkness within us and that there is need for someone to give us the light to dispel the darkness of ignorance. If we presume to know more than the teacher, then we can never make any headway. We must approach the Guru with the right attitude and with humility, then only can we be in a position to learn. It is a crooked mind that denies a Guru. Unless a student approaches it master with devotion, he will not be able to do his best. When a student or seeker approaches a teacher with devotion, his divinity opens before him. Then only is he in rapport with the teacher. We are often confronted with the problem of the personality cult. We forget that without a teacher we cannot attain God-consciousness.

It was a tragedy of our modern educational system because the teacher was not so much interested in the children, as he was not being approached in a divine spirit. One must surrender himself before a teacher. Only when our egoism has been surrendered to him can we get illumination and liberation. We feel shy to fall at the feet of a Guru because our own ego will not let us do it. Our egoistic nature conjures up stupid arguments about the worship of a Guru. We try to compare ourselves with Rama or Siva. If these were men, then we are mere worms in comparison. We have no business to call ourselves human beings. We do not even know how to prostrate or fold our arms properly. Remember: We do not prostrate before man, but the divinity in him. We must serve the Master. It is through his service that the vanity or egoism in us is destroyed. From him, we must seek to clear our doubts. He has seen the Reality. To us all is still darkness. The story of Ekalavia in the Mahabharatha is ample testimony of the power of a Guru, if approached with true devotion. There is no difference between a God-realised Sage and God. The Guru is a gift of God for mankind. Since it is not

possible for us to meditate upon the formless Absolute, it is a good practice to meditate upon the form of the Guru. It is the Guru that can open the divine eye - the divine vision. Not for a moment should we doubt the Guru.

July 29th, 1961 - We Live in a Topsy-Turvy World, but a Level Mind Sees a Solution

Port Elisabeth: There are various ways of developing the intellect and they all involve use of the head. But none are quite as blatant as the method recommended by Swami Venkatesananda, a 39-year old religious leader from India who is touring South Africa.

He addressed a packed City Hall in Port Elizabeth this week and has made several successful appearances in Natal. The tour is being sponsored by the Divine Life Society.

'Standing on your head is not a joke,' this saffron-robed expert on yoga said. 'It sharpens the intellect and builds up brain power.'

He also demonstrated the familiar crossed-legs laths position to aid concentration during meditation. The Swami follows a rigorous daily routine. He gets up at 4 am. every day for meditation and exercises. Afterwards he studies scriptures before starting his day's work. The same routine is followed every evening.

His home is at Rishikesh, in Northern India, where he has lived in a monastery for the past 16 years. His solution to the problems of life is bewilderingly simple. 'There is no such thing as a problem between Blacks and Whites or between English and Africans', he said. 'These problems can be found throughout the world.'

'One must be able to recognise the fundamental problem - man hates man - and this must be removed.'

'If there is bread on the table and we both want it, we snatch for it. If the bread is removed, the problem is gone. The bread represents money, power, or any of the things we desire.'

'If our attention is diverted to matters of the spirit, all our problems will be solved.'

The Swami entered the monastery in 1945. Before then he was a Government employee.

August 11th, 1961

Port Elisabeth: At a public meeting presided over by the Mayor of Port Elizabeth, Councilor Monty van der Vyver on July 25th, Swami Venkatesananda appealed to the citizens of Port Elizabeth to take up a sincere study of the fundamentals of religion and practise that religion.

'Theories created dissensions, whereas practice led all towards unity,' he said.

Quoting from a letter just received from the Master, Sri Swami Sivananda, the Swami said: 'That side of the earth which faces the sun enjoys sunshine, whereas the side which turns away from the sun is dark.' He appealed to all to turn to religion.

The Swami emphasized the need for religion and said that only religion lent meaning, purpose and life to life itself; it was because this spirit of religion had been lost that, with the best of intentions, the self-styled benefactors of humanity - the political, industrial, social, economic leaders - have been unable to promote human weal. 'What we need is a change of heart in man, and then all the blessings conferred upon mankind by scientific advance will be utilised for constructive purposes'. This change of heart was the work of religion.

The religion for the modern man aimed at enabling him to find his place in society, as a helpful citizen. The rational man would easily understand that real happiness was within him - from an analysis of the deep sleep state. 'We are happy only when we forget ourselves and the world,' said the Swami; 'to do so, while yet remaining active in this world, we should be continually interested and working for the welfare of all.' This selfless, self-forgetful service of mankind can only proceed from cosmic love. Here again the Swami cited a common everyday experience and said: 'We are happy when we are near the beloved one. Naturally, if we love all, we shall be perpetually happy. It is only when we begin to hate another, do we feel miserable.'

It was essential for the preservation of the right attitude towards life, to enable our actions to be truly selfless and our love to be cosmic and unselfish, to rise above the little self and the world, and to experience the Spirit that dwells in Man and in all beings. It was this attempt at experiencing this Indwelling Spirit that could enable man to experience the happiness of sleep, consciously. That attempt was called meditation. Hence, the Master Sri Swami Sivananda exhorts the seeker to meditate regularly. That in essence was the religion for the Modern Man - Serve all, Love all, meditate or commune with God, and realise His Omnipresence.

The Swami then put the audience through a short practical course in concentration and meditation.

Indian Women

Addressing a meeting of Indian women on the 26th July, Swami Venkatesananda exhorted them to preserve their glorious culture. He characterised them as the Guru or First Teacher of Man who learnt everything from them. He appealed to them to realise their great responsibility as the moulders of the character and personality of the future men and women. 'This responsibility is so great and exacting that no woman who feels this will ever think of leaving the home and claiming equality with man in the other spheres of his activity.' he said.

In ancient India, the Swami said, women were given a worshipful place in the house; they were not oppressed or ill-treated. But the wise women ruled the house and thereby the hearts of everybody. In the interests of the proper upbringing of the younger generation, the Swami appealed to the women not to listen to the poisonous propaganda which, in the name of securing the 'emancipation of women', was in fact ruining the very foundations of civilisation. The Swami suggested that women should acquaint themselves with holy books - especially the Puranas or the epics like the Ramayana, Mahabharata and Srimad Bhagavad Gita - and the stories of great saints and sages, and narrate these

stories to their children at bed-time, in order that the lessons of these great epics might be indelibly inscribed on the heart of the young ones.

Uitenhage: 'It was when the religious spirit was banished from the daily life of man, when religion was confined to an hour a day or to a day in the week, that tragedy struck civilisation.' said Swami Venkatesananda at a public meeting held in the City hall here, under the chairmanship of the Mayor of Uitenhage, on July 26th. It was time, the Swami said, the personality of man was integrated and the religious spirit ruled and governed all the activities of man.

That was the special message of Sri Swami Sivananda to the modern man, and in his characteristic way. Swamiji gave extremely practical instructions which enabled man to achieve this integration of personality. The first and foremost was that we should meditate in the early morning hours on God - the early morning period being specially suited to this on account of the fact that (1) there were little external disturbances then, and (2) it was easier to convince the mind that real happiness was within, as was indicated by the state of deep sleep. During this period of morning meditation, the aspirant endeavoured to contact God, distinct from the perishable body and the finite mind. This by itself was not the end. 'It is impossible for man to be a saint for an hour a day and a sinner during the rest,' said the Swami. Therefore, this spirit which was generated during the morning meditation should permeate all the activities during the rest of the day. Sri Swami Venkatesananda again gave practical instructions for keeping up this spirit. The Swami gave a few of them - every hour or so, it was good to close the eyes wherever we were, and to think of God, and repeat His Names as we walked along time road, feeling that all those whom we came across were in truth God Himself. The Swami also appealed to all to see God in all, to pray for all, to serve the poor and the sick, to be charitable, to be generous, to love all, and to meditate regularly.

At the request of the Mayor, the Swami conducted a special practical meditation class in which a large number of the audience participated.

Muslim Institute

'The finite mind will not be able to comprehend the Infinite: man is normally limited by his body and mind, and therefore needs an intelligent way to approach the Infinite Absolute.' said Swami Venkatesananda, addressing a public meeting at the Muslim Educational Institute on 'The Philosophy of Idol Worship,' on July 27th. The ancient sage, realising the limitations of the human being, provided him with a wonderful ladder with the help of which he ascended from the mad (the materialistic life) to the roof (cosmic consciousness), without asking him to jump from the road to the roof.

Referring to the increasing number of persons who were suffering from tension, from fears and neuroses, the Swami appealed to the audience to restore private and public shrines, to have an altar in every house, with an image of God, to which everyone could go in times of stress and strain, for relief and consolation. It was when man was unable to comprehend the Inner Reality that he got caught in tension, and he needed an external aid to release that tension. That was

provided by the shrine, the altar and that image.

The Swami then dealt at length with malpractices that had crept into this tradition of image worship, and the movements that had sprung up to do away with these malpractices. 'Let us study these movements with reference to the context in which they arose, and only then will we understand their meaning. These great masters only pointed out that God was not limited to the image, but they did not deny that God existed in the image,' the Swami said and continued, 'for that would obviously be absurd: the omnipresent God was certainly in the Image, too.'

The Swami also pointed out that the ancient sage who prescribed idol worship did not stop with that, and wove into the system of worship which he instituted, the elements of the Higher Reality, too: thus the names used in connection with the worship of the idol contained, besides those addressing the particular deity, the attributes of the Supreme Reality. Nameless and Formless, Absolute and Infinite.

For the purpose of practising concentration and meditation, the vast majority of people did need an external image. And, when the devotee concentrated his mind on the idol, the Swami said, a miracle happened. 'The concentrated beam of the rays of the mind (which ultimately emanate from the Godhead within the meditator) was powerful enough to burn up the matter that constituted the image of God and revealed Him there to the Inner Eye of the devotee whose veil of ignorance had been burnt up by the same power of concentration,' the Swami said. Therefore, the devotee actually 'saw' God, in and through the image. That was the profound experience of many saints and Yogis both in India and Europe, who had thus 'seen' Lord Krishna, Lord Rama, Lord Siva, Lord Jesus, and Mother Mary.

If the devotee was earnest and sincere, zealous and enthusiastic, he would by stages, step by step, reach the ultimate goal of an actual realization of the Nameless and Formless Absolute.

The day being Guru Purnima day, on which disciples all over India worshipped their Guru and reaffirmed their allegiance to him, the Swami wanted to dwell for a few moments on the glory of Guru worship, too. Posing the question himself, 'Can we worship a living saint?', the Swami answered, 'Yes', and explained: 'Even when we worship the Image of God, we do so only because we believe that God is a Living Reality, and not because He is dead'. How could man worship man? The Swami replied that the saint or man-of-God was not a mere man: he had realised God and therefore had become God, just as coal was turned into fire when it came into close contact with fire. The Swami discouraged people going about declaring, 'Jesus was man and so am I; Sivananda is man and so am I; Rama was man and so am I', and asked, 'If you were in their place and were tested as they were, would you react as they did, in a divine way? No. Then, if they were just men, we are no better than worms. They were far above us in evolution and deserve to be worshipped.' Finally, he quoted from the Upanishads to show that supreme devotion to God and Guru was declared to be a pre-requisite before the aspirant grasped the real meaning of the scriptural utterances.

The Swami, in conclusion, appealed to all to restore this holy tradition of idol worship, at least to stem the growing tendency among the youth of the modern

world to turn to obscene pictures and images, and appealed to all to encourage their children to worship the images of God and saints to derive consolation and a sense of security which he reiterated, they could easily get from idol worship.

Rhodes University

The students of the Rhodes University, Grahamstown, listened to Sri Swami Venkatesananda's exposition of Yoga in Daily Life, this evening, July 28th. The meeting was presided over by the University's Professor of Philosophy. 'Man's quest of knowledge will not cease until he discovers the Self,' said the Swami. Man might fly to the moon and harness the powers of Nature in a variety of ways. But this objective knowledge was imperfect, finite and limited. Therefore, one generation discounted the conclusions and ideas of the previous one. Only when the perceiving instrument itself was understood: only when the subject (Self) realised itself will this quest end, and man would arrive at the answer to the problems relating to the world, man and God. What prevented man from achieving this result was that normally the mind's rays lay scattered over a variety of worldly objects, on account of his endless desires. Yoga enabled man to concentrate his mind and turn the concentrated beam of light upon itself. Through that beam the Self reveals itself. The Swami dispelled many wrong notions about Yoga which was understood to mean some magic. Mysterious physical feats and psychic powers. But Yoga really meant control of mind and ultimately Self-realisation or union of the individual consciousness with Cosmic Consciousness. Even in the initial stages, the practice of Yoga enabled man to achieve perfect equanimity of mind eased his tensions and made him efficient in all his activities. He then demonstrated the Yoga technique of concentration, in which the students enthusiastically participated.

July 31st, 1961 - Master Yogi will Lecture In East London

East London: A spiritual awakening is taking place in Europe - and especially Germany - where one in every three persons is showing an interest in Yoga, according to Swami Venkatesananda, a 39 year old Master Yogi, who will lecture in the East London City Hall tonight at 8 o'clock.

The Swami arrived in South Africa on June 6th to conduct a lecture tour of the country. This will be his last demonstration before he returns to Durban. He is expected to tour South Africa again next month. The lecture has been organised by the East London Gujarati Youth Club under the chairmanship of Mr. O. Gopar. Swami Venkatesananda said yesterday the word 'ananda' - which is used by all Swamis - means 'happy with God.' He said it was not the intention of yoga to convert people to a particular faith. "It is a popular misconception in Western thought that one has to give up his or her religion in order to study yoga," he said. "This is not the case. A yogi may continue practising his faith while studying yoga."

The Swami explained that the word Yoga simply meant the union of the individual with God. During his lecture in the City Hall he will explain the

techniques of yoga as applied in daily life.

Before his arrival in South Africa, Swami Venkatesananda gave lectures in Ceylon and Western Australia where, on one occasion, he was invited to preach from the pulpit of all Anglican Church.

East London: At a lecture in the City Hall, East London, on July 31st, presided over by the Mayor, Councilor Osmond, the Swami emphasised the need for the integration of the life of man, so that matter and spirit could be blended together, like the blind man carrying a lame person on his shoulders for mutual benefit. The Swami pleaded for a correct outlook upon life based on spiritual values, for the spirit to govern and guide matter.

Explaining the meaning of Yoga, the Swami said that Yoga was not just a series of physical exercises, nor some magic or abnormal practices like sleeping on a bed of nails, chewing glass pieces, but it was the attainment of union of the individual with God - an attainment beyond which there was none greater, and which enabled man to remain undisturbed by even the worst misfortune. Therefore, Yoga conferred equanimity on man. Equanimity was conducive to efficiency. Yoga therefore enabled man to find his place in society and to discharge his duties most efficiently, and not to run away from them.

The Swami narrated a story from the Yoga-Vasistha which illustrated the real meaning of 'renunciation' and declared that 'renunciation' meant the renouncing of egoism, vanity, and the sense of 'mine-ness.' It presupposed an introversion of the mind of God-consciousness. When man turned his gaze away from the material objects of the world and felt that God was the Reality within himself, then he acquired this spirit of renunciation, the correct values in life and the right attitude towards life. This was the goal of life, and this is what Yoga promised man.

The Swami then proceeded to explain and demonstrate the technique of concentration and meditation in which the audience participated. He assured them that even an attempt at the practice of meditation would relieve them of their tension and promote good health and a balanced mind.

Later, Swami Sahajananda demonstrated the most important Yoga Asanas and Suryanamaskaras and the Swami explained their benefits to the audience.

The outcome of this meeting was that some leading European members of the audience formed a Divine Life Branch in East London.

Hindu Temple, East London

Illustrating his talk with a number of humorous stories, Swami Venkatesananda spoke on 'Divine Life' at the East London Hindu Temple. He said that the first requisite was to feel that God was the creator and sustainer of all creatures; this thought would help to ease all our tensions and enable us to enjoy peace and happiness free from all worries and anxieties. He likened the self-assumed responsibility of man for his family, business and society, to the attitude of a railway passenger carrying his baggage on his own head.

The next vital factor in life was to feel that man was but an instrument in the hands of God, a channel for the free flow of the Divine Will and Grace. Nothing

happened on earth except through His Will. When the individual surrendered his ego and merged his will with the Divine Will, he was at peace within himself, whereas when he let his own ego assert itself, he vainly struggled, though ultimately only God's Will prevailed. 'For merely being an instrument in the hands of God, we are glorified on earth and we enjoy great peace and happiness,' said the Swami. He who thus united his will with the divine lived a life of selfless service and cosmic love, serving all as the manifestations of the Lord. He did his duty well, regardless of any selfish motive.

He was satisfied with whatever the Lord granted him, welcoming all experiences as the gifts of God. This was another great factor in Divine Life. This again enabled man to be calm and happy in all circumstances; by welcoming even pain, failure and dishonour, the devotee transformed these into pleasant experiences, and he enjoyed great peace and happiness uninterruptedly.

In order to attain to this state of mind, the Swami exhorted the people to do Japa (repetition of God's Name), to keep up God-consciousness throughout the day, and to follow a daily routine of Japa hymn-singing, meditation, Hatha Yoga, the Yoga way of breathing, study of scriptures, service of humanity, charity, and a self-controlled life.

August 11th, 1961 - An Inspiring Talk On Re-Incarnation

In an inspiring address to over 1.000 people at the Orient Islamic Hall on Sunday August 6th, afternoon, Swami Venkatesananda said that the repetition of the Lord's Name 'is a panacea for all ills; and when sincerely done with feeling, it would bring one the ultimate realization.'

His Holiness was speaking on re-incarnation at a meeting held under the auspices of the Shree Sanathan Dharam Sabha and the Durban Hindu Temple. He said that 'matter', 'energy' and 'intelligence' are indestructible, and that these three undergo a continuous process of mutation is now accepted by all.

The talk which was punctuated with appropriate humorous remarks captivated the attention of the audience. He spoke of the three gods which man has come to worship. The first God is the One that man worships in the temples, mosques and churches. The second is a jingling god (money) which brings misery in its trail. The third God was the bottle god (alcohol) which put people into a trance.

Speaking of the immortal life, the Swami said that there has now developed the cult which believes that man must eat, drink and be merry, for everything will end at the crematorium. He said that 'death' was a very much misunderstood word, and that death should not be thought of as being the end. 'Death offers one an opportunity to put on new garments after having thrown off the worn out ones.'

August 25th, 1961 - Swami Tells Women: Do not Be Victims of Modern Civilisation

Swami Venkatesananda of the Divine Life Society, India, recently gave a series of talks on the Natal North Coast. Details of his addresses, which appear below, are given by Dr. B. Rambiritch, who is accompanying the Swami.

Addressing the members of the Cornubia Branch of the Divine Life Society, on

August 5th, Swami Venkatesananda exhorted them to pay particular attention to their inner motives. For, he said, 'You have only one friend in the world, and that is your own pure heart and mind; and you have only one enemy in this world, and that is your own impure heart or mind.' The spiritual aspirant had to keep a vigilant watch over the mind; and, the Swami assured them, 'If you watch the mind, it will ever be quiet, tranquil and pure.'

One should examine his own heart and mind constantly, to ensure that his motives were pure, and no selfish or impure desire arose in his heart. This was of fundamental importance in spiritual aspiration; as, with an impure motive, even social service or spiritual ministry might be turned into a mockery. If the heart was impure, even much learning, austerities and social service or charity would prove futile, where spiritual values were concerned.

He appealed to the audience to remember this basic principle of Yoga, which was also the golden rule for good life.

Doringkop: Speaking to a gathering of Divine Life Society members and the public at Doringkop on August 6th, morning, Swami Venkatesananda felt that life in the countryside was often a blessing as the materialistic influence of urban life was absent there. But, he pleaded that the people should beware of lethargy and moral degeneracy which set in gradually on account of sheer neglect of everyone's duty. He appealed to the mothers to take great care to see that their children grew up into good men and women and that they kept away from evil habits such as smoking and drinking. He appealed to them to stick to their religious traditions and not become a victim of the craze of 'modern civilisation', most of which he said was unhealthy, unhygienic and unspiritual. Prayer was all-important; and no one should miss a day's prayer. 'Be good, do good: pray daily' - and you are on the royal road to God-realisation,' he said.

Orient Hall: 'Modern science and philosophic speculation have both confirmed that we are immortal, that matter and energy are also indestructible. Hence there is no doubt in regard to survival after death,' said Swami Venkatesananda, addressing a large gathering in the Orient Hall the same afternoon, under the auspices of the Sanathana Dharma Sabha and the Hindu Temple. The problem of re-incarnation was, therefore, limited to whether this indestructible being assumes another embodiment after death.

The Bhagavad Gita had given a highly optimistic and intelligent reorientation to this concept of life and death. In two verses stressing this truth about reincarnation, Lord Krishna carefully refrained from using the word 'Mrityu' or death. Instead, he referred to it as 'taking on of a new body.' The Swami pleaded for the adoption of this definition which, he said, would immediately take away the sting from death, and would enable man to acquire a healthier outlook on life and death.

The Law of Karma was intimately connected with this law of reincarnation. Man reaped in this incarnation what he sowed in a past incarnation - good or evil. A correct understanding of this law of Karma and of reincarnation was, therefore, imperative to the promotion of the moral consciousness in man and welfare in society. The Swami said that a denial of the fact of reincarnation almost

invariably led to lowering of moral standards.

Till, therefore, man attained salvation or liberation from the cycle of birth and death, he went on living; as a separate individual this was the vital factor to be borne in mind. Birth, childhood, youth, manhood, old age, death, were all events or stages in the process of Life which flowed on and on, till the individual shed his ignorance and realised his identity with God, when he ceased to live as an independent individual, but existed as the Cosmic Being, immortal and Infinite. The Swami felt that there could be heaven or hell in 'those distant planets and stars,' and that the soul which departed from this world need not return to this world itself, unless there was inordinate attachment to something here, but could reincarnate in any one of the other worlds. The ultimate goal was always realization of the Self, which put an end to this cycle of transmigration.

Tongaat: At a meeting of the Ladies' Section of the Divine Life Society here, on August 7th, Swami Venkatesananda asked the women to give up the glamorous idea of 'emancipating themselves from the tyranny of man.' He reminded them that they had a vital role to play in the world, and their duty lay in playing that role satisfactorily. They were not equal to man, but better than him in many respects. 'In fact, you are our first teachers, Gurus. We owe our life, our health and our intelligence to you.' he said.

It was realising this tremendous responsibility that women in ancient days, all over the world, confined themselves to the home, devoting their time and attention to the service of their husbands and to the training of their children. The Swami emphasised that a neglect of this duty would invariably lead to psychological complications in the children and social evils and moral degeneration.

The Swami asked the ladies to spend more and more of their time in studying religious classics, in singing God's Names, in worship, etc., thus setting a healthy example for their children to emulate. He also asked them to study the lives of saints and incarnations of God, and narrate them as bed-time stories to the children, so that these great lessons would be indelibly impressed on the minds of the children.

Tongaat High School: The students of the Tongaat High School listened to Swami Venkatesananda's address to them, with rapt attention, on August 8th. During the course of his address, interspersed with anecdotes from the life of his own Master, Swami Sivananda, and with humorous stories, the Swami asked the students to be good, to pay all attention to their studies, to learn to concentrate their mind by inner self-discipline and control of mind, and assured them that, by so doing, they could become supermen and women. He exhorted them to obey and revere their teachers - a condition pre-requisite for gaining knowledge, he said. The Swami said that concentration of mind was achieved by will power; and will power could be developed by denying the mind (intelligently) what it craved for, and making it do what it did not like, using persuasive methods. Will power was weakened by slavery to mind, its desires and cravings; he exhorted the students to have a great ideal and to work towards the attainment of that ideal, by single-minded application.

Lot 14 Branch

Swami Venkatesananda addressed the members of the Lot 14 Branch of the Divine Life Society the same evening, and asked them to turn to God, through prayer. The simple solution that Swami Sivananda had for all the problems that faced man today was prayer, repetition of the Names of God. This should be coupled with an understanding that God was the sole reality in man, and that man lived, moved, thought, spoke and worked, in the power provided by God. If man felt the presence of God within himself and prayed, he would immediately realise Him. Such communion with God would immediately bring about a radical change in man's very nature, and this was the surest indication of his spiritual progress. If this prayer was restored to the daily life of man, the Swami was sure, man could get over all his miseries and live a life of happiness and peace.

Tongaat Teachers

Swami Venkatesananda appealed to the Teachers of Tongaat district, whom he addressed on August 9th at the Tongaat High School, to realise that they were the moulders of the nation's and the world's destiny. The students who had been entrusted to their care would rule the society of tomorrow, and what that society would be, depended on what the teachers did to their students today.

He asked the teachers to concentrate more on imparting moral and ethical discipline to the students, than on stuffing them with information. This moral and ethical training can best be given by the teacher's own example. The Swami emphasised that a realisation of this responsibility to set a good example to the student would itself act as a life-transformer to the teacher himself. 'Lead a disciplined life for the sake of the students now; and in course of time, your own life would become divine.'

The Swami also pleaded for a more intimate contact between the teacher and the taught, and suggested certain changes in the educational pattern which would bring this about.

August 29th, 1961 - A Fortnight or Religious Meetings

Pietermaritzburg: While the African community is preparing for its major conferences which, begin next week, the Indian community in Pietermaritzburg will begin a fortnight of religious celebrations and lectures.

The celebrations are held under the auspices of the Veda Dharam Sabha, Shri Vishnu Temple, Hindu Street, Samaj and the Gujerathi Vedic Society. Apart from the Lord Krishna Celebrations, the central branch of the Divine Life Society inform me of a lengthy lecture program by the visiting Swami Venkatesananda, who hails from India.

The local secretary of the Divine Life Society, Mr. M.G. Moodley told me that Swami Venkatesananda was born in the Madras Presidency.

His birth was attended by certain significant and peculiar circumstances. Unlike other children, he never cried when he was born, but remained silent. Alter his

studies he accepted a post in the Government Secretariat in New Delhi. The call of the Spirit was irresistible. In 1945 he cut off all bonds, renouncing a promising career and offered himself to His Holiness Swami Sivananda as a disciple.

In 1947 he entered the Holy Order of Sannyasa and now shines as one of the foremost disciples of Swami Sivananda,

Swami Venkatesananda started a series of lectures in South Africa, and has already spoken in other parts of South Africa. He has lectured in South Africa's major universities: Cape Town, Stellenbosch and Rhodes Universities. The Swami will deliver a series of lectures in Pietermaritzburg from September 11 to 16.

September 1st, 1961 - Swami's North Coast Tour

At the Temple at Verulam on August 9th, the Swami addressed the public of Verulam on 'Yoga in Daily Life,' when he said that there was no use hoarding a lot of information about what Yoga was, but one could become a Yogi by putting into practice what little he knew. He asked the people to give up evil habits like smoking and drinking, to be good and to do good, to be more charitable, to love all, and to pray regularly. He also demonstrated the technique of concentration and meditation, and put the audience through a rapid course of training.

Ottawa: Addressing a mass meeting at Ottawa on the 10th evening, Swami Venkatesananda dealt with the importance of Karma Yoga, both for individual salvation and for the welfare of mankind. He pleaded that everyone should identify oneself with all in a practical manner, and get over the twin-currents of Raga (attachment or infatuation) and Dwesha (hatred), so that one would love all equally. He exhorted the older members of his audience to become like children, to be guileless, egoless and spontaneous in their eagerness to serve all and to love all.

Three Schools

Swami Venkatesananda addressed the students of three schools separately on the 11th at the Isnembe Primary School, the Fair Breeze Primary School and the Verulam High School. At the first two Primary Schools, the Swami entertainingly told the children to be good, to do good and to pray to God regularly. HE explained the significance of these teachings with humorous stories; the children responded wonderfully well. At the Verulam High School, The Swami explained that man was not body alone and that 'he who spent all his time and attention in the upkeep of the body is as foolish as the bride who receives as wedding presents flower garlands, dress and diamond ornaments and stuffs the flower garlands into the steel cabinet.' The flowers had their value, so also the dress; but the wise bride knew that the diamond ornaments were the most valuable. Even so, the wise man knew that the body needed attention, and the mind also needed attention; but the soul, like the diamond ornaments, deserved the greatest care and attention. The Swami said that Yoga gave the right place to all the three, improved the physical health of man through the practice of Asanas and

Pranayama, sharpened his intellect and calmed his mind through the practice of concentration, as also study of scriptures, and illumined the soul through meditation and Samadhi. He exhorted the students to take a keen interest in the Yoga-practice.

Tongaat Meeting

On August 12th, the Swami addressed the children of Tongaat at the Temple and exhorted them to cultivate virtues enumerated in Swami Sivananda's 'Song of Eighteen Ities'. Later at Mt. Edgecomb, addressing a meeting of the members of the Divine Life Society, the Swami said that the complicated mind of the modern man always looked for complicated spiritual practices, whereas the remedy for most of man's ills lay in the simple repetition of the Lord's Name. He deprecated the prevalent habit of 'shortening' and otherwise distorting the names of children, and requested the people to call their children by their proper names - which were invariably the names of God. This itself would prove a blessing, he said.

Addressing the ex-Students Club at Tongaat, Swami Venkatesananda asked them ever to be students in the School of Life, to learn more and ever more about themselves and about the world they lived in, so that they could retain the youthfulness of the student. 'The greatest knowledge is Self-Knowledge, and one could be an eternal student if one sought after this knowledge,' said the Swami. At the local theatre in Tongaat, Swami Venkatesananda addressed a mass meeting of the citizens held under the presidentship of Mr. Watson, the Chairman, on the evening of August 13th, when the Swami gave a brief description of the various aspects of Yoga. He dealt with Japa or repetition of God's Name, Yoga Asanas and Pranayama, concentration and meditation. During his talk, Swami Sahajananda, Head of the Divine Life Society of South Africa, demonstrated Yoga Asanas. The audience were put through an exercise in concentration by Swami Venkatesananda.

September 8th, 1961 - Swami and Maulana meet

Swami Venkatesananda and Maulana Anwarul Haq - two men from the East with a common mission - the spiritual awakening of the people, embraced each other when they met for the first time in Durban last week.

September 22nd, 1961 - Swami Venkatesananda visits South Coast

The Umzinto Branch of the Divine Life Society of South Africa celebrated its first anniversary on August 20 that the Vishnu Hall, Umzinto. The highlight of the celebrations was a talk by Swami Venkatesananda of Rishikesh, India. His subject was 'The Divine Life Movement' which was very well received by the mixed crowd of over a 1.000. Although his talk lasted an hour, the large crowd was very attentive, especially to his marked sense of humour; some even stayed behind after the function to learn the art of meditation which the Swami demonstrated. Earlier on August 19th the Swami addressed the people of Port Shepstone at Casa

Cinema. On the 20th itself the Swami addressed meetings at Illovo and Esperanza, besides the one at Umzinto.

Other Memorable Events

During the month of August, the Swami also visited Gandhiji's Ashram in Phoenix and addressed the students of the School there on the 14th. He met Gandhiji's daughter-in-law Sushilaben.

On August 24th, he addressed the Muslim boys of the Orient High School, under the chairmanship of Moulvi Ansari.

Northdene and Mayville Branches of the Divine Life Society accorded him rousing receptions. The Swami also addressed the people - the lower middle class - in the Railway and Magazine Barracks.

Two series of public lectures were organised during this period: (a) on the 12th Chapter of the Gita at the Sivananda Ashram, and (b) Narada Bhakti Sutras at the Natal Tamil Vedic Hall.

The Durban Hindu Temple celebrated the Krishna Janmashtami with a series of lectures by the Swami on the Gita: from August 26th to September 1st. These lectures are being published in book-form separately.

September 2nd, 1961 - Welcome To Swami Venkatesanandaji

For some months now Swami Venkatesanandaji, a famous Acharya of the Divine Life Society, has been in South Africa. The Sangh accorded this great personality a welcome on Saturday, September 2nd, 1961 in the Mahatma Gandhi Hall at 3 .m. Pt. Nardevji Vedalankar, President of the Sangh was in the chair. The garland of welcome was interwoven into a dance performed by girls of a Hindi class. In simple Hindi Swamiji spoke for one hour on 'Indian Culture'. Swamiji believed that our culture was everlasting. Humanity had to be taught the message of humaneness. Social welfare and self purity went hand in hand. We could maintain our culture in South Africa if we gave our time to Satsangs and the acquiring of Knowledge. Our Eastern dressing and our way of living should be retained. Swamiji's speech created a great impression on those who were present.

Ceremony at Reservoir Hills

A crowd of about 5,000 people including many Europeans, attended the opening of the R. 12,000 Yoga Ashram and the Rs. 4,000 free dispensary and clinic of the Divine Life Society of South Africa on its five-acre site in Reservoir Hills, Durban, yesterday, September 3rd, 1961.

The opening coincided with the 75th birthday of Swami Sivananda, of Rishikesh, India, founder of the Divine Life movement, which has branches throughout the world.

The Yoga Ashram, which will house visiting Hindu monks and lecturers from overseas, was opened by Swami Venkatesananda, a disciple of Swami Sivananda, The dispensary and clinic was opened by Dr. G.R. Naidoo.

This ceremony was preceded by Swami Venkatesananda driving through many of

the roads of Durban in an open lorry, with a number of men and women singing Kirtans, and distributing a specially printed leaflet containing Swami Sivananda's spiritual instructions.

Swami Venkatesananda kept the people enthralled during his talk on the life of Swami Sivananda.

Speaking of Swami Sivananda, the founder of the Divine Life Society, he said: 'The Divine Life Society which Swami Sivananda founded is Swami Sivananda himself.'

Of his scholastic career, he said that His Holiness enjoyed a distinguished career and was a brilliant student. He had completed his studies sooner than expected, he said.

'Having qualified as a doctor, Swami Sivananda had flourishing practice in Malaya where he lived a princely life. Swami Sivananda was not concerned with making money but was devotedly interested in the health of the people,' said Swami Venkatesananda.

Continuing his talk on the life of Swami Sivananda, he said that Swami Sivananda was always guided by the principle 'that service is worship.' So great was this desire to be of service to humanity that he renounced all earthly attachments, gave up everything, and proceeded to Benares to lead an austere life.

A remarkable episode in his life was that he got himself employed as a domestic servant to a local post master, so that he would have sufficient time for meditation. When the post master learned that the man he employed was no ordinary man, he asked him to resign forthwith and stay with him as his guest. Swami Sivananda who could have led a comfortable life, gave up all his earthly possessions, so that he could spread the message of peace and love, said Swami Venkatesananda.

Pietermaritzburg: The Swami spent six extremely busy days at Pietermaritzburg from 11 to 16 September, addressing three to four public meetings a day. He addressed the students of all the main Schools in the City, visited all the D.L.S. Branches, and also addressed public meetings at the Lotus Hall, the Vedic Temple, and Northdale. He also conducted concentration and meditation classes to several groups of students. He met Mr. Charles Dickens, the grandson of the famous novelist of the same name, here.

September, 1961 - Summing Up

Endowed with a never-failing sense of wit and humour, always sweet, humble and affectionate, readily adaptable and eager to serve those who need his guidance - this in short is the picture of Swami Venkatesananda, described by our Master as the 'crest-jewel of the Divine Life Mission.'

The visit of this devoted disciple of His Holiness Sri Swami Sivananda to South Africa is indeed a boon to this country. Ever since his arrival in Durban on June 6th, Swamiji has been thrilling the hearts of thousands of seekers of truth. Even those who had only a casual interest in spiritual matters have been awakened to the glory of Divine Life after listening to his illuminating lectures.

Vedanta and Hindu religion have in the past been given to us in language which

is hardly understood by the lay-man. Here is Swamiji, giving us the same lofty and subtle thoughts in his simple, homely style, illustrated by means of anecdotes, stories and analogies, for the easy understanding of all. Herein lies the secret of Swamiji's success. He comes to the level of the ordinary man, and awakens his interest in religion and philosophy.

Besides having a thorough knowledge of Hindu religion and the science of Yoga, Swamiji is also well equipped to give practical guidance. This was well evidenced, when during his lecture-tour of the Republic, Swamiji conducted many meditation classes with very large audiences. At every meeting he got the wholehearted co-operation of his audience.

Sri Gurudev always says that man's real nature is all-goodness, whatever his superficial attitude may appear to be. Secondly, the basic urge in all of us, 'whatever be our religion, nationality or temperament, is the search for everlasting happiness'. The large number of Europeans who listened to Swamiji's lectures with rapt attention and participated in the meditation and Pranayama exercises showed how deep the craving for real, lasting happiness was. No less than six Mayors and Mayoresses welcomed Swamiji to their cities, with all cordiality and courtesy. The mayors of Kimberley and Uitenhage, in particular, were eager to know more about Yoga. At the Stellenbosch University, Swamiji spoke to the Professors on Vedanta. So interested were the Professors that they questioned Swamiji at length on Yoga, and some of them later attended his lecture at the Capetown City Hall. It is no easy task to talk on the lofty philosophy of Vedanta, a philosophy in which the human mind takes its highest flights. Those of us who heard Swamiji talk on this subject really marveled at the ease with which he handled it, and made it comprehensible even to Westerners. During the past several months, Swamiji has delivered his lectures in English, Hindi, Tamil and even in Telugu. He is also conversant with Bengali and Gujerati. Swamiji has the rare gift of feeling the pulse of his audience. The theme of his lecture is admirably suited to the type of audience he addresses. Whether they be women, men or children, Swamiji wins them over with his humour and charm. Groups of teachers who listened to him were not at all hesitant in joining him in singing Kirtans.

It was a great joy to listen to Swamiji's lectures on the Bhagavad Gita and Narada Bhakti Sutras. Being well acquainted with Sanskrit, Swamiji is able to bring out the hidden truths of these great scriptures very effectively.

It is our humble prayer that the Master's Grace shall continue to pour out through his worthy disciple for the spiritual welfare of all seekers of truth.

CHAPTER TWO - THE MISSION SPREADS

Northern Transvaal

The second tour of the Republic which commenced on September 18th, 1961, had Pretoria as its first Centre. The Swami addressed a number of meetings here between the 18th and the 22nd, including one at the Theosophical Society and several at the local temple Hall.

From Pretoria to Pietersburg on the 23rd, where the Swami addressed a Muslim audience on 'Islam and Vedanta', bringing out their unity.

At Louis Trichardt on the 24th, the Swami addressed several meetings as a result of which a Branch of the Divine Life Society was formed.

He then returned to Pretoria, from where he visited Brits, too.

He left for Cape Town September 28th.

September 30th, 1961 - Swami amazed by 'Wonderful Response' here

Cape Town: Swami Venkatesananda returned to Cape Town last night after a lightning tour of the major centers of the Republic, astounded by the 'wonderful response' and kindness shown to him by Whites and non-Whites.

Wearing flowing ochre robes and walking barefooted, the Swami told a Cape Times reporter that he would give further lectures throughout the country before returning to India in February.

He emphasized the urgency for men and women to turn more to God, if peace and happiness were what they were seeking. By thinking more of God, people would learn to live together in harmony.

Swami Venkatesananda will speak on education and its principles at the University of Cape Town on Tuesday night. On Sunday he will lecture at the Palace Theatre in Salt River at 2.30 pm.

With him is Swami Shankarananda, who is an expert on yoga exercises. He will give demonstrations at the lectures.

Swami Venkatesananda is in Cape Town as a guest of the Divine Life Society. Since his last visit to the city in July, a White branch of the Society has been formed and members meet once a week to practice yoga.

October 3rd, 1961 - Lots of Love in South Africa, He Finds

Swami Venkatesananda, a Hindu priest who is visiting South Africa, said today that he had encountered a great feeling of love among men and women of all races in South Africa.

There need not, and should not, be any conflict between the various religions, he said. And a man's religion need not be a barrier to his attaining that important attribute of being able to love mankind universally. 'The Spirit in all religions is the same,' he said.

'And, if I believed in such a thing as absolute sin, I would say it was an absolute sin to disturb what religion a man has.

'Let us not break down what already exists and try to substitute something which

cannot possibly be as deeply rooted.

'While the new thing is growing an enormous amount of damage can be done. It is only when a man has no religion at all that we should extend a hand and try to guide him. Until that time each of us should worry only about our own lives, trying to develop the ideal of love for all men, faith in God and the vision of simple goodness in all things.'

The Swami will give a public lecture on the meaning of education in the science lecture theatre at the University of Cape Town at 8.15 this evening.

October 4th, 1961 - 'Moral Side Is Neglected'

Swami Venkatesananda told in a meeting at the University of Cape Town last night that although modern man had so much knowledge, it had not made him wiser because the moral side of education was neglected.

The meeting, presided over by Mr. J.P. Duminy, Principal of the University, was one of several which the visiting Swami is giving during his stay in Cape Town. The Swami said that man was stuffing his head with knowledge; but unless knowledge made him wiser it was merely information. Education, however, meant the systematic training of the moral faculties of man first and then later the intellectual faculties.

October 5th, 1961.

Knowledge had become perverted in the modern world because it lacked the necessary moral basis, Swami Venkatesananda, the Hindu priest, told a meeting at the University of Cape Town.

The Swami said the true definition of education was 'the systematic training of the moral and intellectual faculties.'

'We have forgotten the essential part of this definition and concentrated on acquiring masses of information with no moral hacking.'

Child Christened

Swami Venkatesananda of Rishikesh, India, last night christened the son of Mr. and Mrs. Tony Morgan at their home in Silver Town, Athlone, and became the child's godfather. Mrs. R. Moodley of Athlone, who holds baby Krishna, is the godmother.

Broadcast

Swami Venkatesananda was interviewed by the South African Broadcasting Corporation on October 6th; the interview was later broadcast from the Cape Town and the Johannesburg Stations of the SABC.

October 6th, 1961 - Swami Visits Our Parow Works

Swami Venkatesananda visited the Cape Times Parow works on October 6th with

a disciple from a monastery in Natal.

They gave Mr. E.A. Catesby, Assistant General Manager, two books printed by voluntary workers at the monastery. The printing and binding of both are of a high standard.

Mr. Catesby found the Swami's views on life and religion extremely interesting and feels that his tolerance and open-mindedness are perhaps an example to many.

The Swami said he was enjoying his visit to South Africa and had not encountered any antagonism against himself as a non-White.

Johannesburg Again

Swami Venkatesananda paid his second visit to Johannesburg where he stayed from October 8th to 28th. Besides a number of public lectures at the Patidar Hall, the Swami conducted a Gita class for ladies in Hindi in the afternoon, and for men in English at night in the same Hall from October 16th to 20th. The discourses were based on the Chapter 12 of The Bhagavad Gita.

A spiritual picnic was organised by the members of the Divine Life Society on the October 10th - with Bhajans, Kirtans, discourses, etc. - on Mia's Farm.

Several organisations like the Theosophical Society, the Roodepoort Seva Samaj, the Veda Dharma Sabha, Ramakrishna Centre, etc., received the Swami and heard him on various topics.

On October 22nd, the Swami visited Pretoria again and lectured on 'Practice of Yoga' to a large audience at the Empire Theatre. The next day he spoke at African High School.

On the 24th, he addressed a meeting at Springs, which was presided over by the Mayor of Springs.

On the 25th, he addressed the Muslim Society on 'Brotherhood'. And on the 27th, he gave the last lecture to a predominantly European gathering at Auden House.

October 26th, 1961 - East Meets West

Yoga, both the philosophy and the physical practice of it, seems to have attracted the interest of many people in this country. In Springs, about 15 women attend Yoga exercise classes regularly, and on Tuesday night, at the Selcourt home of Mrs. Rose Hagan, two Swamis spoke about the philosophy and the physical practice of Yoga.

A Swami is a teacher of Yoga. Or, rather, he is a priest, because he is concerned with God and everything that will enable him to 'achieve Oneness with God'. Standing on your head is only one of the many exercises which must be practised to make the body fit. With practice, your body can be contorted into all kinds of shapes, each enabling a portion of it to become 'fit'.

Mrs. Ottie Friedman, an attractive blond, dressed in a leotard, demonstrated many of the unusual postures yogis can achieve.

But even more interesting than the physical efforts needed to practice yoga was the philosophy. It is so very seldom that you meet a man who is truly religious. But that night, I listened to Swami Venkatesananda (an Indian) attempting to

explain the mysteries of yoga, and he was truly religious. He was not a fanatic, nor did he lay down dogmatic laws. He explained rather how to 'get to God'. And his attitude showed more than anything else the difference between East and West.

November 3rd, 1961 - A Diwali Message by His Holiness Swami Venkatesananda

Durban: In the present atomic age, it is last growing out of fashion to talk of anything that cannot be proved by scientific instruments. What is surprising, however, is that the scientists of today who feel that the scientists of the previous generation were ignorant of what even the elementary text-books contain today, declare that what he has been able to prove today is final and conclusive. It is heartening nevertheless, that the greatest among the scientists do admit that beyond the frontiers of present scientific knowledge, there stretches a vast domain beyond the reach of scientific instruments and perhaps of even the finite human intellect.

It is the Grace of God that we are slowly being awakened to the supremacy of the subtle over the gross, of the invisible over the visible, of the spirit over matter. This is the true religious spirit, the Light on the Path of human life. With this Light, our Life becomes fruitful. Without it, we walk blindfolded in the dark and dreary world, deluded and deceived by various fancies and phantoms, weighted down by cares and anxieties, and steadily gliding down into the abyss of moral degeneracy, spiritual suicide, chaos and confusion in the whole world.

When this light is lit in the heart of man, he discovers a new meaning to life. In the Light of Truth, the world appears as a manifestation of God clothed in a variety of names and forms, and all human activity and social relationship as the working of the divine play. This discovery leads him to the recovery of peace of mind and of the knowledge of his real nature.

The lighting of this lamp is symbolized by the Deepavali, which is celebrated by the people of India all over the world. The human being is Spirit clothed in form. Even so, he likes his religious life to be a radiant spirit clothed in colorful form. Hence we have the numerous feasts and festivals in India, each one a wonderful spirit clothed in colorful form. Deepavali is one of them.

All the festivals are multi-purposeful. They have a deep spiritual import. They have a social purpose, and a personal meaning. Deepavali too. Whatever be the social status or economic position of the man, he has new clothes for himself and his wife and children. There is gaiety in the air, feeling of light-heartedness, since periodic release from tension is an extremely healthy freedom from a life of seemingly endless cares, worries and anxieties. The man of wisdom can capture this spirit and make it his own forever, if only he discriminates and as a consequence surrenders himself to the will of God, accepting his lot with cheerful resignation. If man can be happy for a day, he can be happy for ever, provided he is able to make the necessary mental conditioning or adjustment. What is the adjustment or conditioning? It is lighting the lamp of wisdom. It is the wisdom to realise that God created the world and a lot of work in it; but man created his own cares, worries and anxieties. Deepavali teaches him that lesson.

Mythologically, Deepavali is the day on which the Lord slew Narakasura. The anniversary of this event is celebrated every year. This Narakusura has found a seat for himself in many human hearts today. There is, therefore, great need for the Message of the Deepavali today. Let us not forget that the darkest hour is before the dawn. As is done on the Deepavali day, if we daily wake up at dawn and pray for light, it is bound to descend into us. In this life itself we can witness the dawn of the Light of God-realisation, even as the early riser on the morning of the Deepavali day witnesses the darkest hour, the dawn and the rising sun. It is not impossible if we apply ourselves to our own moral and spiritual regeneration. May the Light of Truth be lit in the hearts of all the people of South Africa, on this glorious Deepavali day.

Swami Venkatesananda addressed many public meetings in connection with Deepavali - at Cavendish, Surat Hindu Association, etc.

Second visit to East London

Swami Venkatesananda visited East London again from November 9th to 15th, during which he contacted many Indian and European seekers and addressed a public meeting held at the City Hall on November 13th, presided over by Mayor Roberts.

Durban: Swami Venkatesananda addressed another Rotary Luncheon meeting on November 2nd. On November 5th, 1961, he led a 'Nagar Kirtan' when he, along with a number of men and women, went out on the back of an open lorry singing Kirtan and distributing spiritual literature. The lorry was stopped at a number of junctions and the Swami gave a short talk to those around.

The Swami addressed the public of Pinetown on the 19th: the meeting was presided over by the Mayor Hans Dettman. It was an extremely busy day. He rushed back to Durban to speak at a Farewell Meeting organised in honour of Maulana Anwarul Haq, at the Kajee Hall. Immediately the Swami was rushed to the Clairwood Sports Ground, where he addressed it mammoth gathering at a Symposium organised by the Arabic Study Circle on 'The Philosophy of Religion'.

November 24th, 1961 - Philosophy of Religion

Being a gist of a speech at the Symposium at Clairwood.

Philosophy is the love of wisdom: this word 'wisdom' is very different from 'knowledge' with which it is often confused.

It is knowledge that enables you to bake bread, but it is wisdom that enables you to know when to eat it. With that bread you may save your life, when you are starved; with the same bread you may kill yourself if you were suffering from serious digestive trouble and still ate it. Hence, by philosophy we understand that knowledge which would enable us to save ourselves - in other words, knowledge of God, of His Creation, and of our own selves.

Religion is applied philosophy. If even this wisdom is allowed to serve only as a glittering burden, far from saving us, it will serve only as a milestone around our necks. Religion, therefore, binds us - binds us to God, and since God is Omnipresent - to the welfare of all beings.

In India, this is regarded as Dharma. The name 'Hinduism' was derived from geography: the religious practices of the people who inhabited the land of the Indus river. They - the seers of Truth who had actual direct perception of the Reality - perception which should not be associated with visual perception through the fleshy eyes, but which is intuitional and therefore super-sensuous, sought for the highest wisdom. This wisdom is enshrined in the Upanishads. And, they - the Yogis - applied that wisdom to life itself, and the resultant practices were regarded as those of the Hindu religion.

They had very broad vision. The vision of Truth that they had, had no frontiers. Their religion had no doors. As they migrated southwards, they absorbed everything good, as they went. No 'alien' faith could invade them, for in their eyes, no one was alien. Everyone was absorbed, so voracious was their spiritual hunger. So avaricious were they of true wisdom that they were ready to grasp it wherever it was found. They recognised the Ultimate Reality to be transcendental, and Infinite, and conceded that this Infinite could have infinite points from which it could be viewed in infinite ways.

This, then, was their conception of God. He is One. He is Infinite. He is Eternal. Eko Devah Sarvabhuteshu Gudah - God is One. He is hidden in all. Isavasyam Idam Sarvam - God pervades all this. Yatcha kinchit Jagat Sarvam Shruyate Shruyate-api vaa Antar Bahis cha tat sarvam Vyaapya Narayana Sthitah - Whatever there is here which is seen or heard is pervaded inside and outside by God. He is the all pervading Reality.

In other words, this was their sublime vision of the Reality - that God and God alone exists. In one of the most glorious works of India 'The Yoga Vasistha', there is a very bold declaration that the world we see around us is a delusive appearance. On the face of it, it seems to be impossible. But the Rishi (seer) gives us a concrete illustration. The blue dome of unbreakable glass that seems to cover the earth we live in - you and I know it is empty space. The eyes can deceive us - as in a mirage.

Having asserted this, the Rishi does not sit on his high pedestal expecting all of its to do the impossible or stomach this philosophy. He knew that the little, impure, finite mind of the layman could not grasp this subtle truth. He was not a totalitarian dictator, but an all-compassionate benefactor of mankind. Never losing sight of the Ultimate Truth, he yet bent low to give a helping hand to mankind and said: 'Think of God in any way you like, worship in any manner you like - but think of God. Be devoted to God.'

In one of the most thrilling and inspiring sentences, he said: 'Ekam Sat, Vipraa Bahudhaa Vadanihi' - Truth or God is One, but the wise ones describe - only describe, not experience - Him variously. This was obviously necessary for the understanding of people at all levels of intelligence, people of different tastes and temperaments. We shall presently see how this helps us in spiritual practice. Having expounded the truth about God, the Rishis now turned their gaze to the existence of the world. Let us not here narrow our vision down to this little earth of ours. Even the scientists who scan the 'beyond' with a little telescope are astounded at what exists in the 'heavens' and regard this earth as a mud-pill. What the Rishis concerned themselves with was the entire creation; even when they used the word 'earth' it was only to refer to the earth-plane or solid

phenomena - matter.

We have seen already that God is One and Infinite. The Infinite precludes the existence of something other outside it. Oneness precludes manyness within or without. The Rishi saw the Truth, intuitively, and not sensually, and he declared that when we open our eyes, we actually see God; but due to the fact that our vision is veiled by ignorance or non-understanding, instead of seeing God the Reality, we see the world which is an appearance. Instead of Seeing the One, we see the many.

The Rishis go further than this, and explain that this creation is God's Nature. This word 'nature' has unfortunately come to be used independently by philosophers, causing a lot of misunderstanding everywhere. What is nature? Let us take for instance heat is the nature of fire. Can we, by any stretch of our imagination, conceive of heat without fire, or some such source? Heat and fire are inseparable, one. As a matter of fact, what we call Nature is God's Nature, and it is the independent (absurd) use of this word that has given rise to and promoted the growth of materialism.

This view is shared by one of the greatest Muslim thinkers of India, Sir Mohammad Iqbal who says in his 'Reconstruction of Religious thought in Islam': 'Nature is to the Divine Self as character is to the human being. In the picturesque phrase of the Quran, it is the habit of Allah.'

Creation is God's Nature. Why did God make manifest His nature or create it? He Who is One, Infinite, Eternal and All-Full, could have had no wish to be fulfilled by manifesting this Nature here. The sages explain: Loka vat tu leela Kaivalyam - this creation is His Play. Let us not forget that this explanation relates to the origin of creation. In play He created it; and it is maintained with a definite Divine Purpose which is described in Srimad Bhagavatam as the spiritual evolution of Man.

Diversity, imperfection, finitude and evil exist - not in the world, but in the vision of the mind or the heart of the perceiver. When the heart is purified, then Nature - God's Nature - shines as Divine Light itself.

It is now easy to see where we stand. Every speck of creation is pervaded by God and is clothed (a word used to help understanding) by His Nature. Man shares this. Created in the image of God - in the words of the Holy Bible - man has God as his centre and his Nature, as his circumference. Perhaps we can derive a lesson from this symbolism of the 'image.' When we hold up a mirror in front of us, we see our image in it. We look at the image: and it looks back at us. That is our foremost duty here as the image of God - to have our gaze constantly turned towards God, to look at God always. But man turned away from God. The hemisphere that turns away from the sun is enveloped by darkness. Man, when he turns away from God, is deluded, and he suffers.

The Omnipresence of God is the soul of man. The Omnipotence of God is the free-will in him. The Omniscience of God is the voice of conscience in him. God's Nature provides him with his causal, astral and physical bodies.

Man, when he turned away from God, assumed an existence, independent of God. I-ness was the result. God created him to be one of the players on the vast playground of the universe; and He had also set the goal to be achieved, viz., realisation of the Truth or God. But, man resorted to foul-play. He had the free-

will in him - he could be an angel, he could be a human being, or he could be an animal.

He chose to do good sometimes, and to do evil sometimes. Free-will was like a seed given to a man. If he threw it into fire, it would not germinate; if he sowed it on earth, it would grow and yield a harvest for him to reap. If the free-will had been offered into the fire of wisdom of Self-realisation, then man would have attained God. Since he sowed the seeds of virtue and vice, he reaps the harvest of pain and pleasure.

As this foul-play goes on, God, in His Supreme Compassion, sends someone to guide man.

These 'guides' come to remind man of his goal. They are from God and of God. The Rishi of India has something very interesting to say about these prophets, saviours and Gurus. They are from God, no doubt. But God is not the head of a state, a person who could send someone else to this world as his ambassador. God is Cosmic Being. When this Cosmic Being 'sends' down someone to come into our midst, he is not other than God Himself - a chip off the block. Hence the Indian regards these prophets, saviours, and gurus as the manifestations of God Himself, as Avataras or incarnations of God.

Even here, the Indian is extremely broad-minded. When Lord Buddha attained enlightenment, the Indian took him over as an incarnation of God. Similarly, in our own times, my own Master and his followers, regard Lord Jesus as an Avatar or Incarnation of God, Prophet Mohammad as an incarnation of God. Our Master Sri Swami Sivananda, sings all their Names during prayer-gatherings.

What is the nature of the guidance given by these men-of-God? This depends upon what the prevailing situation demands. As in the case of a play, it depends upon where the foul-play took place, to determine what the next move should be. Hence, superficially, the teachings of these great prophets, saviours and gurus seem to differ, though fundamentally they all have the one aim of directing our life to its goal of Self-realisation.

We have seen that turning away from God is the curse of Mankind. Hence these prophets and sages redirect our gaze God-ward. It has been pointed out that I-ness is the root cause of our miseries. Therefore, these saviours of mankind ask us to be unselfish, ego-less, and humble.

'Turning to God' on the basis of the concept of God as the Ultimate Truth, Infinite, Eternal One, is and has always been regarded as the ideal in India. The Upanishads give elaborate instructions in this direction. But to the layman, uninitiated into the mysteries of meditation, to the man in the street who has yet not mastered his mind and senses, this path is invisible. When he attempts to understand the Truth as the One, Infinite, Eternal God, he does not get God, but only sleep. Shall we let him sleep?

The compassionate sage says 'No.' It is the sage's mission to awaken the slumbering. Hence, he comes down to the level of the common man and gives him a helping hand. Lord Jesus spoke in parables, so that his messages could be understood by his followers. Our sages gave us most inspiring and interesting stories relating to God in the Puranas at the same time creating many vivid pictures of God which the earnest seeker after God might devote himself to.

These are supplementary to the Upanishads, and the stories invariably lead on to

the sublime truths of the Upanishads.

Supplementary, even to this Puranas or stories of God, are the Agmas or text-books of worship. Symbols or images of God are described in these, and the method of their worship elaborated. It is easy to criticise them, but difficult to replace them. The finite mind cannot comprehend the Infinite. To what then shall man turn? To what then shall he 'bind himself' as religion implies? The sages never encouraged the worshipper to regard the image itself as God or as God being limited to the image. The image is a symbol. The worshipper approached God through it. And, yet, it would be sheer blasphemy to say that the Omnipresent God does not dwell in that image. It is perhaps human nature to think of God in its own image. Strangely enough there have been numerous instances in which the Yogi has had visions of God in and through such images. We have no right to disbelieve them. It would be blasphemy again to deny the Omnipotent God the right to appear as He wills, in answer to the prayer of the devotee.

Let us make no mistake about this idol-worship. Our sages did not encourage the seeker to stop there. They did not ask him to regard the idol as the only God. When an idol broke, the devotee did not go into mourning. He made another and worshipped it. This is proof enough that with the idol God did not die for the devotee, and that he did not regard it as God, but only as a symbol of God, as an image of God.

Only he who sincerely aspires to walk the path to God-realisation will understand the utility of these images and symbols. 'They jest at scars, that never felt a wound.'

From the idol worship the seeker was gradually guided towards the goal. He was told that Manasic Puja (mental worship) was superior to physical worship. The image jumped into his heart, and he offered worship to the image there.

This was not all. One more step had to be climbed. When the image of God was enshrined in the heart where the little 'I' ruled, God kicked the 'I-ness' out. With it, the evil of ignorance was rent asunder. The seeker was asked to open his eyes and perceive God as the Omnipresent Reality. This is called Para Puja or Supreme Worship. At this stage, the Yogi regarded all that he did as worship of God Who is in all.

This is Yoga - recognition of the oneness of all beings. The Indian sage's ideal was not even brotherhood, but Selfhood. In the words of Lord Jesus: 'Love thy Neighbour as thy own self.' He sees his own Self in all, and all in his own Self. In all this spiritual endeavour, the Indian sage does not indulge in disturbing anyone's faith, never attempt, to convert one from one's own religion, What is needed is an inner transformation, a change of heart, a turning away from the deceptive appearance to the eternal Reality - and hence the religion of the 'Hindus' is called Sanathana Dharma. The conversion that this religion aims at is the conversion of man from wickedness to goodness. Incidentally, it would be of interest to know that in 'Hinduism' - which is a ritual for the most trivial happenings in our life - there is no ceremony for 'conversion to Hinduism.' My Master, Sri Swami Sivananda, among whose disciples and followers there are people belonging to various religions, boldly declares that what we need today is to make a man of a man, to lead him away from the path of vice and self-

destruction, to instill compassion in his heart, to enable him to purify his heart and mind, and to see God or oneness in all - to love all, serve all, feeling the presence of God in all. His teaching - 'Divine Life' - makes a Christian a true follower of Lord Jesus, a Jew a real adherent of Judaism, a Moslem a staunch member of Islam. He proclaims goodness as the heart of real religion. 'Be good, do good', he says, and these four words sum up the essentials of all religions. Man, when he thus surrenders his free-will to God, shines as an image of God here, and as an embodiment of all that is good and holy, full of love for all, ready to play 'the good Samaritan' to all beings. This surrender is the essence of religion, be it Christianity - remember the words of Lord Jesus 'Thy will, not mine, be done', Islam - the very name means surrender to the will of God, or the religion of India.

All roads lead to Rome, says the proverb. We believe in it. Everyone is proceeding towards the same Goal. Sooner or later we shall reach it. And, if we do not reach the goal in this incarnation itself, we shall continue our journey in another. If we do not complete a piece of work tonight, we shall take it up again and complete it tomorrow. The word 'death' has led to a lot of misunderstanding in the Gita. It has been significantly paraphrased as 'obtainment of another body', and there is nothing to worry about. It is another stage of life - in line with childhood, youth, manhood, and old age. The spirit in us is immortal. It shall reach the goal - God. This thought is echoed by Sir Mohammad Iqbal: 'In view of the past history of man, it is highly improbable that his career should come to an end with the dissolution of his body.'

'Heaven and Hell are states, not localities. The descriptions in the Quran are visual representations of an inner fact, i.e., character. Hell, in the words of the Quran, is 'God's kindled fire which mounts above the hearts' - the painful realisation of one's failure as a man. Heaven is the joy of triumph over the forces of disintegration. There is no such thing as eternal damnation in Islam. Life is one and continuous. Man marches always onwards to receive ever fresh illuminations from an infinite Reality.'

The confusion seems to be centered around the question: 'Shall we come back to this earth?' In view of what I have said earlier about the magnitude of the universe, it seems a pity that we should still bother ourselves about coming back to this earth - even though recent para-psychological research and several scientifically proved cases of people who could remember their own past incarnation here on this very earth, do not preclude such a possibility. We continue to live beyond the grave, wearing new clothes suited to our further evolution. And there is not a trace of doubt about this.

What we sow here, we reap in the next birth. And, when the sowing ceases, through true wisdom or knowledge of God, then we become one with Him, we cease to be the little 'I', and God and He alone exists.

This is the goal. Let its never forget this. This goal cannot be reached till we purify ourselves. An impure heart cannot approach God. The urgent need today is to take man away from the path of evil - drinking, gambling, cruelty, selfishness and hatred, to take him away from the 'idolatry of the currency note' - the worst of all blasphemies, and to take him away from the worship of the flesh. The urgent need is to promote goodwill in his heart, love for all fellow beings, and to

encourage him to express this love in selfless service and charity. Man has slumbered enough and wandered enough from God. May, by the Grace of God, he 'arise, awake, and learn the Truth from the lips of the Holy Men of God', in the words of the Kathopanishad.

January 5th, 1962 - Naming Ceremony

Sivavenkatesa Srikanathan, son of Mr. and Mrs. V. Soobian Pillay, was named at a ceremony by Swami Venkatesananda, on Saturday, December 16th, 1961. The ceremony which was attended by close members of the family was held at the residence of Mr. and Mrs. A. V. Govender, 16, Henwood Rd, Durban.

January 5th, 1962 - Fine Welcome for Veena Player

Mr. S. Nantha, who returned from India after a period of study of the veena, was accorded a rousing welcome at the Vedic Hall by Durban's Indian community, on December 10th, 1961.

Speaking at the reception, the Chairman of the South Indian Music Advancement Association. Mr. N.C. Naidoo, thanked the hundreds of people who helped to see the project through. He said his committee would cease to function when it was inaugurated, but he went on to suggest that a committee, possibly on a broader basis, could be set up to help other deserving aspirants with bursaries and study grants.

Other speakers were Mr. P. R. Pather and Dr. Tirupurasundari. Swami Venkatesananda also spoke and praised Mr. Nantha's performance on the veena. He said he knew Mr. Nantha's teacher, Sri Kalyana Krishna Bhagavatar as a musician of high repute. Swamiji said that Mr. Nantha was fortunate to be tutored by one so great in music.

On the same day, Swami Venkatesananda addressed two other public meetings (at Saiva Sidhanta Sangham and at Sea View) and took part in two private ceremonies.

February 2nd, 1962 - The Graphic

Mrs. A. Pillay, a well-known Indian woman who will be publishing a book on Sixty-Three Nainaars shortly, is seen garlanding Swami Venkatesananda at the opening of the Sydenham Branch of the Divine Life Society of South Africa at Clare Estate on December 31st 1961. Others in the picture are Vic Pillay, P.R. Maharajh and M.S. Naidoo.

Divine Life Knocks At Your Door

During the last two months of 1961, Swami Venkatesananda concentrated more on visiting individual seekers in their houses, holding small-scale intimate Satsangs, where the seekers (both Indian and European) could have their doubts cleared and receive personal instructions.

The Swami also visited a number of the Branches of the Divine Life Society.

Besides these, he type-set Gurudev's book 'Sixty-three Nayanar Saints' which was printed during this period at the Sivananda Ashram Press. A memorable event was the Swami's visit to the Marianhill Church on the night of December 24th, when he attended the Midnight Mass in connection with Holy Christmas.

January 5th, 1962 - Birthday of Sri Swami Venkatesananda

Sri Swami Venkatesananda will celebrate his birthday at the Sivananda Ashram on Saturday January 6th, 1962. The Divine Life Society of South Africa has arranged for a public celebration of this function and has included other items associated with the Society in the program.

At 12-noon on Saturday the Society will feed the needy. From 2.30 pm. the program for the afternoon is as follows: the celebrations for the Swamiji's Birthday; Fifth anniversary of the press; Institution of Gita Printing. On Saturday evening Swami Venkatesananda will address the gathering.

The Swamiji will deliver an address on 'Yoga for Peace and Happiness' at the Durban City Hall on Sunday, January 7th at 2.30 pm., at a meeting presided over by Councillor Bolton. The Swami will give the commentary on a practical demonstration of Yoga Asanas.

Intense Activity In The New Year

The tactics were slightly altered, since Swami Venkatesananda had been permitted by the Government to stay in the country for 3 years. Instead of visiting centers and institutions and talking to isolated groups, more systematic propaganda work was organised from the New Year, though occasional visits to new centers were also organised.

The Swami paid his first visit to Zululand early in January and on the 13th, addressed a gathering in Amatikulu.

On the 14th, at Stanger, the Swami addressed a Public meeting, presided over by the Mayor of Stanger.

He addressed the Spiritualist Church in Pietermaritzburg on January 21st, and the 'Acquarius Rising' Group on February 8th and 9th.

From January 22nd to 28th, the Swami went round Merebank daily in an open lorry, with a number of men and women, singing Kirtan and delivering short talks en route. On each evening, he addressed a Public Meeting in the area, and the talks were 'graded' presentation of the Science of Yoga, so that the people who attended the entire series had a basic idea of what Yoga meant.

Similarly, from January 29th to February 4th, the Swami lectured in Clairwood. The way rain behaved during this period proved beyond doubt that God's and Gurudev's Grace was with the venture; often clouds were hanging overhead during the Nagar-kirtan, but it did not rain till all the people were inside the hall. Later, too, the rain stopped when the people were ready to go home.

The same procedure was carried out in Greenwood Park area between February 27th March 3rd.

The Swami paid a second visit to Escourt and Dundee on February 24th and

25th.

From March 20th to 31st of that month, the Swami was in Tongaat, when he addressed nearly all the Schools in the area and several older organisations. He also took part in a Sadhana Camp organised by the Divine Life Society on the Tongaat Beach.

The Sanathana Dharma Sabha, Natal, celebrated Sri Ramanavami at the Durban Hindu Temple from April 5th to 13th, and invited the Swami to lecture on the Ramayana every night.

On April 12th, Swami Venkatesananda addressed the members of the Students' Union of the University of Natal, on Yoga.

From April 16th to 22nd, he conducted a special class for selected Indian School Teachers, at the Ashram, to give them the background of Hindu Philosophy, Religion and Scriptures - with special reference to Hindu Religious Education in Natal Schools.

During the period, at the Ashram, the Swami also set the types for 'Hindu Fasts and Festivals' printed there.

June 1969 - Swami Venkatesananda's Tour

Transvaal: Swami Venkatesananda toured the Transvaal for the 3rd time in May-June, 1962, and visited all the Branches of the Divine Life Society. He went as far north as the Rhodesian border.

In Johannesburg, the following were the main features of the tour program;

- (a) Meditation classes from 5 to 6 am. which were attended by a number of Indian and European aspirants:
- (b) Special forenoon Satsangs for Indian ladies:
- (c) Visits to the 'poor' areas like Boksburg, where, thanks to the munificence and dynamic selfless service of Srimathi Iris Kavin, Srimathi Ambujam Pather and Sri Chitubhai Patel, blankets, food-stuffs and provisions were distributed to the poor, and a Satsang has also been organised.

We thank everyone responsible for the success of the tour, especially Sri and Srimathi Chitubhai, who were the Swami's hosts, and Sri Bhanabhaj who was with the Swami throughout his stay in Johannesburg.

The Swami also addressed a number of meetings in Pretoria, Pietersburg (where the audience was predominantly Muslim), and Louis Trichardt. All this was organised by Sri Narottam Tanna (who was the Swami's loving host at Pretoria) and Sri Bhicka Chiba. To all of them our grateful thanks.

June 15th, 1962 - Hindu Religion Interests Whites

Surprisingly, the Hindu religion is gathering followers among Whites in Johannesburg and elsewhere in the Transvaal. Afrikaners, Jews and English-speaking sit together in common worship with Indians.

I was amazed at the number of Whites who have acquired Hindu mannerisms and traditional way of worship. Many have become vegetarians and chant Hindu prayers and prostrate themselves at the feet of their Guru (spiritual teacher) as devout Hindus do.

This does not mean, however, that they have abandoned their respective religions. Hinduism, they explained, is an 'all-embracing religion' and by following this spiritual path they have 'found peace of mind in a world of tensions caused by man's excessive greed for material possessions.'

May 5th, 1962 - Indian Swami's Treatment Helpful, Says Reader

'Curious,' Cape Town, writes: 'I had an attack of coronary thrombosis about two years ago, and afterwards was given a diet without animal fats together with pills to lengthen the time of coagulation of the blood. I also got tablets of nitroglycerine to put under my tongue for attacks of pain. Living reasonably quietly, I found I kept fairly fit. Three months ago I met an Indian Swami who gave me spiritual advice and special breathing exercises. He told me to give up all drugs, but to continue with the diet. Recently I had my blood tested and found, to my astonishment that the coagulation time was still prolonged, though I had stopped taking the prescribed pills. Can you tell me how this is brought about?' That is a difficult question for me to answer. There is no doubt that a better frame of mind (following your spiritual advice) might make you feel generally better emotionally, while the breathing exercises you were given could help you as a tone-up.

August 17th, 1962 - Renowned Swami to give Series of Lectures

'Indian religion and philosophy' is the title of the first in a new series of adult education courses to be offered at the M.I. Sultan Technical College, Durban. The philosophy course will be given over a period of 10 weeks, and will touch all aspects of the subject. Swami Venkatesananda, the most dynamic Hindu missionary to come to South Africa from India, and whose talks and works on religion and philosophy have earned for him a world-wide reputation, has been selected by the college to deliver the lectures.

The Swami has already delivered the inaugural lecture, entitled 'Need for Philosophy and Religion', on Wednesday. The weekly course will be held at times to suit the delegates.

Mr. Jack Naidoo, deputy principal of the college, told 'The Leader' that this would be an introductory course giving delegates an excellent background of India and its philosophy and religion.

'It is the intention of the College to expand this form of activity as part of its adult education program. The later series will embrace the religions and philosophies of the East and West.'

Mr. Naidoo added that the expansion of the adult education facility has made the College really live up to its name of 'the working man's university in that it offers not only vocational training but caters for the cultural development of the Indian community as well.

Adult education has helped a great deal towards creating an interest by the Indian people for their culture, religion and philosophy. The College, realising the full needs of the Indian people, has opened up this facility.

Mr. Naidoo said that other courses to be offered at the college in the near future

include drama, literature, culture and effective speaking. 'This will make for a better understanding in a multi-racial country such as ours, and it is the aim of the College to fulfill a theme of education known as 'Education for national and international undertaking.'

The titles of the lectures to be given by Swami Venkatesananda are: 'The Indian concept of Evolution (Mythological and Philosophical);' 'Basis of Indian Philosophy and Religion'; 'Unique features of Indian Philosophy and Religion;' 'Life - Its Stages and Goal;' 'The Path of Meditation;' 'Self-Realisation;' 'The State of Perfection or Liberation.'

The 11th session will take the form of a seminar of discussion which will be held at the conclusion of this series of lectures.

Lectures on the Gita

At about the same time, Swami Venkatesananda's lectures on the Bhagavad Gita were inaugurated on June 26th. The lectures were delivered on the nights of Tuesday and Thursday and continued till December 6th, 1962. During the same period, the Swami also set the types for the latest edition of Sri Swami Sivananda's commentary on the Gita, besides composing 'The Yoga-Vedanta Dictionary' earlier.

The Swami also delivered a series of lectures on the Gita at the Durban Hindu Temple, from August 18th to 22nd, in connection with the Janmashtami.

September 21st, 1964 - Swamis Meet Archbishop

Two religious leaders, Swami Venkatesananda and Swami Sahajananda of the Divine Life Society, together with Mr. Perumal, Mr. Narandas and others, met His Grace Archbishop Dennis Hurley in Durban on August 16th. The Swamis gave an explanation of the Society's work to His Grace.

Miss Rebecca Charles accompanied members of the Divine Life Society.

September 5th, 1962 - Fountain Head's Saviour Dedication Ceremony

The installation and dedication of the statue of Lord Venkatesa by Swami Venkatesananda will be held at the Shri Venkatesa Devasthanam, Fountain Road, Umkomaas on Thursday, September 6th.

Prayer meetings will be held daily from 3 pm. to 4.30 p.m, from Friday, September 7th to Saturday, September 15th. The official opening of the new temple will be performed by Swami Venkatesananda, on Sunday, September 16th at 2.30 pm.

In 1919, when thousands were dying as a result of the influenza epidemic, the Hindu residents of Fountain Head built a tiny wood and iron building and dedicated it to Lord Venkatesa of Tirupathi, and prayed for his intercession and protection. The residents of Fountain Head were cured.

Since those days, thousands of people from all parts of the country have visited the Temple to receive the blessings of Lord Venkatesa. Last year, the Temple officials commenced the new buildings and without any special effort, sufficient

funds have come to hand to complete the fine new building. Shri Ganga Govender went to Tirupathi, where through the assistance of the Executive Officer of the Tirupathi Temple, the services of Mr. V.E.S. Devashunmuga Acharya, Head of the Lalitha Academy of Sculpture of the Venkatesa University, was obtained to make a true replica of the famous statue of Lord Venkatesa of Tirupathi, in solid black granite specialty imported from Ceylon for the Temple. The Ashtabanthan Rites were performed by the priests of Tirupathi.

Let Swami give Radio Talks Plea

Sir, I must congratulate you for giving us 'religious articles' by the renowned Swami Venkatesananda - every week. Truly these articles are a 'tonic of life.' We are also thankful and grateful to the Swami for the wonderful work he is doing in this country. Is it not possible for the Divine Life Society to 'put' Swami on the air - SABC, once every three months for a religious talk? We must definitely have him on the air during Diwali, October 2nd. The Swamiji's talks are always inspiring, and educative. Truly Hinduism has had a 'great revival' and life since his arrival in this country. We also hope the Swami will conduct Yoga classes soon. The youths are waiting to become Yogi experts. Yours. Grateful.

September 7th , 1962 - Swami Sivananda

Millions of people in all parts of the world will celebrate the Birthday of Swami Sivananda this Sunday. In practically all countries the teachings of this great religious leader have been widely spread through the Divine Life Society, an institution which he created and which renders valuable services to the people of all religious groups. At the headquarters in Rishikesh, India, many well-known religious teachers have been trained. One such teacher who is at present rendering spiritual service to South Africa is Swami Venkatesananda. Since his arrival in this country he has addressed all sections of the population on several occasions. Wherever he goes, he, like his Master Swami Sivananda, spreads the message of love, goodwill and peace.

September 7th, 1962 - Birthday of Swami Sivananda by Swami Venkatesananda

Born on September 8th, 1887, Swami Sivananda gave evidence of his future greatness even as a boy. With a sturdy frame, smiling face and piercing intelligence, the young boy towered over his comrades at school, and was the foremost boy in the classroom, the field of sports, and in the hearts of all. Extraordinary memory, exceptional originality and exuberant vivacity soon endeared him to his teachers at school, and he sped through the High School, Arts College and Medical College, while people were still discussing his boyhood pranks.

Early in life he displayed a fondness for the spread of knowledge. The ignorance of the people in the matter of personal hygiene, public health problems and living standards appalled him. He conducted a Journal 'Ambrosia' and strove to dispel this ignorance and continued this service through the various newspapers and journals in Malaya when he went there to nurse the sick.

The young doctor in Malaya soon befriended the people and conquered their hearts by his spontaneous generosity, magnanimous heart that bled for the poor, the sick and the suffering, and the intense zeal that literally possessed him to serve, serve and serve.

Suffering moved his heart; materialist civilisation was unable to remove it and it disgusted him. He spurned the degrees. He spurned wealth, spurned position, titles and status. He spurned the world that could not offer a lasting solution to suffering. He ran to the bosom of Mother Nature and in the holy company of sages of all times asked himself: 'is there a solution?'

The elite of Malayan society, who once inhabited mansions of Malaya, now wandered with his begging bowl and in the company of holy mendicants, dwelling in roofless houses and eating what chance brought him, but ever intent on finding out: 'Is there a solution?'

The Doctor-Swami shut himself up in a solitary room on the banks of the Ganges and came out to serve the poor, the sick and the suffering. He carried on his research in seclusion. He applied the fruits of that research to the service he rendered at his own medical clinic. Soon Swamiji's fame spread throughout the country as the ablest of doctors and humblest of men, great Yogi and saint.

People thronged to have his blessing. On each one's face Swamiji read the query: 'Is there a solution?'

Many sleepless nights of meditation, many tireless days of service, gave him that which he sought. He came out. And, he toured throughout India, thundering his message: 'Come, my beloved children. I will show you the Path. I have known: there is a solution.'

This solution - Divine Life, he has administered to the suffering humanity through the Divine Life Society for the past over 25 years. Untiring selfless service, charity, cosmic love, spotless purify, deep meditation - that is Divine life. The presence in him, of these, to an enormous degree of perfection, has added wings to his glory which today has spread to the four corners of the earth. His life is an open book. His personality offers you a pattern for your own life. To follow his footsteps by 'serving him, worshipping him, and by enquiry' - in the words of the Gita, is to know, to feel and to realise for ourselves: 'There is a solution.'

September 28th, 1962 - Tirupathi in South Africa - New Temple at Fountain Head

The above Alayam of the Shri Venkatesa Devasthanum at Fountain Head, Umkomaas, Natal, can aptly be described as a miniature 'Tirupathi in South Africa.' In a sense it is just like 'Tirupathi in India,' for to reach this most historic and renowned Shrine of the Vaishnavites of India, one has to pass through 'Seven Hills', through winding pathways, which today is macadamised - an engineering triumph. The Tirupathi at Fountain Head is nestled in a valley surrounded by

towering mountains, with a small rivulet nearby, and an atmosphere of sanctity pervading the whole place.

On Sunday September 16th, a large gathering of people from all parts of Natal wended their way to this Tirupathi.

The official opening and dedication of the Shrine was in the capable hands of Swami Venkatesananda, and the Trustee of the Devasthanam, the moving spirit behind the whole work, Mr. C.S. Naidoo.

It was an impressive and historic ceremony; the very large number (over 3,000 people) who gathered there received the Lord's blessings and Darshan at an afternoon well spent. Mr. P.R. Pather spoke on behalf of the South African Hindu Maha Sabha.

Gurudev's Birthday Celebrations

Swami Venkatesananda took part in the Birthday Celebrations both in Johannesburg and in Durban. In spite of the fact that he had been to Johannesburg on September 1st to take part in the Patidar Society's Golden Jubilee, the devotees there had arranged for a flying visit to the Golden City on September 8th when the Swami spoke there on the Mission of Sri Gurudev. He flew back to Durban on the 9th morning to speak again at the Durban celebrations of Sri Gurudev's Birthday.

October 5th, 1962 - Statue of Saint to be unveiled

The old Umbilo Temple Prayer Group is observing the 139th birthday anniversary of Sri Ramalingar, one of South India's foremost Saivite saints, by unveiling a statue of the saint on Sunday, October 7th, at the temple Rosshurgh.

Swami Venkatesananda, the visiting Hindu monk and missionary, who is in Durban, will unveil the statue. Dr. S. Cooppan, of the University of Natal, will give a talk on the life and teachings of Ramalingar.

Ramalingar was born on October 5th, 1893, of humble parents in the village of Marudur, near Chidambaram, South Ascot. He is reputed to have received divine illumination while he was barely five months old. Devotional poetry began to flow from his lips from the age of six. The poems of his childhood days have been collected and published. His complete works, which run into several volumes are contained in the Thiru Arutpa.

October 12th, 1962 - Unique Ceremony at Umbilo Sunken Temple

Several hundred people were present at the sunken temple at Umbilo on Sunday when Swami Venkatesananda unveiled the Sri Ramalingam Statue. The essence of what Swamiji told the gathering is as follows:

India is proud of her unbroken line of spiritual luminaries. There has not been a single generation from the dawn of creation till today which has not been blessed by the living Presence of God, which sages of Self-realisation are.

Saint Ramalingam is not a mythological or legendary figure. He was with us in the last century. He was an incarnation of divine light, and so in the end merged

in that Light. His 'disappearance' from this world was not like mortals. The Light that he regarded as God, the Light that he had lit in the hearts at thousands, to that Light he had returned.

He was not opposed to the worship of idols and images, realising that they were all manifestations of that Divine Light. But he did give a revolutionary definition of God in the two phrases that are his Mantras. (1) 'The Great Light of Grace' that is God. The Light that dispels darkness. Not the Light that merely dazzles or hurts the eye, but the light that is Grace, that saves and redeems, that blesses and purifies. To discourage people from day-dreaming that they had seen the Light in meditation, he added: (2) 'Unequaled Great Compassion' that is God. Have you lit the Light of God in your heart? Then this great Compassion, not only towards humanity, but towards all living creatures, will flow in an unbroken stream from your heart. In the words of Lord Krishna: such a one will be ever intent on the welfare of all beings.

His songs were soul-stirring. In one of them he prays to the Lord: 'Oh Lord, may I have as my relatives and companions only those who are devoted to Your Feet with one-pointed mind. May I never mix with those who think one thing and say something else.' These are the first two lines; and they will lead us a long way in our life.

He himself established an institution and gave it a wonderful name: 'Samarasa Sanmarga Sangham.' It is an association of people who realised the 'samarasa' - it is difficult to translate this word; it means realisation of the same essence as filling all beings, all faiths and all approaches to God, and hence has a lot more than brotherhood, equality or even unity. And this realisation should be characterized by goodness, righteousness, and divinity. It should be an association of people who will walk the 'Sanmarga' or the path of righteousness and who will lead others, too, along this path.

He is here with us. Since his disappearance from this world was mysterious, and since he is really not dead, it is possible for us, if we are devout and zealous, if we are pure at heart and sincere in our adherence to his teachings, to feel His presence here.

This Umbilo temple is indeed vibrant with auspiciousness and divinity. The Lord's Presence has been demonstrated here by many miraculous happenings. His own Grace has renovated this temple. The atmosphere here is one of spiritual glory. If people assemble here more often and sing his glory and worship him, it will be easy for them to attain purity of heart, peace of mind, and also happiness and prosperity.

University Students Listen To Yoga

Though the second half of 1962 was devoted almost entirely to the Bhagavad Gita (Swami Venkatesananda did the type-setting for the book at the Ashram, and also lectured on the scripture regularly twice a week at the Bharat Hall), the Swami addressed the students and the public, too. On September 10th, at Pietermaritzburg, and on September 18th at Durban, Swami Venkatesananda addressed the students of the University of Natal. The former meeting was organised by the Science Club of the University where the Swami spoke on Yoga.

The latter was organised by the group studying education and the Swami spoke on that subject.

The Swami also paid a living week-end visit to time Zululand on September 22nd and 23rd, when he visited and lectured at most of the important towns in this area.

October 19th, 1962 - New Gilletts Hall Opened

The opening of the Gillitts Indian Hall was performed by Swami Venkatesananda. Mr. V.N. Naick donated all the materials for the project.

Special thanks were paid to Mr. V.N. Naick and Mr. R.G. Douglas who did all the renovations free of cost to the community. The Swamiji was garlanded by Mr. R. Sitaram. A bouquet was presented to Mr. S.N. Naick and a basket of flowers to Mr. R.G. Douglas.

October 1962 - Monumental Commentary of Swami Sivananda on the Gita

The publication of the 900 page monumental commentary of Sri Swami Sivavanda on the 'Bhagavad Gita' is half way through at the Sivananda Press, Clare Estate, Durban. The entire work is being carefully supervised by Swami Venkatesananda, who is also doing the linotype setting. Besides the voluntary services of Srimati and Pundit Tulsiram who are setting Sanskrit Slokas, the Society has over a dozen members engaged on the production of the book. The work is done almost entirely on voluntary 'selfless' basis.

Swami Sivananda's commentary, which is extremely simple and lucid, was read through by a European spiritual aspirant, so that the book would be cent-percent readable and clear to the average English educated man in South Africa,

The book gives the original verses of the Gita in Sanskrit (for which purpose special types were obtained from India), a transliteration using special accented types with the help of which everyone will be able to read the original without learning the Sanskrit alphabet, a word-for-word translation and a general translation into English and then commentary.

The Divine Life Society is producing over 12.000 copies of this great work on special 'Bible' paper. The book will be bound in cloth (ochre-coloured which is the colour of the Swami's garb) and will contain several tri-colour pictures.

October 26th, 1962 - Deepavali

Swami Venkatesananda, the Visiting Divine Life Missionary from India, writes:

Light was created first. Without Light Cosmos would be chaos. The Bhagavad Gita and the Katha Upanishad declare that God (the Supreme Self) is the Light of all lights, the self luminous source which enables all other lights to shine. Light gives meaning to life.

That Light shines within us as intelligence, Buddhi. With it we become devas - beings of light. Without it we become asuras - beings of darkness. God, having bestowed this intelligence on us, has permitted us the choice. With our own free will we can become a deva or an asura. What shall we call the man who would

want only put this light out and walk in darkness, bringing misery unto himself and others?

'Div' is 'light' in Sanskrit. Deva - a god and divine have the same root. The life that is godly, that leads us to God, that unveils the latent divinity in us is Divine Life, the title which our Master Sri Swami Sivananda has chosen for his message.

Four lamps radiate this light. They are the four words: Serve, Love, Meditate, and Realise. He who keeps these four lamps in the four corners of his inner world will find that the darkness of ignorance has vanished in his heart, and in the new light he will know that he is one with God. That is the real Divali or Deepavali.

The owl dislikes light; it hurts the owl. The diabolical nature of man revolts against the light of God. This conflict has been picturesquely described in our scriptures. The battle between Rama and Ravana, that between Krishna and Narakasura - reminds us of this inner battle. Darkness, however dreadful it may be while it lasts, cannot stand before light. That is the law of nature. Evil cannot triumph over the good. The evil-doer is fighting a losing battle and is self-condemned. Then, why not deliberately elect to join the divine forces?

Thousands of years ago, Lord Rama returned to Ayudhya on this holy day, after killing Ravana.

Thousands of years ago, Lord Krishna slew the demon Narakasura on this same auspicious day. As we bow to Him on this auspicious day, now let us pray that He, the Indwelling Presence, will slay the demon of ignorance in our hearts.

Ignorance is Narakasura, making our life on earth a hell - naraka means hell.

When our intelligence is overpowered by this darkness of ignorance, the ten senses - Ravana had ten heads - run riot.

But there is no need to despair. With a single arrow of wisdom, the Lord can slay this ten-beaded monster within us, and enthrone Himself in our hearts.

I pray to Him on this auspicious day to bless the 'Leader' and its readers.

Swami Venkatesananda addressed several meetings in connection with the Deepavali - at Jacob's, Springfield Flats School, Ottawa, etc. On the 27th he also conducted Nagar Kirtan in the Clare Estate area.

November 10th, 1962 - As Christmas Draws Nearer

I was listening to Swami Venkatesananda recently and something he said really set me thinking. The Swami gave a new meaning to something which has always worried me. Man can do so many good things for people, the Swami said, but man's only reward is ingratitude. When you help a drunken man to a ricksha, he turns round and kicks you, the Swami added.

What does one do in a case like this? Look for the God in the fellow that kicked you, says the Swami. It is no use kicking back. One had to accept the ingratitude as an act of God for which the man was not responsible. This, I think, is a wonderful way to look at life.

As Christmas draws near, each of us should make this part of our way of living. You who read this column are still young and growing and there are so many things that have to be learnt by you. In life you will come across villains, cheats and imposters, who will pretend that they are doing you a good turn, but who will forsake you as soon as they have achieved their purpose. You will find people who

will never say 'thank you' for a good turn. It takes all sorts to make a world, and this is what you must accept. None of us can change the world or its people. People have bent like this through the ages.

What China is doing to India makes a distressing story. India, however, cannot just accept this as an act of God and be smug about the invasion. I guess it is difficult to apply the Swami's way of looking at life to all things, although it works wonderfully well with persons in day to day dealings. Some people find it very hard to forgive and forget. If someone slights them, they spend hours in bed turning and tossing about in agony. At first it will seem hard, but if you look at the most unkind act toward you as an act of God, then our mind will be very much at ease and you can sleep well.

As you live in the world, you will meet lots of nasty people. Education and all that means so little to them that honour is a word without meaning. You cannot afford to lose a night's sleep worrying over rudeness towards you or Krishna's snobbery. Take things as they come. Let things be.

Remember, he is a greater man who does not feel a hurt no matter what the provocation. Life is wonderful and is for living. Everything is God's creation and no mortal can upset your balance.

As Swami Venkatesananda says: 'Look for the God in everybody'.

December 3rd, 1962 - Visiting Indian Swamis

Two monks from the Divine Life Society are at Society at present visiting East London - Swami Venkatesananda from India and Swami Shankarananda from Durban. Swami Venkatesananda, who studied yoga for 20 years under his Master, Sivananda of India, is on a lecture tour of the Republic. He visited Australia and Ceylon before coming to South Africa and intends visiting East Africa and Madagascar before returning to India. Before he was able to leave the headquarters of the movement, a monastery in the foothills of the Himalayas, Swami Venkatesananda studied and trained for 16 years. The two monks gave a lecture entitled, 'Yoga for every man', in the Old Library on Saturday night.

December 7th - Magnificent Contribution

Man cannot live by bread alone. This well known proverb has stood the test of time and, judging by the growing materialistic outlook in mankind, there is no greater need for the spiritual upliftment of all people of all races and creeds than ever before.

Every religion is endeavouring to provide man with this much needed spiritual sustenance. All forms of campaigns are being organised to bring man into fold where he would seek the path of truth and righteousness. All leaders in this field must be complimented for their magnificent and untiring efforts.

This week the Graphic seeks out one group - the Divine Life Society of South Africa - for special commendation. Since the formation of the Society there has been a great move among large sections of the people to seek the path of God. Branches formed in different parts of the Country have flourished with growing numbers attending religious services. The Society, at its Ashram in Clare Estate,

Durban, has produced thousands of booklets which simply and explicitly explain the tenets of the great religions of the world.

This week the Society will offer to the public another great work. The Srimad Bhagavat Gita has been completed and will be made available to the public after a ceremony at the Ashram on Sunday afternoon. In order that this epic may be available to rich and poor, the Society is offering it at R 1.00 per copy. This again has been made possible through the generosity of many people who have contributed to make the publication possible, either by monetary donations or voluntarily helping at the Sivananda Press during their spare time.

Swami Venkatesananda has made a valuable contribution in the production of the Srimad Bhagavad Gita. The story on page 9 of this issue of its production and the picture of Swami Venkatesananda working at the lino-type machine gives a small picture of the thousands of hours that have gone into the production of this valuable book.

Since the arrival of His Holiness in South Africa from Rishikesh, India, he has together with Swami Sahajananda and members of the Society, brought a new light into many homes. His untiring work in the Sivananda Press and the countless hours spent in translating the various Sanskrit words so that all may understand the great work, will be warmly appreciated by all when this book is read throughout South Africa and elsewhere.

On behalf of the people of South Africa, we congratulate the Divine Life Society on its great achievement.

December 7th, 1962 - Srimad Bhagavad Gita to be Released at Colourful Function

The Divine Life Society's monumental work, the Srimad Bhagavad Gita will be released for distribution to the public this Sunday, December 9th, when the Gita Jayanti will be celebrated at its Ashram, 570, New Germany Road, Clare Estate, Durban.

The 920 page Hindu Bible contains the lucid, simple and comprehensive commentary of His Holiness Sri Swami Sivananda. The Sanskrit Slokas are followed by their transliteration, word for word meaning, free translation and commentary. Swami Venkatesananda who himself did the entire linotype setting for the book, has used special accented letters to enable those who have no knowledge of Sanskrit to read the Sanskrit Slokas. The book is also provided with the pronunciation guide to assist correct pronunciation.

Over a dozen voluntary members of the Society as well as many others were engaged daily for the past several months in the production of the book. 12,000 copies have been printed on Special Bible paper. The whole book is beautifully got-up and strongly bound. The title is gold-blocked and there are three attractive tri-colour pictures - two of Lord Krishna and one of Swami Sivananda.

In order to enable everyone to possess a copy of the book, the Society has priced it as low as R 1.00. This has been made possible through the kind generosity of members, well-wishers and patrons of the Society, who readily came forward to bear the cost of production. The support from all sections of the Hindu community, both the rich and the poor, has been magnificent. Besides the smaller contributions through the Branches of the Society, more than 40 patrons

have sponsored the cost of either 125 or 250 copies of the book by contributing R 125 or R 250 respectively.

The function this Sunday will commence with a Havan Ceremony in the morning followed by the feeding of the poor at noon. In the afternoon the main ceremony will take place - the presentation of the Gita to the donors. The books will be presented in attractive gift-boxes, also made at the Sivananda Press by the members.

The anniversary of the Sivananda Press as well as a farewell to Swami Venkatesananda will be held at the same time. Swami Venkatesananda is expected to leave about the middle of this month on a short tour of East Africa and Madagascar. He is expected to be away for about 8 months after which he would again return to the Republic.

The Last Quarter of 1962

The printing of the Bhagavad Gita still occupied most of his time. But Swami Venkatesananda managed to visit Port Shipstone on October 14th to address a public meeting at the Memorial Hall. It was attended and appreciated by Europeans, Muslims and Africans. On November 14th, he addressed a public meeting at the Queensborough Civic Centre, presided over by the Mayor. Swami Venkatesananda visited Zululand again on November 24th and 25th; this time many Branches were opened. He also addressed a number of other Branches in Natal, in connection with their anniversaries, etc.

The Swami also paid a flying visit once again to Johannesburg - from December 11th to 14th.

There were two interesting series of lectures, too, during this period, besides the Gita lectures at the Bharat Hall. The M.L. Sultan Technical College organised a second series of lectures for the Swami, this time on the Gita. It was inaugurated on November 19th. The Arabic Study Circle organised a series of Symposia: on October 24th, on 'Conception of God', on November 21st, on 'The Good Life', and on December 19th, on 'Law and Morality', which was the last public meeting the Swami addressed before he boarded the ship 'Uganda' a couple of hours after this meeting.

CHAPTER THREE - EIGHT MONTHS IN EAST AFRICA

These reports, written by the Swami himself, were published mostly in the 'Leader', Durban.

December 21st, 1962 - Religious Unity

Mr. Shaik Himed, the travel Agent, was right: and how. It was not very pleasant to take leave of the beloved people of Durban: but there is a painful delight when you see people with wet eyes stand in pouring rain just to see a religious man for a minute more. I did not anticipate it. Mr. Shaik Himed did, and he was right. It augurs well for a sick world recovering from the dope of materialism. More and more must catch this soul-curing infection. This Christmas Jesus would rejoice if we remind ourselves, 'Man does not live by bread alone' and that the Eternal Spirit is the Goal of all human quest. It does not matter what religion we follow, so long as it is religion. The true religious spirit unquestioningly pursues its own path: and does not question the 'other man's faith' either.

This was a very big surprise for me. As the 'Uganda' pulled away from the Durban harbour, I found myself surrounded by a number of pilgrims from the Cape on their Haj pilgrimage to Mecca. How mysteriously our divine Master works to ensure that his child has good company. All of them were wonderful people. I was still more thrilled when I learnt that on board they would not be eating meat. If we keep our eyes and ears open, we can behold the Grace of God from hour to hour of our life.

I listened to their prayers. Where was the difference between our prayers and theirs? To one who did not know Sanskrit, Tamil and Arabic, they all sound alike. We pray to the same God in different tongues. The Father of mankind knows all languages; and He listens to the vibrations that emanate from our heart and soul - these vibrations are the cause of which audible or mental prayer is the result. God is the essence of our very existence and he 'drinks' the essence of our prayer and our divine life. The forms and formalities are needed for us not for him. Corroding mischief and vested interests, however, exalt the form above the Spirit, weigh one form against another, create differences and exploit them. One of the Haj pilgrims, a Muslim lady from the Cape, surprised me by her deep understanding of this problem. What a great joy to hear her say, 'All the Prophets have taught the same Truth, and the mischievous followers often twist their teachings to suit their own selfish interests.' For a moment the lady vanished in front of me and I saw our divine Master, Sri Swami Sivananda, before me - these words I have often heard from his lips.

People are beginning to think: we cannot lead them by the nose for long. A more honest reassessment of the spirit of world scriptures is the urgent need of the hour, if more and more sensible and sensitive people are not to turn away from organised religions, disappointed and disgusted with their narrowness and bigotry.

December 23rd, 1962.

Human folly is interested only in the unnatural - I will not call it supernatural. Hence the craze for 'miracles' of the unnatural type. But if we keep our eyes and ears open, we see miracles in our every-day life. I had been told in Durban that I would not be allowed to go ashore in Beira. I did not inform the people I knew there.

But when I did go ashore, nothing happened. I am not interested in politics and our Master's children have no nationality but universality at heart. A series of miracles landed me in the house of my friend Sri Ratanshibhai of Damodar Anandjee. We had a busy afternoon, culminating in a Satsang at night. That was yesterday.

This morning I again went ashore. We drove to the farm of another friend who is prepared to build an Ashram on it, if a Swami could come and stay in Beira. By his Will even this may come to pass. What we need is faith in Him and optimism. 'Optimism sees an opportunity in every difficulty, whereas pessimism sees it difficulty in every opportunity.'

I had taken a few of the Muslim brothers and sisters, too, with me. In the farm and in the car, I was singing the Maha Mantra and also 'Sri Krishna Sharanam Mama'. The music and the rhythm appealed to them, and from the back-seat I could hear them sing in chorus, too. If I can sing the Name of Allah, can't they sing the Name of Krishna? Allah and Krishna are not two different Gods but different names of the One God - even the Quran contains 100 Names of the One God. He who hates Allah or Krishna, recognises duality of Godhead - he hates one God and loves another. The wise man is convinced that there is only One God and His glories are sung in different tongues. He is the man of God, the man of Peace, a Muslim, a Hindu.

December - January 1963 - Unassuming Clerk Was Divine's Messenger

There is great joy in letting ourselves go, and be taken charge of by the mysterious Power that governs the entire universe. We do not surrender or forfeit our intelligence - for that Power has bestowed intelligence on us for our use. But we use that intelligence aright and try to understand Him and His ways. The gift is not greater than the giver. Right intelligence will not doubt Him, but understand Him aright and learn to admire and love Him. What happens, happens by His will. He has His own mysterious ways and purpose. This attitude chases all tension and fills it with eager expectancy - 'What is up His sleeve now?'

The ships schedule is more relaxed and uncertain than the schedule of our ship of life. The 'Uganda' was expected to enter Mombasa harbour early this morning, and jettison us not later than 9 am. At 8 am. it was discovered that the ship had no vacant berth, so we were told that we could go ashore by about noon. The people who had come to the docks waited and went home.

Suddenly the authorities decided to take us away by launch, at 10 am. We could not be surprised, therefore, when we found ourselves being welcomed by Customs officials at the baggage shed. 'What is up His sleeve now?'

An unassuming man was almost nagging me with the repeated question. 'Is there somebody here to receive you? Do you know anybody in Mombassa?' 'Yes,' I

replied. 'Dr. Sharma may be here any moment'. This conversation was repeated thrice in 15 minutes. 'If you do not mind, I will take you to Dr. Sharma', this person was adamant, and this was the first time I had seen him in my life. He won. I nearly took him for a travel agent. After he had loaded the baggage into his car and held the door open for me, I asked him for the first time: 'Who are you?' 'I am a clerk in the Customs Department here, and my name is Bhatt.' What is up His sleeve now?

'You don't mind if I take you to my house for a couple of minutes, before taking you to Dr. Sharma?' Of course, I didn't. I was in his hands. He took me - an unknown Swami - home and his equally devoted and pious wife was ready with lunch for both of us. His young son was eager to commemorate the occasion with a photograph.

Only then would he send for Dr. Sharmaji. Now I know what was up His sleeve. This demonstration of His mysterious Grace and protecting Love had to take place, before, the official reception - by the Indian High Commission and Divine Life Society officials - and the public meeting, etc. etc.

Sharmaji was at the Phone for over an hour, stopping people from going to the Harbour - 'Swamiji is already here.'

The three days at Mombassa rolled away faster than the world on its axis. Why is it that, when we want longer days, they become shorter, and when time hangs heavily on our shoulders, it grows longer? Because of it.

On the 31th I was preparing to leave for Nairobi when a devout African came to see me, wishing to know what this Yoga was all about. I explained in brief; and when he discovered that I was not interested in converting him, but in confirming him in his faith, he was eager to study it. But when I glorified other religions at a meeting, I was buying trouble. A very 'devout' Hindu very firmly disagreed and questioned: 'They even condemn us and regard cutting our throats as virtue - how can you say that their religion, too, has the same basis as ours?'

But this critic was readily led to the conviction that it was not the 'other religion' that was to blame for such conduct, but that it was the animal nature in man that creates such dissension and discord, and that sets man against man. No matter what religion one professes, if he is truly religious, he will love all and respect all other faiths, and if he is irreligious, whatever may be his religions titles and profession, he will use the holy name for the irreligious purposes of his own animal self.

The critic was immediately prepared to sing the Names of all the saviours and Prophets of all the religions.

The first time on African soil, I boarded a train on the evening of the 31st. We were disturbed at about 10.30 at night, at Voi. There was a big gathering on the platform and we sang the Lords glories: men, women and children who defied the darkness of the night to seek spiritual light.

The reception at Nairobi on New Year morning was indescribably enthusiastic. With tears of joy, singing the Lords Names, the big gathering rushed forward with garlands and I was smothered for a few minutes.

The Indian Commission was represented by Mr. Malavia, the Educational Secretary.

From January 1st to 8th, we had one major public meeting daily, and on some

days one or two minor gatherings. Time rest of the day was filled up with interviews. Though the meetings were held at different centers, the major part of the audience was constant; hence I took up Gurudev Sivananda's 'Divine Life Message' - Serve, Love, Meditate, Realise, and spread the explanation over the eight days.

The modern youth is not interested in 'empty religion'; and when they realised that my religion was not empty either, they came in large numbers. Gurudev's Divine Life Message could be summed up in a few sentences: 'The goal of human life is the realisation of God Who is immanent and dwells in all beings, though He is transcendent and so beyond the mind and senses. This goal is reached by serving all beings, with the inner attitude of worshipfulness. In order to acquire this attitude, we are asked to meditate, repeat His Name, go to the churches and worship. One who is firmly rooted in this attitude is desireless and free from hatred and ill-will. He sees God in all and serves Him and loves Him in all. He who has realised God thus enjoys unending bliss, peace and power infinite.'

January 15th, 1963 - At Nairobi

It was good to hear Dr. Gregory, an ex-Mayor of Nairobi, say, 'The Pope and the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Head of the Greek Church ought to have been here. These thoughts are stimulating and can promote better understanding among the people of various religions and nationalities,' when I explained to a public meeting over which he presided on the January 10th how different religions oppressed the same truth using various symbolisms. The Holy Cross, for instance, could be the best symbol of a Yogi - the horizontal limb representing the highest ideal of Karma Yoga - harmonizing man with man - and the vertical limb representing Bhakti-Jnana Yoga - bringing about union of the individual with the Supreme, both these being simultaneously effected.

The next evening, Sir Charles Markham presided over the public meeting. He had studied Yoga as a young man and found the Buddhi Yoga of the Gita illuminating. We have for far too long allowed the false notions of the 'miraculous powers of Yoga' prevail; it is time we proclaimed boldly from housetops that the greatest of all miracles as the transformation of the heart of man, softening it with love and strengthening it with service - not in the social sense, but motivated by the highest idealism of worshipfulness - seeing God in all.

The Commissioner for India, Sri Khilnani, presided over the last meeting in this series, on the 12th, where I explained that religion, far from asking us to shirk our responsibilities and run away from life, promised us richer, fuller, happier and more peaceful life. Sri Khilnani surprised us all by his appreciation of the ideals of the Divine Life Society, and called upon the people of Nairobi to build a home for Divine Life. 'You have built clubs, schools and cinemas. All other aspects of our social life have their home. But Divine Life has none.'

On the 13th, the Bharatiya Swayamsevak Sangh celebrated Vivekananda Birth Centenary. Both Sri Khilnani and I addressed the mammoth public meeting and pleaded that we, especially the younger generations, should study the life and teachings of Swami Vivekananda, and endeavour to emulate his example. Swami Vivekananda was not a human being, but a living column of spiritual fire.

Yesterday at the Theosophical Lodge, I prayed to the intellectsia to get back to the source of all religious scriptures, study them with an open mind, and a heart eager to find the 'common and golden thread of unity in diversity that runs through all of them', and expressed the hope that the religion of tomorrow would, without destroying time natural charm of diversity build up a unity based on understanding, love and brotherhood.

Today I am leaving for Nakuru, Kampala and other towns in Uganda.

February 15th, 1963 - The Power of Thought

People seldom realise the Power of Thought. In spite of the tremendous advance made in nuclear physics (and proofs of the power of the unseen atom) and in psychology, which has been recognised as a science, man's intelligence still clings to matter.

'Will thinking make the mango fall?' asks the idiot, without realising that there is always a thought behind the action of throwing a stone to bring it down.

Thoughts are things, even as air under certain conditions is liquid or 'solid' enough to sustain the aircraft.

We are in an age of Subtle Power. To some it is hard to accept: but did not Lord Kelvin, then the doyen of English scientists, say in the closing years of the last century that 'flying in heavier-than-air machines was a physical impossibility.'

Sri Khilnani, the Indian Commissioner at Nairobi, had wished that Divine Life should have it home in Kenya. At every town I visited, I heard the echo of this wish. For 15 days - January 15 to 31 - I toured the Highlands of Kenya and the major towns of Uganda. The culture-conscious Indians here have poured their resources into temples and libraries. At every meeting they eagerly thronged in their numbers and their eager expectations rose to a new pitch again, 'Is it possible to stabilise such activity by founding an Ashram in East Africa?'

It is a very healthy sign that practically no one thinks of a proselytising mission among the Africans. But there were unmistakable signs of a shyness among many to reveal that they belonged to a religion and culture different from the Ruling Powers.

This attitude closes the only door through which we can enter into the Common Hall of Understanding with our dear brethren of other religions and races. A noble old man called Hirji Bhappa is the only hero who has endeavoured to bring home to the African the wholesome and catholic basis of our religion. Just an instance illustrative of the state of affairs. At Nakuru, two African Municipal Councilors attended the meeting, and at Kampala an African Member of Parliament was in the audience. They confessed that they enjoyed listening, and that they had no disagreement at all with what they heard. They were eager that others should come to the correct understanding of what we stand for. Several Indians were quick to strike the iron while it was hot. A plan was evolved on the spot. They ordered quantities of the 'Bhagavad Gita', published by the Divine Life Society of South Africa, Durban, for distribution among the African intelligentsia. A big surprise awaited me in Nairobi when I returned on the 31st, after taking part in the Vivekananda Centenary celebrations at Nakuru on the 30th. Inspired by Sri Khilnani's call, a number of young men had come forward to organise 'The

Sivananda Yoga Centre.' Sri Bahaclur Singh Parmar had taken the lead. The name had been suggested by our Master, Sri Swami Sivananda himself, who had sent a special message of blessing.

Sri Khilnani referred to it as a historic event which would be remembered when many other contemporary events were forgotten. Such is the power of his thought, that soon after it arose in his mind, it stimulated many others' minds and materialised as the Centre which will soon have its own Ashram and activities.

After a couple of busy days at Nairobi, here I am back in Mombasa where we have meditation class in the morning, Yoga Asana class in the evening, and Gita Lectures at night.

The Sivananda Yoga Centre

Gist of Swami Venkatesananda's lecture while inaugurating the Centre at Nairobi on January 31st 1963.

Our master has aptly christened this the Sivananda Yoga Centre, and the organisers are busy working for the building of an Ashram under its auspices. An Ashram literally is a place in which we take refuge when we are assailed by worldly forces. It is a holy place full of peace and divinity, to which we turn when the unholy atmosphere of the world generates restlessness and undivine thoughts and emotions in our hearts.

It shall be a 'Centre'; and of course it shall have its radii reaching out to various points on its circumference. It will have a net-work of Branches, smaller Ashrams, in all the three East African territories. We should have one at least in each major town in East Africa. Everyone should have within easy reach an Ashram which can afford him spiritual protection immediately the need arises, without compelling him to wait - which would be impossible - till he can get to Nairobi or Rishikesh.

It is a 'Yoga Centre'. Let us make it abundantly clear once again that Yoga is not a religion nor even a sect. It is a way of life, and a way of approaching God. We shall not disturb anyone's faith, but shall strengthen it. We shall demand that a Christian shall be more devoted to Lord Jesus and a Muslim to Prophet Mabammad and the Holy Quran, and that a Hindu should pursue his on path to the goal. The Centre will not encourage change of faith or external form. It will only bring about a change of heart. Where there is disharmony or ill-will, it will promote harmony and goodwill. This Yoga will not only bring about union of man with God, but will also bring about union of man with man - a loving understanding among all men.

'Sivananda Yoga' is but a restatement of the Bhagavad Gita, Quran and the Bible. Our Master's teachings are universal and aim at the integration of our personality through the practice of the Yoga of Synthesis.

February 1st, 1963. Divine Life Delegate for Nairobi

East Africa is to have its own representative of the Divine Life Society who will be in attendance at the newly opened Sivananda Yoga Centre in Nairobi. The

announcement was made during a ceremony last night to inaugurate the centre by the movement's leading disciple, Swami Venkatesananda.

The Commissioner for India, Mr. Khilnani, said: 'This simple ceremony is an historical occasion. When much else which is contemporary is forgotten, this will be remembered for hundreds of years.'

The Swami's last two lectures before returning to the Himalayas will be given at the Patel Brotherhood in Nairobi, this evening and tomorrow evening.

The Other Centers of this Tour

I left Nairobi on January 15th and reached Nakuru the same afternoon. On the 15th and 16th I addressed a number of public meetings: one at the Town Hall was presided over by Mr. Faulkner, and attended by a number of African Councilors. On the 17th I left for Kishmu where I stayed till the morning of the 20th. I addressed a number of Schools. A public meeting was presided over by Sri Bashiruddin.

I arrived at Jinja on the 20th where I stayed till the 23rd, addressing several public meetings at the Temple, and also the various Schools.

I was at Kampala from the 23rd to the 26th, where I addressed several public meetings, the last of which was presided over by the Mayor of Kampala.

I reached Mbale on the 27th where I spoke to the children of several Schools and also visited the Leprosy Centre at Kumi. There were also public meetings in the temple and meditation classes at Dr. Balla's house where I stayed.

On the 29th I arrived at Kakamega and addressed a public meeting there.

On the 30th I returned to Nakuru to address a public meeting in connection with the Vivekananda Centenary. The next day I was back at Nairobi.

Throughout this tour Sri D.N. Sodha was with me and was a source of great strength and encouragement. Without him the tour would not have been possible. Thanks to him, thanks to Sri C.J. Patel who organised it from Nairobi, and thanks to the many hosts at the various centers. So many co-operate and contribute to the success of a mission. The mission is not one mans job: as a motor-car does not run on one wheel.

February, 1963 - Swamiji at Rotary

Mombasa Rotarians this week were addressed by Swami Venkatesananda, a disciple of Swami Sivananda, the founder of The Divine Life Society.

The Society has branches in Europe, America, Asia and Africa, and Swami Venkatesananda has traveled widely to preach the Society's message of peace. He recently toured Australia and South Africa.

He is spending three weeks in Mombasa after an extensive tour of East Africa and leaves for Madagascar on Monday.

The Swamiji told Rotarians that he deplored the fact that metaphysics had been sacrificed on the altar of science which demanded that everything should be chemically analysed.

'When man ceases to think, reflect and contemplate, the human element becomes almost dead, the animal instincts rise,' he said.

February 25th, 1963 - The Glimmer of a New Era

I had a remarkable experience in Johannesburg last year. We used to have meditation-classes in Fordsburg early in the morning at 5 am. A few people used to come from 17 miles away: they were keen. Yet, some living two blocks away complained it was too far for them to come so early in the day.

In Mombasa, too, I had the same experience. I insisted on having the meditation-class in a quiet place: the truly eager aspirants, though they were (and are always) few, attended. They discovered that the regular practice of meditation first thing in the morning, made them calmer and so more efficient during the day - so, proved to be a good investment. Whatever be the motive, meditation is good. From February 3rd to the 25th, except for a couple of days, this became a routine: meditation-class in the morning, Yoga-Asana class in the evening, and Gita-lectures at night.

I have seen enthusiasm of various degrees, but there was the most unusual sight in the Gita-hall. A middle-aged seeker was a regular student and he could not hear. He had his hearing-aid held close to the loudspeaker, so that he would not miss a word. That others were watching this with amusement did not bother him. I also addressed the students of the two Indian High Schools in Mombasa. The proverb 'It is never too late to mend' does not apply to the human personality. Very soon in our life it does become too late to mend - either we mend ourselves in childhood or we never do, really. There is a Tamil proverb which means 'It is no use letting the leash go and hanging by the tail'.

The Rotary Club of Mombasa, a similar Saturday Club, the Theosophical Lodge, and also the Tanganyika African Club invited me to address them. There are Africans in all these, the last named is an entirely African organisation. They appreciate Indian philosophy whole-heartedly. Yoga, as a non-sectarian, non-proselytising and life-transforming influence is appreciated by them, as well as by the thinking Indian. One can distinctly see the glimmer of the dawn of an era in which people will not be spoon-fed by dogmatists, but will insist upon a well-reasoned, sane and fruitful philosophy of life. I have noticed this always in our Master's life that his foresight is unerring. He fulfils the need just before it arises. How wonderful it is to realise that he had just, a quarter of a century ago, discovered this universal message of Divine Life, which mankind would readily adopt for its universal appeal and application.

Let us not lag behind in spreading it.

The people of Mombasa wrested from me a promise to return, before they let me go on the 25th. So I am off to Madagascar.

Peace of Mind

Gist of a Talk by Swami Venkatesananda, at the Goan Institute Hall on the February 13th, 1963, under the chairmanship of Sri Khilnani, Commissioner for India in East Africa.

Among the Westerners (whatever be their nationality or colour, if they live a Western way of life) an infection is spreading. This virus is mis-called civilised

behaviour, for in practice it is 'militarised behaviour'. Curt replies, convenient lies, hypocritical affection and affected manners - these are the main ingredients of 'civilised behaviour' - and altogether they conspire to create disharmony and tension in the human mind.

That the virus is impossible of microscopic analysis ought to alert us all the more: a brick falling on our head might lead us to the hospital for a few days stay there, but a microscopic cholera germ might lead us to the cemetery for eternal rest.

This tension-virus is more deadly.

Tension is the opposite of ease. This state is reflected on the body, too, as disease. The man continuously subject to this tension obviously does not know how to live. Hence perhaps the doctor administers the slow poison of the tranquillizers - it absolves the doctor of sin and crime which instant poisoning would convict him of. The man leads a miserable existence. He does not even live in the proper sense of the word ... but what is worse ...

He infects others with this virus. A gloomy man spreads gloom everywhere. There is tension in the family, in the society, in the nation - and if the tense-man occupies the unfortunate position of a ruler - in the international sphere. The world witnessed the horrors that an unbalanced mind might heap on humanity. A mad moment in the life of a maniac might ruin humanity. Hence this tension-virus is more deadly than the cholera virus.

Mankind is turning more and more away from the source of peace or ease. There is evidence everywhere that there is Tamasic (stupid) perversion of our intelligence which exalts vice as virtue. Hence, it has become fashionable to be tense. A few years ago, it was disgraceful to have been made: but now it is a sign of culture and sociability to confess, 'I was under psychiatric treatment for six months'. Sophisticated expression for 'madness'.

But where is this peace? Within us. We have this simple story in the Upanishads. A seeker approaches his preceptor and asks: 'Sir, what is the nature of the Self - Atma?' The sage is silent. The seeker asks again and again. The sage was silent. The seeker turned away, but the sage called him back and said, 'I told you, but can't you understand? The nature of the Self is peace.'

There is this mansion of peace within us. 'But the key is prayer', says Pere Danielou. 'One can stifle from lack of prayer just as one can stifle from lack of air. Our Western world in its restless and activistic life has completely lost this sense of prayer. That is why there are so many mentally ill and eccentrics in our midst. There is a veil of silence within themselves to which they have no access, a domain of peace they know not how to enter.'

Prayer is the centre of all religious practice. But the modern man has an intense dislike for prayer. The fault is not entirely his. The 'devout' have turned praying into preying. We do not pray to Him; we prey upon Him. We regard God as a Christmas tree, with all sorts of gifts hanging round - and we hurry to grab them, lest our brethren should be there before us. What foolishness and ignorance. Why should we beg for food from God, our Parent? Work for it! Why should we pray for health? Live a clean life. Should we pray for a holiday in heaven? If we do good to our neighbours and do a lot of charity, we shall get it. Why waste prayer on these childish ends?

Prayer is the key to the domain of peace within. It involves a twofold confession.

(1) The individual is powerless against the forces undivine within which disturb the peace and stir the animal instincts into activity. (2) The Indwelling Divine Presence is full of power, the light of divinity, wisdom and peace. Hence, prayer is invocation of that Divine Power to take hold or flow into and transform the individual personality.

Visualise two chambers within yourself. The one is the chamber of the individual - dark, undivine and negative. The other is the chamber of God - full of Light, wisdom and power. The moment the door is opened between the two, the Light Divine dispels the darkness in the other chamber. The power of God floods the negative chamber which is a vacuum. This is the purpose of prayer.

The two-fold admission is reflected in all our prayers. But we should be sincere in this twofold admission. More lip-service will only close and bolt the intervening door. More than even this: our prayers should be practical. They should be translated into our daily life. We often pray for Light and wisdom, but revel in darkness and bestiality. We should also recognise that God is infinite, and cannot be accommodated in a small heart. Our heart should expand and we must wish well for all and translate this wish into a practical life of selfless service and charity. Then the prayer becomes effective.

Such prayer opens the gates to the inner chambers of peace. Only he who prays regularly and who lives a selfless life, promoting the happiness of all, and who delights in the happiness of all, can be at peace within. Only he can be truly happy: for there is no happiness to the man without peace of mind.

March 24th, 1963 - Report On Madagascar

I have been in Madagascar for almost a month, Someone told me a few days ago that there are no wild beasts at all on the island, and that there are not even poisonous reptiles like the mamba. I replied that from what I have seen I would add that even poisonous human beings are absent here. During the whole month I have never heard an angry word and never seen two people fighting.

I had the first glimpse of the genial nature of these people in Majunga, soon after my arrival in Madagascar on Feb 28th. The customs officials wanted to do their duty; but you could see from their looks that they were least interested in worrying anyone. As we drove into the town, I noticed a uniformed man standing in the middle of the road waving a baton - reminding one of a conductor of an orchestra. We had to wait on the roadside for a friend. I discovered that the uniformed man was a traffic cop. The baton is used to direct the traffic. Within the quarter-hour I watched him, many people passed him - in cars, on bicycles and on foot. He had a smile for every one; he patted some on their back, shook hands with pedestrians, exchanged a word of greeting with a driver as the latter swung round. This man knows how to extract happiness out of toil. I do not think he personally knew everyone. But does that matter to be courteous and loving, to greet and offer a smiling gift of an affectionate glance?

There are enormous number of Indians in Majunga and they have a make-shift Temple with an auditorium attached. They held a Satsang there during the two days of my stay there. They were enthusiastic - men, women and children - perhaps because the Swami is a rare commodity.

The resident Indians themselves pay a very high tribute to the Malagasy people. A prominent Indian told me that if a Malagasy saw a sick man (perhaps fainting away) on the roadside, he would invariably stop his car, render whatever help was necessary before proceeding further. I had a glimpse of this in a very strange manner.

In Madagascar, one often meets with the prefix 'Mad' which is an abbreviation for 'Madagascar'. They do not know English, and therefore are quite innocent of its awkwardness. Thus you have the 'Madair', 'Madbus', etc., etc. When I saw I had to get into a 'Mad-air' plane, I chuckled at the interesting prospect. The Law of Karma is inexorable. This naughty thought had its repercussion. My suitcase failed to arrive by the same plane. At Tananarive, as we waited at the baggage counter, after all the baggage had been taken away, one official literally ran to every nook and corner of the place to search for the suitcase. An extremely rare behaviour on the part of an airport official. There is no doubt: there are people who want to help all the time.

It seems an Italian once visited Tananarive and had forgotten his brief-case in a shop. It contained all his money and other valuables. In a few minutes he found a shop-assistant at his heels, with the briefcase, saying: 'You had left it in the shop. The Italian immediately opened it and found everything intact and told his friend: 'These people are mad; they will not even take on an occasion like this!' The Malagasy people are an extremely contented lot, and they openly declare that that is something they have inherited from the East. Their language, their life, their customs and manners are all a synthesis of some of the good things of both the Eastern and Western cultures.

We organised some Yoga-classes. I wanted to have a look at the prospective students before formulating any plans for my work. When on the evening of March 5th, I was confronted by a crowd of people of all sorts of shapes and shades of colour, I wondered. I explained the object of my visit to them. They sat in grave silence, listening. I had to depend on a translator. As we dispersed, I almost felt sure that none of them was impressed or interested. But to my surprise, all of them turned up for the class, and brought more with them. The classes are swelling to-date. God's Grace.

The Indian Ambassador, His Excellency Mr. Ramachandran, is a wonderful person. He has organised in Tananarive what is known as 'The English Speaking Society of Madagascar'. He invited me to speak to them on March 14th. I was surprised to meet there the U.N.O. in miniature - Diplomatic Officials, Ambassadors, and leading businessmen from all countries - resident in Madagascar, as also some of the high officials and Ministers of Madagascar. I spoke to them of 'The Art of Living', illustrating it with quotations from the Gita and the life of our Divine Master Sri Swami Sivananda. At the residence of another prominent Indian, Sri Maganlal Chandarana, I met on March 19th prominent Indian women, executives of the Seva Sadan.

But the most memorable event so far took place yesterday. We took a taxi and went to a 'Mystic Church'. Incidentally, the people use the taxi a lot here. There are innumerable taxis. And, go where you like within the city, you pay only 50 francs, equivalent of 1/6. All the chanting and singing and also the priest's sermon were in Malagasy. Even I was moved by the fervour. At last the priest led

the congregation in an impromptu prayer. I could only understand the plaintive tone in which the word 'Jesus' was uttered again and again. Women were sobbing all over the place. Even young girls who could not collect tears in their eyes sniffing, covering their face with handkerchiefs. Devotional fervour was unmistakable. Even if it was mixed with emotion, the devotion was there all the same. This is the first time I have seen the Christian version of our Bhakti cult. These people are not all that emotional. Soon after this Church-service, I addressed the Malagasy public at a cinema hall. The questions they asked me after the lecture were eye-openers. They are ready for the Yoga-teaching. And, are eager.

September 20th, 1963 - Swami Writes of Trip Abroad

Venkatesananda who made a deep impression on people of all races and religions during his lecture tour of South Africa, describes his recent visit to Madagascar and Mauritius. The Swami returned to South Attica last week.

They have a word in the Malagasy language which has its root in the word 'Yogi'. Now it means 'a respectable elder brother - sometimes also identified with one who is given to extreme mortification or grave demeanour - whose words should be unquestioningly accepted and obeyed'. The significance of this meaning was brought home to me in an amazing way. At Majunga I asked a young Gujerati to stop smoking if he wanted to save on mounting medical expenses. A Malagasy seeker was also there, and he had just a week before given up the idea of giving up smoking. He took the advice to himself, and he told me a fortnight later that he had not smoked one cigarette after he heard my advice to the Gujerati young man.

The spiritual institution that invited me out here is interested in Raja Yoga. When the ideal of Ahimsa was explained to them, the next day several entire families had abandoned meat-eating. All this is due entirely to our divine Master's Grace. But something really funny followed. The little daughter of my saintly host, who is himself a vegetarian, was fond of fish. When I asked her, 'Why do you eat fish?', she answered immediately, 'Because I like fish.' I posed a counter-question, 'I like you and shall I eat you, too.' That settled it amidst side-splitting laughter. She has not touched a fish for over a month now. These are only samples.

Since the last report I have had another demonstration of the fundamental unity of religions. Where the perverse intelligence of the vain wrangler has not introduced customs and dogmas, just to prove 'My religion is better than yours', we discover in the innocent devotees the same fervour, the same symbolic rituals and the same attitude to God and fellow man. A few Protestant Missionaries, men and women clothed in pure white, bareheaded and barefooted - absolutely indistinguishable from our pious Hindu brothers and sisters, received a few friends and me with washing of feet and singing songs, exactly as we do when we receive holy men. The language in which they sang their praises of God was different from the language which I knew and used in my prayers. But the simplest truth which we often forget is 'God knows only the wordless language of the heart'. 'God is Great', 'Allah-o-Akbar' and 'Vaasudevah Sarvam' - are all equally intelligible to Him if they spring from a pure, devout heart.

At midnight of April 13th, the British Vice-Consul here who is a keen student of Yoga took me to a Church, and the midnight Easter Mass was most inspiring. Yet, when I gazed at the huge crucifix on the Altar, I could not help reflecting; 'Did you, Oh Lord, include even the people of the present generation in those for whom you suffered on the Cross? If so, the suffering should have indeed been very great. Didn't You say, From those to whom little is given little will be expected, and from those to whom much is given much will be expected'? Yet, the people to whom you gave your very life and spirit - how far have they strayed from the Christian path. And, just then they in the Church were celebrating the Resurrection, and my own prayer continued - that the service was in a language I could not understand helped me in this: 'Were you resurrected three days after the crucifixion, only to be recrucified in countless homes and hearts all over the world? The very things that you commanded Man not to do, those very things he does now - the only difference: now he does them in your Name! And, one of your commands he obeys implicitly: he does carry the Cross, but this cross is made of gold and is bejeweled - an ornament, far from being a Holy Christian Symbol. When will mankind treat spiritual truths as spiritual truths, and spiritualist life, instead of using the spirit to material advantage? You asked man not to serve God and Mammon: today he asks you to join him in the worship of Mammon.' The Congregation sang ecstatically glorifying the Resurrection of Lord Jesus - may He be resurrected in the Human Heart.

People are thinking: and it is evident here, too. Hindu, Muslims and Christians, they are all tired of salesmanship slogan introduced into religion. Even dealers in petrol only say, 'Our product is better than the others?' But, when this slogan is imported into religion, it is turned into a stinking nonsense: 'Only mine is God, yours is not.' Hence, you find that the Spirit of God is rarer in the world than the petrol. The people of Madagascar - whether they are called Christians, Muslims or Hindus, are keenly interested in religion; but only in so far as it will not be narrowed down to sectarianism.

A prominent Muslim of Tananarive organised a public meeting which was attended by a large number of people of all religions and races. This whipped up some more enthusiasm and more and more people are asking, 'Can religion show me the way to God, instead of leading me into a camp from which I will be asked to wage a war against some others?'

In order to provide the answer and to sustain the Interest in Yoga, the institution that invited me intends to build an Ashram in Tananarive, and the site has already been selected. Two young men have come forward to dedicate their life to the cause, eventually to become Swamis. A number of other householders too are enthusiastic in this project. One of them, the Gabriel-family, is remarkable. Father, mother and 5 children - all of them are very keen students of Yoga. Even so is the Alexander-family: and the 2 boys who have dedicated their lives to Yoga come from this.

Yoga Ashram in Madagascar

For the first time in the history of Madagascar, a Yoga Ashram was opened on the holy Guru Purnima July 6th, 1963. Two young men - who had assumed the

names of Hariomananda and Ramananda, as a preparatory step to taking Sanyasa, have dedicated their life to the institution, and an aged dentist who has also renounced the world will be in charge of it. I have already received reports that, under the leadership of these good people, the Yoga-mission is spreading in Madagascar; soon we may have another Ashram in another town there. With such intense sincerity and honesty of purpose, as these people have, it is certain the Yoga-way of life will spread among the Malagasy people who now realise that it involves no proselytisation, or being organised into antagonistic camps of 'my religion' and 'your religion'.

Veloma - Swamiji's Farewell Message to the People of Madagascar

It is difficult to say 'Veloma' to the people of the Tsimisaramianakavy, and the people of Madagascar, who have sheltered me in their homes and hearts. This world is a big inn: people meet and have to part. Things are in constant motion here. But this applies only to 'things', not to the soul and its Light which is Eternal, Infinite, all-pervading - the Ultimate Reality or God. In Him we are all one and there is no parting at all.

I thank the Tsimisaramianakavy for bringing me here to serve you all. I have said so publicly and I shall repeat it a million times, wherever I go - I have learnt more than I have taught. I have seen goodness in action. I have seen the philosophy of the Bhagavad Gita being practised by people who have perhaps not learnt it or perhaps do not even know that a scripture like that exists.

The people of Madagascar are good. It is a simple word but this complex outside world has totally banished simplicity. Implicit faith I have found here; not faith which accepts because it does not know how to doubt, but which dares to believe. I have seen here an eagerness to love and serve others. I have seen here readiness to tolerate the other man and accept his point of view. Above all, I have seen here an unwillingness on the part of man to hurt fellowman in thought, word or deed. I have actually encountered in the life of the people among whom I have lived and moved, provocative situations in which, elsewhere, there would have been a quarrel. But, the people here hesitate. They would much rather let it go, rather than let themselves go. They are wise.

Unless you know each one intimately, you cannot know their social status. They move with such a spirit of friendliness. Amiability is in the very atmosphere. This amiability is born of a deep philosophic faith. To me, some of the words of greeting, some of the meaninglessly meaningful sounds of interjection and response have sounded like sweet music.

I came here to serve. I thank God, my Master Swami Sivananda, the Tsimisaramianakavy, and the various other organisations like the Calam, the Lions Club, the English Speaking Association, the Seva Sadan, the University (Friends of the Unesco), and the numerous seekers who have given me an opportunity to serve the good people of Madagascar. In them I have seen God manifest. At their feet I have offered a few flowers, words: not as a teacher or Master, but as a devotee worshipping the Lord at His Omnipresent Altar. The saintly Swami Gitananda is in charge of the Malagasy Yoga Ashram. Two dynamic boys - Swamis Ramamanda and Hariomananda - have dedicated their

lives to its promotion. Advocate Rakotondrainbe and Mr. Razafimbelo Paul and a band of wonderful seekers have joined hands to ensure its successful working. Not they, but God in them. And this God is omnipotent and omniscient. He knows what to do, and when, and He has the power to do it.

I shall say 'Veloma', not in its implied meaning of 'parting', but in its real meaning of 'long may you all live'. There is a very great future for the Malagasy people. May the Almighty illumine your path and lead you to the goal. May God bless you all. It is at your feet that my humble head will always be, in supreme gratitude for the privilege given to me of serving you, for all the acts of kindness and loving hospitality I have enjoyed, and for demonstrating the Presence of God so vividly to me.

August 7th, 1963 - Swami Venkatesananda

Swami Venkatesananda, a disciple of the late Swami Sivananda of the Divine Life Society, will be leaving Tamatave per 'S/S Ferdinand des Lesseps' on August 6th, for Mauritius.

Swamiji is well versed in English, Tamil, Telegu and Hindi. He is the author of many books and a keen player of Veena. During his one week stay in our midst, he will be the guest of Mr. M.S. Veeramundar, of Bourbon Street, Port Louis. He will be leaving for South Africa by the 13th of August on a lecture tour.

August 9th, 1963 - Swami Venkatesananda

Swami Venkatesananda landed in Mauritius on August 9th, arriving from Madagascar by 'S/S Ferdinand des Lesseps'. There were many sincere people to welcome him, among whom we could see the Honourable B. Ramlallah, Mr. M.S. Veeramundar, who is the Manager of S. Veeramundar and Co. of Bourbon Street, Port Louis, Mr. S.K.R. Pydiah, the honorary president of the Mauritius Andhra Maha Sabha, Mr. Gopaul, Mr. Romriky Ramasaniv, Mr. Shivapragassen, Mr. Mudaliar, Mr. Saminaden Veeramundar, the president of the Tamil Samudaya Vriddhi Sangham.

Swamiji is staying with Mr. M.S. Veeramundar at Rose Hill. We welcome him. It is a matter of great pride to us that we have Swami Venkatesananda in our midst. He is a direct disciple of Swami Sivananda who was a doctor of medicine and surgery. Sivananda founded the Divine life Society in 1938. The Society has been serving the people in innumerable ways for the physical, mental, spiritual and educational regeneration of mankind. Many institutions sprung up around Swamiji - each representing an aspect of the Divine consciousness that emanated from him. Thus were born the Yoga Vedanta Forest University, the All World Religious Federation, the All World Sadhus Federation, the Sivananda publication League, the Sivananda Ayurvedic Pharmacy, the Sivananda Nature-cure Sanatorium, the Sivananda Charitable Hospital and the Sivananda Medical Mission. Just as the wasp that changes the worm into its own likeness, Sivananda, who is the author of more than 250 books on ethics, psychology, philosophy and medicine, transformed Venkatesananda into his own spiritual likeness, when the latter was enjoying the unalloyed bliss at the sylvan solitude of

the Himalayas. Swami Venkatesananda was initiated into the order of Monk in 1947, by the late Swami Sivananda.

Swami Venkatesananda was born in a village near Tanjore in 1921. He was brought up in a respectable family of Vaishnava Brahmins. Swami Venkatesananda is the author of more than a dozen spiritual books. He is already acclaimed as a great saint of India.

He is well-known to the world as the chronicler-editor of the monumental work, 'Sivananda's Lectures: All-India Tour'. He was the famous editor of the Yoga-Vedanta Forest University weekly, an inspiring organ published from Ananda-Kutir, India. He has a great aptitude and love for music, meditations and what not. He is unassuming and unpretentious in his thoughts, words and deeds. His spotless character is enough to infuse in us power and inspiration.

He has already accomplished remarkable works in Madagascar. He gave innumerable inspiring talks on Raja Yoga which was appreciated by the inhabitants of Tananarive, Tamatave and Majunga. He was able through the grace of God and his Guru, to request the people in Madagascar to open an Ashram there. And his work was fruitful in Madagascar. A well-equipped Ashram was opened by him there.

On his world tour, he found it very necessary to visit Mauritius, though a small island. He is full of bubbling enthusiasm to serve mankind.

Swami Venkatesananda says: 'It is my creed to serve everybody, irrespective of creed, caste or colour. My religion is universal: to cheer up the depressed, to infuse power and joy in all, to feel oneness with each and every creature and to treat all with equal vision.'

Swamiji's philosophy is not a dream subjective, world negative doctrine of illusion. It is the theory of the divinity of the universe, the immortality of the soul of man.

He stayed for a considerable length of time in South Africa where there are many branches of the Divine Life Society. He is leaving Mauritius again for South Africa within 3 weeks. America, Australia, Europe, and Africa need his spiritual guidance.

Swamiji has consented to give a series of talks on Raja Yoga, besides the teachings of Sivananda in Mauritius. He will give special courses or talks on Yoga Asanas to the Mauritian youths.

Meernaidoo T. Somanah

August 23rd, 1963 - A Swami Meets the Press

Last Tuesday Swami Venkatesananda at a Press conference revealed several interesting aspects on which Yoga is based. After explaining some principles which guide Yoga - the integration of one's personality in his own self in society and in God, the Swamiji stressed that Yoga is in fact not a religious doctrine. Swamiji further declared that Yoga itself admits followers of all religions, and God's presence exists in all beings, alive or inert. For him, suffering and sacrifices are but a path to attain the divine being.

Replying to a question, Swamiji declared that the word Hinduism comes not from ancient writings, but from geography. Today Hinduism is adopted as a religion by

the people of India. But this religion is so vast that in every religion and in every philosophy one would detect the basic knowledge of Hinduism. And this religion becomes powerful because it does not reject any Laws, but absorbs all good laws professed by other religions of the world. Even the divine laws of Buddhism and Jainism manifest their existence in this vast religion - Hinduism.

There are 12 central Ashrams in India, but the real number of Ashrams amounts to thousands, since there are about 7 lakh Sadhus in India.

A disciple of the universally known and Guru (preceptor) Swami Sivanauda, Swami Venkatesananda's motto is 'to serve, love and meditate.' The followers of the Divine Life Society belong to every community from all parts of the world and this society has more than 250 branches outside India.

The Swami will leave us on 28th of August for South Africa.

August 1963 - Meet Swami Venkatesananda

Undoubtedly it is astounding when I say that Swami Venkatesananda has come to Mauritius to serve the youth. Yes, readers, he has come here to serve the youth. This is what he revealed to the journalists at the press conference held on Tuesday morning at the residence of Mr. M.S. Veeramundar, where Swamiji is staying.

After touring Madagascar, Swami Venkatesananda made up his mind to pay a visit to Mauritius on the advice of the Indian Commissioner there. On his arrival he went to pay a visit to Mr. Aunauth Bheejadhur, the Minister of Education and Cultural Affairs, who entertained him about our youth problems; hence his enthusiasm to meet the youth.

But why is Swamiji eager to meet the youth? This is his rejoinder to the query: the youth are suffering from a mental conflict, they are indifferent to religion, it is certainly due to the fratricidal quarrels in which the old people are involved. They are being used as catpaws.

As Swami Venkatesananda will leave Mauritius for South Africa on August 28th, he will not be able to bring to fruition his proposed tasks; but he hopes to return next year and will try to establish a school where yoga physical culture, the teaching of Swami Sivanauda, the Gita, etc. will be taught. The school will be opened to anyone irrespective of his caste, colony and creed. Here are the answers to two very interesting questions put to Swamiji:

Q. Could you give us a definition of Hinduism?

A. Hinduism is difficult to define briefly: nevertheless I will try. Hinduism is a name derived from Geography, but today it is a word which refers to religion practised by the majority of the people of India, and the religion is so vast in its ramifications that you can find in it the echo of every philosophical thought in the world. It absorbs and assimilates everything good. For instance, in our days Buddha was supposed to have established Buddhism; but Lord Buddha is worshipped as Avatar of God. In Hinduism there is no proselytization.

Q. There are some loose talks nowadays about Tamils not being Hindus. Could you give your news about this?

A. Tamils are Hindus, they are part and parcel of the Hindu community.

Before we departed, Swamiji confided to us: 'Mauritius will soon get its

independence, it is important to build a Mauritian nation and culture. I hope that when I come back, I will be able to help in this endeavour and hope it will be fruitful.'

Swami Venkatesananda wants to put into practice the motto of his Master, Swami Sivananda: 'Serve, love, meditate and realise.' Naturally, with his magnetic personality, he will be able to accomplish it and infuse that spirit into our youth, so that the word Mauritian nation will not wait for long to materialize.

World As Body of God

Swamiji's Radio Talk, Mauritius

Om. It is by a miracle of God's Grace that I am able to address my beloved sisters and brothers of this beautiful and prosperous island. For this privilege I thank God, the M.B.S., and you.

Modern world is moving very fast to its own goal of human weal. Everywhere you hear about campaigns to stamp out hunger, illiteracy, disease and slavery. These are what our religion, our Dharma, the Indian religion or Hinduism promises. Let me explain to you what this word Dharma means. Dharma means 'a factor or force that sustains, protects and brings together'. Brings together what? Brings us all together. Binds us all in a wonderful and divine cord of love. Anyone using this Dharma to divide society into antagonistic groups is spreading irreligion and doing the greatest harm to our Dharma. Ultimately Dharma unites us with God. You can readily see now, by this very definition, that our religion or Dharma ought to promote the prosperity of mankind and also ensure the salvation of man. By keeping us together in a bond of love, we are almost compelled to serve one another and thus promote one another's interests and welfare. By uniting us with God, we are liberated from pettiness, worldliness, selfishness and greed. Here is the greatest miracle possible on earth: the silent transformation of the human heart, which our Dharma brings about. It reminds us that we are, all of us, parts of the Body of God, which is the universe. Whatever may be our profession or position in society, whatever may be our physical or mental statute, whatever may be our nationality or religious creed, whatever may be the other superficial differences - let us never forget that we form the One Body of God, inseparably united in him. Our Dharma boldly proclaims this Truth: however much we try to ignore or to run away from our fellowman, however much we try to hate or harm our neighbour, we cannot. It is only being foolish and ignorant. It is like running away from our own shadow; it is like the feet trying to run away from the head. We, all of us, form the One Body of God. In him we are all one. We may have our own characteristic faculties and temperament, different from our neighbours - but we are all one in God. We may follow different paths to Him and call ourselves Hindus, Muslims and Christians - but in His Love we are all united, and eventually we shall all reach His Feet. There is no doubt of this.

All our efforts at the betterment of the lot of mankind seem to fail only because we have not yet realised this transformation of the human heart and tilled our heart with cosmic love, which our Dharma demands of us. We should realise, here and now, that we are all one in God. The same life-force throbs in all hearts. The other man too has feelings, emotions and sentiments, as much as you and I

have. The other man too is subject to hunger, thirst, heat and cold, pain and pleasure, and he, too, desires, and has a right to have, food, clothing and shelter, social security and justice. It is this spirit that enables us to rejoice in the happiness of others.

Isn't that the greatest miracle? We are unhappy, not because someone is making us miserable, but because our heart has become so narrow that we want only our own happiness. Let us remember that we are all parts of the One Body of God. If there is a toothache, the whole body becomes sick. One part of the body cannot be healthy while some other part is decaying or dying. All of us constitute the one Body of God; we can never be happy unless we learn to promote one another's happiness, unless we learn to rejoice in the happiness of our neighbour. The good man delights in the joy of others - that is the greatest miracle: the transformation of the heart of man.

Selfishness is an animal instinct. The extremely selfish man is an animal. The moderately selfish man who lives and lets others live, too, is human. The truly unselfish man is a divine being. We live, in order that we may reach that stage one day. To become divine is our goal. It is inevitable that we should reach that goal one day, some day, in this or a later life. With God given intelligence we can hasten our progress to this goal.

True unselfishness is not possible unless we recognise the hidden God in all. We cannot love one another truly unless we recognise that the same God, Who dwells in our heart, dwells in the hearts of all. We cannot truly serve mankind and work for the good of all unless we feel that all of us together form the Body of God. This knowledge, understanding, and realisation should come first. Only then will political systems, economic theories, and technological progress bear fruit.

Without this inner transformation, the selfish man will only wish to turn all these to his own advantage - and history tells us how disastrous that can be.

Hence, all the great saints and saviours of the world have proclaimed that we should seek God first and live a righteous life and then we shall view the world and all the benefits and pleasures it offers us in the proper light and utilise them for the good and well-being of all. Unless we seek God with all our heart, we shall not be able to experience His Omnipresence nor the truth that the world is the Body of God.

It is dangerous to pay lip-homage to this doctrine. We should sincerely pray to Him, meditate upon Him everyday. We should endeavour every moment of our life to express through loving service of our neighbour the inner faith that God is Omnipresent and that all of us form the One Body of God. We should love all, perceiving the Light of God shining in all faces. It is then that we shall truly be human beings, eligible to evolve into Godhead. That is our goal. Whatever be our occupation or temperament, birth or faith - that is our goal. Let us never forget it for a moment.

This is in essence the teaching of all the great Masters of the world. This is the essence of the teaching of all religions. This is the essence of the teaching of my own Gurudev, Swami Sivananda. May God bless you all and may love and unity prevail in this wonderful island.

A Word of Thanks

Om Namo Narayanava. The past fortnight has been one of many miracles. I came as a transit passenger: but now, when I have to leave Mauritius, I am leaving in my heart behind for the people; especially the youth have won my heart.

God brings us all together for His own purpose. My meeting Mr. Mr.

Veeramundar on board the ship, a letter of introduction which H.E. the Indian Ambassador at Tananarive gave me for the Hon. Mr. Beejadhur, the unexpected acquaintance of the Hon. Dr. Ramgoolan, at the Municipal Theatre on the 15th, are just a few of the miracles that turned my holiday in Mauritius into a holy fortnight of service of His children. I see behind these the divine hand of my Master Swami Sivananda.

The love and sincerity with which everyone pleaded that I should continue to stay here for some more time is irresistible; the eagerness with which the youth seek the knowledge of Yoga is God's call to me, His humble servant, to serve them; for, who speaks through them but God Himself.

If God wills, I shall be in this good land to serve His sons and daughters, in a few months' time. When I do come, it will be to serve all - irrespective of any distinctions - through all organisations and institutions, as the servant of the people, the Manifest God, and of my Master.

To single out a few to pay my homage or to express my gratitude might be misleading. Yet, I cannot resist mentioning some specially, while I must assure you that all - many whose names I do not know - have been extremely kind and gracious. There are two young hearts which throb with the heart of the youth in this island: the Hon. Mr. Beejadhur and Mr. Servan Singh. There are countless hearts that bleed out of sympathy and love for our Dharma and culture, of whom I came into contact with a few, the Hon. Mr. Ramlallah, Mr. Beehary, Mr. Ruhee. I had the greatest good fortune of meeting several people keenly interested in the spiritual aspect of Yoga, like Mr. Sivapragasan, Mr. Purmessar, and a number of young men of Stanley led by Mr. Velayudhan and ladies from Vacoas. Last but not least, I am grateful to God for having brought me into contact with two saintly personalities who shine by their supreme goodness - the Hon. Dr. Ramgoolam and the Indian Commissioner, H.E. Mr. Kidwai - who demonstrate in their life that man can rise above all differences and distinctions and espouse the cause of Man. To them all, to H.E. the Governor for a half hour of delightful talk I had with him on the last day of my stay here, and all the organisations that brought me into contact with the public and gave me a touching welcome and farewell, and to my noble host Mr. Veeramundar who sacrificed all his time to be with me most of his time, to Mr. Abdullah Currimiee, to H.H. Sri Swami Kirtananda, and to my spiritual brother Mr. Meernaidu Somanah, whose loving encouragement sustained me in my service of the youth of Mauritius - my grateful thanks. May God bless them and you all.

Swami Venkatesananda

August 30th, 1963 - Bon Voyage

Le Citoyen, Mauritius: I have much pleasure in writing these few lines on behalf of my Federation, to wish 'Bon Voyage' to Swami Venkatesananda, who has

endured the stress and strain of his short stay in our emerald island, particularly among us - the youth - to teach and impart with sincerity of purpose and loving encouragement that the large measure of courtesy, friendship and above all, spiritual growth which is so cherished by one and all.

I cannot but take this opportunity of extending to Swami Venkatesananda our best wishes and God-speed and assure him of our keen interest to meet him soon.
M.H. Rhyman Saib, President, Port Louis Youth Federation

August 30th, 1963 - Au Revoir

On Wednesday last, Swami Venkatesananda left the colony by the South African Airways for Johannesburg. Among those who had gone to the airport to bid him farewell were Shree Ayer of the Draupadi Ammen temple, Hons. Vele Govinden and B. Ramlallah, Messrs. K. Sunasee, S. Veeramundar, K. Armugum, S. Sivapragassen, Dave and several prominent personalities.

Two farewell meetings were organised in his honour, one at the Draupadi Ammen temple and the other by the Mauritius Hindu Hymn Society at the Marrimen Hall, Port Louis.

During his three-week stay in our midst, Swamiji had given several lectures and demonstrations of Hatha Yoga for our youth. Everywhere he won the admiration and respect of each and everyone by his deep learning, his dynamism and his psychological approach to problems facing the youth specially. We hope Swamiji will return to this country for a longer stay.

September 20th, 1963 - Twenty Days in Mauritius

I went to Mauritius on August 9th as a transit passenger, and had not the least idea of what the Lord had in store for me.

The Indian Ambassador in Madagascar asked me to meet the Education Minister of Mauritius. And, the Education Minister immediately introduced me to a wonderful youth organisation in that small island.

It is a remarkable and indeed very wise way of building a nation. They have hundreds of youth clubs in that small island, that provide the youth with a variety of cultural activities.

The youth were interested not only in yoga physical exercises which I demonstrated at one centre every day, but also in the practical aspects of religion. They listen if it is presented in their language. They are eager to learn if their eager questioning is not dismissed as irrelevant or irreverent.

We must meet them. Mauritius may well show the world the best method of nation-building.

The advantage in living in a small island is that we can contact everybody in minutes. The Master's Grace had taken me to the island at an opportune period. At the Indian Independence celebrations (which the Hindu Maha Sabha combined with a reception to me) I met the noble, soft spoken and kindly Chief Minister, Dr. Ramgoolam.

A few days later he presided over one of my meetings. It is Mauritius' good fortune to have such a saintly man at the helm of affairs.

There are a goodly number of Hindu temples, Christian churches and Muslim mosques. The Government is truly secular. It subsidizes all of them. Religion is encouraged, but the Government does not take sides.

This is a very good idea. Elsewhere we find 'secular' governments encouraging irreligious trends. Religion, if truly understood, preached and practised, is the very best cementing factor to unite mankind and promote human weal.

Durban

Swami Venkatesananda returned from Mauritius and spent a few days in the Transvaal, before returning to Durban. The 40 days spent in Durban were mostly restful - with a few talks to private groups of Yoga-students, and preparing for the mission in Cape Town, etc. On September 8th, he addressed a huge gathering at the Ashram in connection with Gurudev's Birthday and farewell to Swami Sahajananda. The Swami also visited Pietermaritzburg and a few other Branches during this period.

October 22nd, 1963 - Cape Town

Swami Venkatesananda, the Hindu monk from a monastery on the holy Ganges River, who is at present in Cape Town, where he is lecturing on Yoga as a way of life, is anything but a visionary who only sits and meditates.

The Swami, who wears a saffron robe and wooden kaparrings, has a lively sense of humor and warns his listeners that Yoga is more than 'gymnastics'. To concentrate on exercises without learning to acquire that essential 'equilibrium' of mind is, according to him, like laying a table and not serving any food. The Swami is working on a diary which will have a verse or two from the Bhagavad Gita - the universal scripture - for each day of the year. He is an expert shorthand typist. Another accomplishment of his is the ability to use a linotype. The Divine Life Society of South Africa has published a special edition of the Gita in the Republic, which has a tribute to the Swami by the publishers, who say that he has an expert knowledge of Sanskrit, which made the edition possible. Also that the entire linotype setting of 900 pages of the book was done by him.

October 26th, 1963 - A Man Of Peace Among Us

Swami Venkatesananda is again in Cape Town - he came to South Africa in 1961 - and his lectures on the 'Bhagavad Gita' have drawn thousands of people of all races to the Mowbray Town Hall.

What impresses everyone about this wandering, saffron-robed ascetic is that he is a profoundly religious man who, through years of study, meditation and renunciation, has become the very personification of what he preaches. And what makes everyone love him is that he does not expect others to be as dedicated as he is himself.

One cannot help being drawn by his sense of humour, his wisdom and tolerance, his reverence for life and his amazing erudition - he can discuss anything from the Beethoven symphonies to Sanskrit.

His gentle manner, his calm unlined face, his lucid thought are the outward signs of a yogic discipline of body and mind. And a very strict discipline it must be in a life of absolute renunciation, not only of material and physical things, but of his own individuality which must not be allowed to stifle the potential spiritual growth that leads ultimately to the perfect state of being at one with God - Moksha - the peace that passes all understanding.

In his long travels since he left his austere monastic life at Rishikesh in the Himalayas four years ago, the Swami has carried no money, no food, no possession of any kind. He literally owns nothing except his orange robes, the rosary of glass beads, his padukas, the religious and philosophical books he has written and, of course, the Bhagavad Gita, a scriptural work of the boldest eclecticism which declares his faith. This is the unity of all men with God and the Hindi belief in universal peace and the brotherhood of all mankind.

He told me that he eats only enough to live and the one and only meal of the day is lentil porridge or fruit. He wakes up at 4 am. every day and devotes the hours before dawn to prayer and thought and the rest of the day is spent in studying, writing, preparing lectures and doing yogic exercises.

While our Indian hosts served us with a delicious vegetable curry, the Swami theologised over a small plate of sliced apple. He sat on a chair, to be polite, but being unused to such western comforts, he soon adopted his favorite squatting posture with legs folded and feet resting on his thighs.

No country has a religious literature so vast and complex as India. The creeds of Hinduism have come from a manifold mass of ancient myths. But from these the nameless thinkers of the Upanishads and the Bhagavad Gita have given the Hindu religion glories of unsurpassed achievement.

When the Swami spoke of these, his eyes closed in concentration and his expressive hands were raised as if to embrace the whole universe, for it is this universality or rather what he calls cosmic-consciousness that is the essence of his religious thought.

'From dust to God' is one of his favourite expressions, and it means that everything, living or dead, has the potentiality of God.

This potentiality, this ability to evolve or grow is the soul or essence of all life. It is what Spinoza called the uncaused cause. Its power and growth lie in its potentiality and I can only illustrate this by pointing to the potentiality vapour of becoming water. And when it has so manifested its potentiality we call it jiva.

'It might interest you to know that we compare this thought with the story of Adam and Eve. We think they are the same stories re-stated in two different faiths. After all, the story of Adam and Eve originated in an area where Hinduism was the current religion. Phonetically the names sound the same; atma - Adam: jiva - Eve.'

This led the Swami to discuss another fascinating Hindu theory - that basically there is only one religion in the world.

We now know that the Aryans migrated southwards. Some of them might have taken the central Asian route through China, Mongolia and Tibet. Others obviously took the European route southwards through Greece and the Middle East to the valley of the Indus.

What is most interesting is that all the great religions and systems of philosophy

were born in these areas from time to time: Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Confucianism, Buddhism, and Hinduism all originated in this vast religious belt of the world. If we approach the great religious and spiritual classics of the world, bearing all this in mind, we will find lots of common ground. The fundamentals are the same. The differences were caused by geographical conditions, climate and political upheavals.

Unlike the Buddhists who believe that ultimate bliss lies in perfect extinction, the Hindus of the Bhagavad Gita believe that life in its physical or spiritual forms goes on in an everlasting cycle. They see everything animate and inanimate as 'part of the body of God.'

'I belong to the monistic school of the Advaita', the Swami said. 'This monism makes no distinction, even between you and God. We see things as a great unity'. Finally, was there anything about our Western way of life that he would care to remark on? 'Yes', he said. 'The thing that worries me is the divorce of your spiritual religion from your daily life. You go to church on Sundays, but you do what you like the rest of the week. That worries me.'

I dare say it worries us too.

Brian Barrow

October 31st, 1963 - Tibetan Tea

Swami Venkatesananda, who will be concluding his course of philosophical lectures on the Bhagavad Gita in the Mitra Hall (commenced October 18th and held daily), Mount Street, Mowbray, tomorrow, has introduced a new way of preparing tea to Cape Town. He refers to it as 'Tibetan tea.'

According to the Swami this tea has a beneficial effect on the digestive system as well as its strengthening qualities. It is made in the same way as ordinary tea but instead of milk, a spoonful or two of butter is stirred into it. The Swami then adds sugar, but explains with a glint in his eye, that the accepted way to drink Tibetan tea is to use salt instead of sugar.

October 31st, 1963 - Eastern Cult Leader

Port Elizabeth: Swami Venkatesananda, disciple of Sri Swami Sivananda, founder of the Divine Life Society, will make his second visit to Port Elizabeth on November 6th. He last toured South Africa in 1961, and is at present in Cape Town. He will be welcomed by the Port Elizabeth branch of the Divine Life Society at the Moslem Institute at 7.30 pm. and during the evening there will be demonstrations of Yoga exercises by students of Yoga. From the following evening till November 20th at 7.30 pm., Swami Venkatesananda will lecture on 'The Philosophy and the Teaching of the Bhagavad Gita,' at the Gujarati Hall. Swami Venkatesananda left a promising career in 1945, and entered religion. Since leaving the Rishikesh Monastery four years ago, he has travelled extensively preaching and lecturing.

November 16th, 1963 - Swami Talks of Original Religion

'Where do I come from?' This question has intrigued man more than any other since he first found himself able to inquire and to reason. For countless centuries he has probed into history trying to trace his roots, his origins. He has never really succeeded because the mists of time shroud pre-history in a veil which no anthropologist, archaeologist or philosopher has ever penetrated completely. Much of what we believe about our origins is based on theory. Take the first civilisation. Did it arise in Sumer (Mesopotamia) about 5,000 years ago, as many scientists say? Or in Lumeria (the lost continent of the Pacific) about 100,000 years ago, as many mystics say? Or did it arise in the Arctic around 15,000 years ago? Was this the home of the mystical Aryans - the bringers of civilisation to the world?

I had the privilege this week of hearing at first hand this new (to me) theory about the birthplace of civilisation. And a totally fascinating one it was, too. It was explained to me by one of the most unforgettable people I have met - a man with eyes of gentle fire and a heart of burning compassion. His hair is greying and closely-cropped. His skin is light and clear. He breathes health and serenity and dedication. He wears an orange robe - 'to remind us of that fire of wisdom and renunciation - and wooden sandals ('paduka') held in place by a knob between the toes, and prayer beads ('mala') around his neck. He speaks English fluently, as he does Hindi and Tamil. He is a Swami, which means in Hindi 'a Master' - a religious teacher.

Swami Venkatesananda came to the Eastern Cape to teach and talk about the Divine Life Society, an international, non-denominational philosophical group. The Swami has served the group since 1945, including 16 years spent in a monastery. He came to South Africa from India in 1961 to work for the movement here.

I asked him about Hinduism - and he explained many things, mentioning in passing the 'Arctic Civilisation'. 'Hinduism is not a single, religious sect or cult,' the Swami said. 'It is a united religious organisation which finds in itself reflections of the fundamentals of all religions.' 'We have no prophets. Our Swamis are only the teachers'.

'Centuries ago, the Greek invaders coined the word 'Hindu' to describe the people living in the Indus River Valley in north-west India. The religion these people practised therefore became known as Hinduism. 'The origin of the religion is lost in time; so we attribute it directly to God.' 'When you ask a pious Hindu what his religion is, he will not say 'Hinduism', but he will say 'Sanathana Dharma' - the 'ancient religion'.' And that brought us on to time Vedas - most ancient of the Hindu holy books, so old that no one has ever established when it was originally written.

I listened, intrigued, as the Swami went on: 'The Veda refers to periods when the sun never set. This has led Hindu scholars to assume that the book could therefore not have been written in India at all. But where, then?

'In recent years, three scholars found what they accept as the answer. Where does the sun sometimes not set for long periods? At the Arctic and the Antarctic, of course.' 'Exploring their theory further, the scholars found that the oldest Scandinavian holy book is known as the Edda - very similar to Veda.

'And so the theory holds that the world's first civilisation - the Aryans - arose in

the Arctic region 15,000 or 20,000 years ago. These Arvyns were the original humans. Theirs was the first religion, too, from which all other religions have stemmed.' 'As they migrated south-wards into Europe, Asia and the rest of the world, they carried their religion with them. They brought the Veda into India.' The Swami says that if you accept this theory that all the religions had a common origin, you can understand the Bible more easily, too. 'Take the story of Adam and Eve. There is a Hindu word 'Atma' which means the God-soul within the living soul in every man. There is another word 'Jiva' which means the living soul. 'Atma-Adam, Jiva-Eve. They sound similar, don't they? Eve was formed from Adam, as the living soul is formed from the God-soul.'

We talked on for a long time and I found myself under the spell of this gentle man whose serene eyes flashed with humour at the slightest provocation.

But space, again, is my enemy and I can tell you no more. I would be interested to hear any comments on the Swami's theories.

Adam Brand

November 26th, 1963 - Indian Swami Speaks At Prize-Giving

Queenstown: Discipline, concentration and observation were the key-words to education - the foundation of the future generation - said Swami Venkatesananda in Queenstown on Friday night.

The Swami, who comes from India and has been in South Africa for the past three years, was speaking at the annual prize-giving of the Maria Louw High School in the Industrial Hall at the Showgrounds.

Young and old alike were students, he said. 'Some are students of this school, all of us, even you little ones, are students of the bigger, wider school without a compound - the world.' 'But there is a very big difference, and that is that this school without a compound is not without a foundation.' 'All students, particularly the younger ones, were the foundation of the future nation.

'I do not know anything about politics, I am not a politician. I do not know what this wonderful country is going to be like when you grow up to take charge of it. But may I express the hope that among you boys and girls there may be leaders of the nation of tomorrow. Among you there may be, who knows, Ministers, Prime Ministers, spiritual leaders, ministers in the church. Anyone of you may become a Bishop or an Archbishop. Maybe there are Saints, whose names will be remembered, not only by people of that particular generation, but for all time - who knows?'

'But have you got the ambition, have you got the goal, have you got that ideal before you that one day through God's grace I may become a leader. I may have to occupy the position of a leader. God may choose me for the position of a leader.'

'That is the roof of the building, but the building will not stand unless the foundation is laid in good time. It is in order to enable you to lay the foundation that you are sent to school while you are young.'

Often the older ones asked themselves, 'What is wrong with us? This world is full of good people. Yet, we are unhappy.'

He said politicians told one they had the solution to all the problems of the world:

industrialists, businessmen and economists were happy as long as they had other people's money in their pockets; the social leaders and religious leaders: 'Come fill my church, fill my mosque, fill my temple and all the problems of the world will be solved.' 'But this was not going to save anyone from unhappiness or give them peace. One needed a foundation, and education was the foundation.

'I do not say these good people have not been educated in schools and colleges. The philosophers have all been well educated - they are well-read. 'But have they even understood the meaning of the word 'education?' He once had a teacher who took a personal interest in his education, who used to tell him: 'My son, if you want to acquire right education, develop the dictionary habit. If you want to avoid committing errors in speaking and writing, cultivate the dictionary habit.' 'Even if one is in doubt, do not take things for granted, refer to the dictionary.'

Even the leaders, and particularly those who were responsible for the education of the young, not the school boards of the Department of Education, but also the parents, refused to look into the dictionary to find out what the word, education, meant. According to the dictionary education meant : 'The systematic training of the moral and intellectual faculties.' 'Are we anywhere near this definition?', the Swami asked. 'I am not criticising the present system of education, but I am only giving the position as it appears to me.'

He had seen children, not only in South Africa, but in India and other countries, going to school with 'box loads of books.' 'All those books have to be read, not studied.' They had to be crammed and the students had no time to digest. You all know what happens when something you eat is not digested - nausea, and it must come out.'

All this knowledge came out at examination time, and everything was forgotten during the holidays which followed. 'This,' said Swami Venkatesananda, 'is surely not education. That is not the purpose for which young onus go to school.' 'If book-knowledge is the aim of education, then it is a waste of time sending children to school'. People should then wait until they are about 30 or 40 when they are better able to digest book-knowledge.

The aim of education was to lay the foundation of morality and intellect, and discipline - the most important. A young plant could be bent to suit the need, but when it grew up, it became stiff and unbending, so that any bending would break it. 'And that is what is happening all over the world. Everywhere people are being broken and the whole situation is coming close to the breaking point.' Why? Because the foundation had not been laid. He said it was with a slight pang he had heard the Principal say in his report earlier that the matrices had not done very well.

'It is unnecessary if this text-book reading is taken as a measure of intellectual discipline. Then it is all the more valuable.' 'You can study more text-books if you like - you can read day and night if you like, provided you are prepared to discipline yourselves.' 'If there is discipline, all the text-books can be studied, digested, and you need not be afraid of failure, neither at school, nor in the wider school of the world.'

Failures were only due to lack of discipline. 'We do not like discipline. We are like wild horses.'

Comics, found on the desks and in the bags of many school-children, had no

place there. The Swami referred to them as 'tragic books' and said they were 'a terrible obstacle in the way of our young men and women disciplining themselves.' If they were banished, he was quite sure that 'the highest ambition we have for these young ones will be fulfilled.' 'Cowboy stories and comics have filled the young mind with filth, and there is no place for them in our libraries.' One should have the deepest respect for one's teacher - almost a reverential devotion, which would promote receptivity. 'He should be given God-like status and, even if he punished you for no reason you should bear it, and now that he is interested in you and that he is teaching you the powers of endurance.'

All students - those at school and all the older people - should learn their lessons thoroughly, and should be prepared for the test - examinations in the case of the younger ones, and disease or even death in that of the older ones.

At school and at college one should learn to acquire complete knowledge - one should be thorough. Every text should be thoroughly absorbed, 'It is then that we shall satisfy the second half of the definition of education - systematic training of intellectual faculties.'

'If this is done, then all the books we are asked to study at school are worth studying, because, whether they are going to be useful to us in our lives or not, they will at least provide intellectual training. 'Even subjects which do not interest you now, or which have no bearing on the business of living and achieving success in later life, can be studied provided you bear in mind that they are there to provide you with systematic training of your intellectual faculties. In conclusion the Swami said: 'May I pray to the Almighty that when the time comes for you to leave this school, you will have lived your life here in a manner which will make everyone connected with your education - your parents, your teachers and your principal, your nation and ultimately the whole world, proud of you.'

December 5th, 1963 - He Generates A Spirit of Goodwill And Happiness

To own virtually nothing and yet to be happy and to generate a spirit of goodwill to all with whom one comes into contact is a quality very rarely found. Such a man is Swami Venkatesananda, who recently visited Queenstown.

The Swami, who spoke at the Maria Louw High School prize-giving, at the Girls' High School and in Tarkastad while staying in Queenstown, left India four years ago and has since been traveling around the Republic lecturing and preaching.

R. Haxton

November 30th, 1963 - Indian Swami On Visit To East London

East London: An Indian teacher, Swami Venkatesananda, who spent 16 years as a monk in the Order of Sanyasa and was once invited to speak from the pulpit of an Anglican church, is at present in East London on a lecture tour. The Swami will spend until December 6th, speaking nightly in the Hindu Temple, North End, on the theory and practice of Yoga as revealed in the Hindu teaching of Bhagavad Gita. For some years he has been touring South Africa and territories farther north, and his Present tour has been sponsored by the Divine Life Society, which

has 70 branches throughout this country.

The headquarters of the Society are in Rishikesh, Northern India, and it was there that he spent part of his life as a monk. He says that it is not the intention of Yoga to convert people to a particular faith and there was no truth in the idea that a person had to give up his or her religion in order to study Yoga.

'A yogi may continue practising his faith while studying yoga.' The interest in Yoga, he says, is growing daily.

Farewell to Zululand

From December 8th to 22nd, Swami Venkatesananda toured the entire Zululand, going to every important town in the whole area and addressing the people every day. He was the guest of a pious devotee Sri V.N. Naidu of Mposa. At Durban the Swami visited 'The Place of Safety' - an institution for coloured children, and took part in the Christmas Feast organised by 'The Windermere Road European Group'.

December 31st, 1963 - Yogi Converts Thousands On South Africa Tour

Johannesburg: Swami Venkatesananda, a man with a mission, will leave South Africa soon after claiming thousands of converts to his way of life - Yoga. Swami, a 43-year-old mystic who spent 16 years in a monastery at the foot of the Himalayas, is one of the greatest exponents of the Yoga cult in the West. Wearing only an orange ('the colour of fire') habit and a necklace of prayer-beads, owning nothing and living on the charity of fellow-Yogis, he has spent two-and-a-half years preaching in South Africa. Early in the New Year he will leave for Mauritius. He has written books and has traveled in his native India, Australia, and other African countries. The Swami - a rank used by those who have attained a high level of Yogic study - said yesterday: 'No one who is not a Yogi can understand the peace of mind I have, despite owning nothing. My mission in life is to make people realise the value of Yoga. People in South Africa, both Indians and Whites, are very enthusiastic. Since Yoga interferes with no religion, but helps us to greater appreciation of our own religion, it gives offence to no one.' He is giving a series of lectures, on the Gita in Johannesburg this week - from December 30th to January 11th 1964.

Young Boy Receives The Sacred Thread

In Durban's Bharat Hall on January 19th, a unique ceremony reminiscent of the culture of Bharat (India) was held when Sri Jagdish Chandra, the seven-year-old son of Pundit R.P. Joshi, was invested with the sacred thread and received the Holy Gayatri Mantra from Swami Venkatesananda of India.

The ceremony was both picturesque and symbolic. The young boy, with the permission of his parents and the public, seeks the feet of a teacher (Acharya). With his head shaven and clad in simple arment, he approaches the teacher with a prayer to be instructed in right knowledge. To signify his qualification to study the three Vedas, he is invested with the sacred thread which itself has a wealth of

symbolism in it. He holds a staff determined to put down any obstacle that may be-set his path. In ancient India this event marked the commencement of a long period of studentship - apprenticeship would perhaps be a more appropriate word - under the teacher, who imparted to him knowledge of all arts and sciences, besides Vedic knowledge.

He lives on alms: and our young initiate, Jagdish Chandra, also 'begged' for alms, received plenty and offered it to the Acharya.

At the conclusion of the period of studentship the young man is so fired with the desire to realise God or attain Moksha that he runs away to the forest. However, the elders dissuade him from such a premature attempt and point out that the path lies through righteous living of the household life before renouncing it altogether.

January 27th, 1964 - India Day Meeting

Cape Town: The 14th anniversary of the founding of the Republic of India was celebrated by the India Republic Day Celebration Committee in the Claremont Civic Center yesterday.

The guest speaker, Swami Venkatesananda, spoke on the spiritual heritage of India throughout the centuries. The children of the Gandhi Memorial School sang Indian folk songs and the Saraswati Orchestra played. The gathering was presided over by Mr. B. Chavda.

February 2nd, 1961 - Hindu Monk To Lecture Again In Cape Town

Swami Venkatesananda, a Hindu monk from a monastery in India, who has been lecturing to thousands of people all over the Republic in the past three years, has returned to Cape Town to give a fare-well series of lectures on the Bhagavad Gita and Yoga.

Mr G.R. Munsook, an official of the Divine Life Society of South Africa told the Cape Times that the Yogi had a big following in the peninsula, especially among the whites.

The Swami, who speaks faultless English, will lecture daily in the Mitra Hall, Mount Street, at 8 pm., starting tonight, till February 12th.

On Friday, the Swami gave a demonstration of yoga - posture known as -'fish-pose'. He told the Cape Times that the yogi feels that water is full of life-force - prana - and that the posture of lying effortless on water invigorates him.

8th February 8th, 1964 - Taking Things Easy

Swami Venkatesananda, the Hindu monk from the banks of the Holy Ganges, who is at present giving a farewell series of lectures - from February 3rd to 8th - on the Hindu Scriptures and on Yoga as a way of life, thinks that South Africa has too many psychiatrists. People go to have themselves examined mentally, 'alost with pride', whereas in the past it was a matter that was kept a secret, he says. The Swami maintains that much of the tensions that modern man suffers from stem from his practice of carrying over yesterday's worries to start today with.

Night was meant to help man to refresh his mind and body so that he can start the new day untrammelled with burdens of yesterday. Because we carry forward our worries of the past, we prepare ourselves for the psychiatrist's couch, says the Swami.

The Swami is essentially a practical man. He is a former civil servant who decided to become a Swami at the age of 25. He is now 43.

Besides being a homeopath - he studied the science in order to find a cure for hereditary ailment he had - he is a musician, a student of the Sanskrit, a shorthand typist and he knows how to operate a linotype machine. He set the type of the South African edition of the Bhagavad Gita.

Hundreds of people have been attending his free lectures all over the Republic, and on Sunday he will demonstrate a series of yoga exercises for physical and mental culture, when he lectures in the City Hall.

February 8th, 1964 - They crowd to hear Swami's Ancient Creed

Swami Venkatesananda, mystic an monk from the Himalayas, a man who owns virtually nothing of material things, will soon leave South Africa after a mission of several years here. His lectures in South Africa have drawn thousands who have wanted to hear his lectures on Yoga, based on the 5,000 old Bhagavad Gita.

The Mowbray Hall in which he has been speaking during his stay in Cape Town has been crowded to overflowing on every occasion. And when he gives his final demonstration of Yoga at the City Hall tomorrow, it is expected that the people of all races who will want to attend will exceed seating capacity.

When I met the swami yesterday, he was barefooted, wearing only an orange habit, and a necklace of prayer-beads. While we spoke, people of all races and creeds came to pay their respects to him, or to discuss problems. At the same time, a well-known artist was painting his portrait. His lectures are free. 'All I expect is blessings. I do not even ask for my listeners' allegiance to me.'

The Gita, he explains, shows people how to lead their own lives and yet to be conscious of God. He says the series of physical exercises he demonstrates are designed to bring good health, to free people from worries and tensions, to augment intellectual facilities and 'to unfold the spirit'.

The Swami has written many books, all in English, and one of them he typed direct on a linotype machine.

His interests are universal. Among them is music - he plays the Indian stringed instrument known as the Veena - and photography.

When I left, I asked how I should describe him - monk, mystic, ascetic?

'I am just a servant,' he said.

Staff Reporter, Cape Argus.

February 15th, 1964 - Swami's Portrait

At a farewell gathering in honour of the visiting Hindu monk Swami Venkatesananda on Thursday, a Hout Bay artist, Mrs. Laurel Zahn, presented him with a portrait of himself in his saffron robes. No gift could have been more acceptable to a sage who possesses hardly any worldly goods.

The Swami who left by air on Friday for Port Elizabeth on his way back to India, has made so many friends in South Africa among all sections that attempts are being made to get him to return soon.

Meanwhile the portrait, which captures his likeness very well, is being kept by the Divine Life Society in Cape Town. Swamis travel light when they move around.

February 10th, 1964 - Man's Life 'Artificial', says Swami

'Tranquillizers are slow poison'. Swami Venkatesananda, the mystic and monk from the Himalayas, told a large multi racial audience at the Cape Town City Hall yesterday afternoon, at the last lecture in South Africa on Yoga. And when the audience gasped, probably thinking of the number of tranquillizers they had taken, he said, 'I am serious'.

Ten tablets could kill a man, therefore one tablet could kill one-tenth. It was nothing else than slow poisoning; but for many it was the only way they could relax and sleep.

Supermarket Mind

Man's inability to relax was the cause of his unhappiness. He led an artificial life, did not use his mind or body as it was intended and was becoming increasingly lazy. Even asking him to make his mind a blank was almost an impossibility, because the mind was like a supermarket with separate compartments for all different thoughts.

Yoga, he said, developed health, peace and tranquility of mind, enabling people to live a full and efficient life.

The Swami, who was addressing a meeting promoted by the Divine Life Society, will leave South Africa soon.

February 21st, 1964 - Many Jews Interested In Yoga

Jews are among the large number of people in South Africa who are taking an interest in Yoga, according to Swami Venkatesananda, a mystic and monk from the Himalayas, who visited Cape Town after completing a lecture tour of the Republic and East Africa.

When the Swami gave a series of lectures on Yoga here recently, there were many Jews in the audience; while at a Yoga centre in Sea Point, more than 75 per cent of the 180 women pupils are Jewish.

Swami Venkatesananda told me he had worked closely with many Jews, both here and in Australia. 'Some of my best friends are Jewish,' he said. 'Their interest in finding the truth is perpetual. The Jewish people are always looking for more light, which could be one of the reasons why they become interested in Yoga.'

'Yoga', said the Swami, 'is a way of life. It is not a religion. Practice of the exercises develops health, peace and tranquility of mind.'

Port Elizabeth

A group of enthusiastic seekers - the Ranchhod Brothers - had joined hands with Sri V. Reddy and a number of Europeans - Mrs. Campbell, Mrs. Wood, Miss Kathy, and the members of a Yoga School, to make this last visit most eventful. The first meeting at Uitenhage on the 15th February was presided over by Mayor Lens.

The Feathermarket Hall was packed with people of all races on the night of February 17th, when the Swami demonstrated Yoga Asanas and explained their benefits.

The most memorable events of probably the whole tour were the Swami's address to the Christians - (a) at the Methodist Church Hall, presided over by Rev. R.D. Adendorff, and (b) at the Methodist Church in New Brighton (an African Township) on February 22nd. Everyone was amazed at the way in which the Africans received the Swami's message of Love and the keenness of spirit that they revealed.

On the 20th February, the Swami addressed a meeting in the City Hall, with Councilor Schauder presiding.

Mrs. Miriam Palmer painted the Swami's portrait.

The Swami also addressed the European Students at a High School on February 21st and even taught them Yoga Asanas on the spot.

Three big lectures were organized at the Rhodes University Hall.

Mrs. Mc Dowall of the Yoga School and all her students co-operated nicely to make the whole program a great success.

March 5th, 1964 - A Swami Talks On Yoga To Rhodes Audience

Grahamstown: 'Yoga is a way of life, and the Yogi is essentially a student who retains the spirit of seeking, thereby being able to live his life to the full.' This was said by Swami Venkatesananda at a Dissenters' Club meeting on 'Yoga, the way to health and success', on February 28th.

About 130 people including several members of staff attended. Before presenting his lecture, the Swami, dressed in the saffron robes of a Hindu monk, chanted an Indian prayer in a low monotone.

He said the art of Yoga was one of strict mental and bodily discipline, culminating in the complete subjugation of the body to the mind. This was possible only by employing intense concentration, and the Swami suggested that this concentration can only be brought about by complete relaxation, thereby removing all tense layers of the mind which would otherwise block the great latent spiritual power which was present in each one of us. Yoga was the art of utter relaxation, attention without tension, he said.

It was dangerous to acquire technical knowledge without mental discipline - as indeed was demonstrated at Hiroshima. With such discipline, however, it was possible to use all knowledge for the betterment of self and neighbour.

He stressed that the discipline of Yoga should be instilled into the youth at an early age, to enable him in later life to blossom out as a useful and constructive member of the community, and above all to enable him to live his own life to the full.

Still on the subject of youth, he suggested that the youth of today was far too much inclined to worry, and that this interfered with their ability and the enjoyment of their lives. Only by complete relaxation could one remain alert and able to grasp the opportunities presented to one throughout life, whereas overtenseness brought only disease, unhappiness and frustration.

He said that most of the troubles of people today sprang from overwrought and unhappy minds and this was a much more frequent disorder than any infectious ailment. He cited instances in which overwrought and disturbed people, believing themselves to be at death's door, had been cured overnight by injections of distilled water. 'The less one worries about one's health, the better one's health will be.'

Throughout his address, Swami Venkatesananda stressed the importance of making contact with the inner cure of the soul, from whence springs all power, wisdom and strength.

At the end of his lecture the Swami mounted the table, and, sitting cross-legged upon it, demonstrated two simple Yoga breathing exercises, the first consisting of a series of rapid inhalations and then holding the breath, the second being measured inhalations, first through the left nostril, then through the right. The importance of this latter exercise was in the fact that in inhaling through the right nostril, the air stimulated nerve endings which excited the nervous system, while inhaling through the left nostril had a sedative effect. These two exercises helped the Yogi to attain a state of relaxation.

February 28th, 1964 - Famous Swami Arrives in Queenstown

Queenstown: Swami Venkatesananda, mystic and monk from the Himalayas, arrived today in Queenstown on his second visit. The Swami, is making his second visit before going back to India after a mission of several years in South Africa.

His lectures, promoted by the Divine Life Society of South Africa, have drawn thousands who have wanted to hear him speak on Yoga, re-incarnation and other fascinating subjects, all based on the 5,000-year old 'Bhagavad Gita.' The Gita, he says, shows people how to lead their own lives and yet be conscious of God. The Swami will lecture on Monday and Tuesday at the Showgrounds. His lectures are free. 'All I expect is blessings. I do not even ask for my listeners' allegiance to me,' he says.

March 3rd, 1964 - Swami Tells Local Audience of Road To Happiness

Swami Venkatesananda, a monk who owns virtually nothing but his orange habit and his prayer beads, last night spoke on happiness and common sense to a multiracial audience at the Showgrounds.

'We are looking for happiness, but we are looking where it does not exist,' says a mystic and monk from the Himalayas. He said that modern man had lost the capacity to think logically. 'This is an age of logical absurdities,' he said. 'No one is prepared to think. At no time in our lives do we have the courage and wisdom to pause and think.' People tended to rush madly from one place to the other

regardless of safety, reason or feelings for others. For what reason?, he asked. 'What do we do with the time saved?'

Common Sense

In an age that prided itself on its common sense, was human behaviour consistent with common sense? The swami did not think so. 'We have surrendered the greatest gift of God - common sense.' The big question, he said, was how to be happy. Unfortunately the very things we want become headaches once we get them. 'Humans have all the troubles and none of the privileges of an animal. This is because we are not interested in using our intelligence.' The answer lay in the fact that happiness in this world was impossible 'unless we do enough to manifest the divine nature within us. We are dumb, driven creatures of our own habits.'

To be happy, one must love one's neighbour. Treat your neighbour as God, he urged. Treat the whole of mankind as the manifestation of God.

Universal

Was it not a fact, he asked, that the universal experience of happiness was to be with someone you loved? Therefore, if you want to be happy, always love all, and if you love all, the nearness of all will make you happy.'

At last night's meeting the Mayor, Councilor J.C. Marshall, welcomed the Swami to Queenstown on behalf of the people of Queenstown.

Mr. F.L. Green, who introduced the Swami, associated himself with the Mayor's welcome and urged the audience to listen to a man who had attained a very high degree in his religion, or, as he preferred to call it - philosophy.

Happiness

He felt sure that all who listened would go home richer and happier having listened to the positive message of a man who believed that all men were brothers irrespective of race or creed.

The Swami will tonight explain in fuller detail the true meaning of Yoga.

March 1964 - Priscilla's Diary

My Friend the Swami

What a stimulating evening I had last week with my visiting friend Swami Venkatesananda. You will have read about him in our columns before, for he was paying a second visit to Queenstown. Besides, you may even have had the pleasure of hearing him speak on Monday or Tuesday evening, over on the Showgrounds, where he delivered a really striking address. I listened to him myself on the first occasion, but I had already met him in person at an informal little party at home.

And what a charming gentleman he proved to be! What a learned gentleman, too. When we finally bade each other farewell, it was after 11 o'clock, and I could have

listened to his opinions and philosophy until 'the dawn came up like thunder'. What did we talk about? Well when you spend an evening with a Swami, you sit and listen! You let him do the talking.

I was inclined to be nervous at first, but he has such pleasant, easy manners, and such a fund of good humour, that in no time the ice was broken. Mr. P. and Miss S. Pillay, Mr. S.V. Sollier and local doctor and his wife completed the little party. Priscilla's column is no place for a religious discussion as such, and in any case, the Swami's beliefs seem to take something of all religions. He indicated a belief in a Supreme Being, in a Hereafter, and in Reincarnation. But he spoke of them so naturally and easily that I felt I was listening more to a philosophy than to a creed.

When the time came to my goodbye, I felt that I can only term spiritually refreshed.

F.L. Green

March 6th, 1964 - Master Of Yoga Comes To East London

The famous Hindu monk, Swami Venkatesananda, who has drawn crowds to his lectures all over South Africa, arrived in East London yesterday on the last stage of a tour of ministry in this country.

The Swami, a striking-looking man in his early forties, is a leading exponent of Yoga and an author of note who has produced original works as well as biography of his Guru and translations of the Hindu Bible, the Bhagavad Gita. He is a noted Sanskrit scholar who is believed to hold a singular world record: he once simultaneously composed a book mentally and typographically, by casting the letters on a linotype machine as he thought out each sentence. The book was therefore 'written' directly into print.

He will give a lecture in the East London City Hall tonight at 8 pm. 'Everybody is invited to my lectures free of charge,' he says. 'I ask no money for my service - only a blessing.'

The Swami does not decide on the theme of a lecture before hand. He merely speaks as he is moved to speak, and some illustrations of his philosophy have intrigued and impressed listeners so much that some have followed him from place to place to hear him.

'Tranquilliser tablets are poison', he says. 'Ten such tablets can kill a man, so one such tablet can kill one-tenth of a man.'

He says people should seek serenity from within, instead of relying on artificial aids that are a feature of the material life. With correct harnessing of the life force, or Prana, a right-living man need experience as little physical illness as moral and spiritual degeneration, says the Swami. The first secret of life that he propounds is relaxation. 'So many people have never really relaxed once in their lives, because they simply do not know how.'

The Swami also demonstrates Yogic exercises, some simple, some complex, that are designed to bring serenity to mind and body, and to prepare the spirit for developments through Yogic science.

On Sunday, the Swami leaves by air for Kimberley, and shortly after he will leave South Africa for Mauritius on the next stage of his world ministry.

Clad in saffron robes and a strand of prayer-beads, he owns nothing, and asks for nothing. Although he had made no plans to fly to Kimberley, or arranged for any ticket, an air ticket was awaiting him on his arrival in East London from Queenstown yesterday. 'God provides everything, and makes all the plans,' he says. 'It is not my will that is done, but God's.'

'There is no joy to compare with drawing closer to God, and although there are many paths to God, Yoga is a path the West could well study, for it is both a path and a science that has developed through the ages to link the physical with the spiritual in a developing progression to perfection.'

Dozens of schoolboys gaped in amazement yesterday as the famous Hindu monk, Swami Venkatesananda, floated on the water of the Do La Salle swimming bath in East London to demonstrate the Yogic 'fish-pose' as an aid to meditation, he locked his legs in the lotus posture, extended his arms, and lay motionless without sinking. Yogis believe that life force (Prana) flows through water and that the 'fish-pose' is highly beneficial from a point of view of health of mind, body and spirit.

The Last Month

Swami Venkatesananda returned to Durban from the Cape tour on the 10th and attended to packing etc., prior to leaving the country.

A few European devotees filmed his Yoga Asanas and also got a running commentary by him tape-recorded.

On March 21st, the Swami went round nearly the entire Chatsworth township for Indians. Leaving the truck on which he and a party of men and women began the Nagar Kirtan, the Swami walked for over five hours singing the Lord's Names. That was a prelude to a public meeting in Chatsworth that the Swami addressed the next day.

On the 23rd, the Swami paid his last visit to Tongaat and addressed two Schools, including the Tongaat High School. On the 25th, the Gujarati community gave a farewell dinner party. On the 27th, Swami Venkatesananda went to Unkomans and worshipped Lord Venkatesa there in the Fountainhead Temple. On the 28th, the Swami made a lightning tour of Zululand. On the 29th, the children (Brother Dharmalingam's disciples) gave him a Farewell. The same night a neighbour Sri Kanhai gave a Farewell Dinner. Afternoon there was a D.L.S. Farewell Meeting.

March 27th, 1964 - Swami Venkatesananda says Thank You

Eve of departure message

By Swami Venkatesananda

I have asked myself, on the eve of my departure from South Africa, after spending nearly three years here, am I satisfied with the tour? Yes. I am more than satisfied, I am gratified with the love and affection with which all alike treated me. But, I am completely dissatisfied with my service to the people of this wonderful country. As far as the two cardinal principles of my Master Swami Sivananda's message - serve and love - are concerned, I am more a debtor than a creditor.

It is heartening and highly encouraging to see that the Indians in South Africa have cherished for over 100 years the great culture which they inherited from their forefathers. The glory of this culture is indescribable, for it insists on the unity of mankind - nay., all beings - in God, and encourages each one to approach God in his own way. A clear understanding of this culture will not lead to superiority or inferiority complex, but only to a simple unity.

What we need today is a revival of this culture, not because it is Indian or Hindu, but because it is universal and provides the spiritual vision in which we shall find that we are and have ever been one. The Hindu will, of course, not try to convert anyone into a Hindu; for him a Christian is a 'Hindu worshipping Lord Jesus', a Muslim 'a Hindu worshipping Allah', already. What we need is not a change of faith, but a change of heart.

It is possible if there is greater understanding on the part of all concerned. This 'understanding' is the final step in a three-stage progress towards unity.

The first is 'tolerance': here the tolerator is above, and the tolerated is below, and there is a suggestion of vanity. The second is 'love': the two parties concerned are on the same level. The third is 'understanding': the understander stands under - as the word implies, and the person whom he understands, is above him. This understanding is the essence of our culture. Hence, India has always welcomed and assimilated any contribution to her philosophy, religion and culture. If the Indian in South Africa regained this culture in all its richness, he can become a better South African, a better citizen of the world, and also contribute a great deal to the physical, mental, moral and spiritual betterment of the whole world.

I am grateful to the grace of God and my Master, to the Divine Life Society of South Africa and to the numerous religious, cultural and spiritual organisations throughout the country for giving me an opportunity to serve them, and through them the Lord who is the Living Presence in them all.

March 27th, 1964 - A Real Swami

The name of Swami Venkatesananda has become a household word in countless homes in South Africa. Those who have met him will always remember him as a distinguished religious ambassador whose love for God and humanity exceeds all bounds. Those who were unfortunate in not having met such a personality will remember him for his simple yet absorbing writing. When he arrived on the shores of South Africa from Rishikesh, the headquarters of the Divine Life Society in India, everyone took an immediate interest in him. His simplicity, his friendliness and his willingness to meet people from all levels and from all communities gave a new surge to the importance of spiritual development in the hearts of all men.

His vast storehouse of knowledge on all religions, the ease with which he quoted from the scriptures of different faiths, his sincerity and his ever-flowing love made those who were close to him feel the presence of a personality from whom flowed Divine radiance.

In the short time that he spent in this country, he has been able to kindle a flame in people of all religious denominations to aspire towards greater spiritual attainment. Himself a Swami who has renounced materialism and worldly

pleasures, he has in his spoken and written words advised people to develop a balance between spiritualism and materialism. Knowing that material pleasures cannot be renounced by the masses in a short time or ever, he has implanted in all the need to devote some time to spiritual aspects of one's life, in this respect he has earned the respect of the poor and the rich, the black and the white people of South Africa, and also the sick, lame and disabled.

In kindling the spiritual flame in us, he has been able to free many from selfishness, greed and other characteristics which destroy everything that is wholesome in the human being.

His presence in South Africa has also helped to bring to the fore the teachings of the Divine Life Society. Since his arrival more people have taken an active interest in the teachings and the work that is being done by the Society at its quarters at Clare Estate, Durban, and also in the many branches in all parts of the country.

As much as we would love to have him stay with us for a longer period, duty calls that he continues his way to other centers before returning to Rishikesh, India.

On the eve of his departure, we wish to express our appreciation to Swami Venkatesananda for the wonderful work he has accomplished in South Africa. While we shall miss his physical presence among us, the work of God which he has helped to build will always remain a cherished memory of a man who was God-fearing, 'leading a clean life with an open mind' and generating true love to all.

Venkatesananda's Farewell Message

I must first at all express my deep debt of gratitude to the Divine Life Society of South Africa for enabling me to come to this country and to spend over two and half memorable years. These years have brought home to me the immense strength of Indian - loosely and often inappropriately called Hindu - religion and philosophy of life, and their vast potentialities which, when manifested, can greatly enrich the World of Tomorrow.

The religious freedom that the Indian enjoys is unsurpassed in history. The ideal itself is beautifully summed up in the Vedic declaration, 'Ekam Sat Vipraa Bahudhaa Vadanthi' - Truth or God is One and sages of call Him variously. The validity of the One and the Many is accepted because of the conviction that the One is the Many. I have seen this happen on countless occasions: the Indian holding the door of his Prayer Room or Hall open for people of other faiths and outlook upon life to enter and leave. To him all of them are worshipping the One God in their own unique ways - he is not interested in either shutting them in or out.

This spirit is the life of our religion and philosophy. Applied to different spheres of our life, it can lead to true understanding, goodwill, harmony and unity. As yet, its potentialities have not been fully explored. The form still veils the Reality. The first two or three generations of Indians in this country had their faith firmly rooted in the form, in the ritual, which did and do contain the Spirit. The present generation is already beginning to question the meaning and the use of this form. From within each one of these forms, the Spirit is crying aloud to be liberated.

When it is liberated, it will knit the whole country in a bond of harmony and love. It will not isolate the Indian, but unite him with all, for this Oneness of humanity is the foundation of Indian philosophy. Religion as a strangling hold on people is breaking away everywhere: to the Indian - Hindu, it is its blessing. For, thus is the Spirit of the Indian Religion liberated. Yet, it is not wise to encourage immature men and women to abandon the form. We should inculcate a little more patience in them. They should realise that the forms and the ritual are like the mathematical formula which enable a future scientist to reconstruct the inventor's discovery.

That is the purpose of 'religious instruction' to the young. Such instruction is admittedly formal and oversimplified. It is bound to contain several half-truths from the point of view of mature vision - even as the High School math teachers' descriptions of a 'point' or a 'straight line' are half-truths from the view-point of higher mathematics. There is a certain reluctance on the part of enlightened Indians in this country to impart to our youth religious instruction which may not satisfy everybody to the absolute degree of perfection. That might result in stagnation which in every-moving Life means retrogression.

European brothers and sisters have often expressed to me their admiration - often envious - of the serenity, contentment and cheerfulness that radiate from the faces of the Indian devotees of our Master Sri Swami Sivananda, and Indians in general. This is an extremely valuable treasure, the greatest prize of a good life. Yet, often one notices this satisfaction narrowing down to self-centredness. Thus the Indian loses countless opportunities of 'infecting' his neighbour with this wonderful spirit of peace and joy.

This 'shell-life' also leads to another undesirable consequence. 'The Indian in South Africa has not quite forgotten that his is the spiritual scale of value and not the material: that, given the choice between righteousness and wealth, he will choose the former. But, this 'shell-life' tends to tilt this scale a little bit towards the material side, tempting the Indian to rely more on his wealth than on God and good neighbourliness. No one denies the need for material wealth, property, and possessions. As our Master once wrote: 'Even Sanyasins and Ashrams need money nowadays'. But it is a tragedy if it is valued above the spiritual wealth. Our heart will always seek that which we value most and all our endeavours will centre around it. If that is material, we might grow rich materially but bankrupt spiritually. If that is spiritual, we will grow in inner wealth and 'all these material things will be added unto us.' The former will make us selfish and bestial: and sooner or later, the heartless business of cut-throat competition will deprive us even of that material wealth. The Indian outlook on the other hand is to earn righteously and regard oneself as a mere trustee of that wealth, appointed by God to look after and promote the welfare of all.

This spirit, too, is still alive in the Indian home, and is amply reflected in the proverbial Indian hospitality. The spiritual organizations like the Divine Life Society, too, acknowledge that they enjoy the enthusiastic financial support of the Indian community. But, the potentialities in this regard are limitless.

May I humbly suggest that what we need in South Africa is organised and well-planned missionary - not proselytizing - work? As far as I can see, we have all that is necessary - the men and the money and the capacity. And there is only one

little obstacle. Like a little thorn in the foot of a sturdy athlete, it is capable of crippling all else. And that is disunity. With unity will come strength. A strong community can organise itself and bring about moral and spiritual regeneration which is the need of the hour.

I am grateful to the Graphic for this opportunity given to me to serve the people of South Africa and to its Editor Sri K.M. Pillay who has always been a tower of strength and support to me, throughout my stay in this country. May God bless him!

Swami Venkatesananda

Divine Life Society in South Africa

An Address of Appreciation,

presented to Swami Venkatesananda on the eve of his departure from South Africa to India, via Mauritius, Madagascar and East Africa.

Blessed Swamiji,

In presenting this address we, the officials and members of the Society wish to express our deep sense of gratitude, however inadequate though it be, for your services to the Divine Life Movement, to record them so that they may be a constant reminder of the very high standard you have set before us; and to draw our source inspiration from your example in all our endeavours.

From the time of your landing on the shores of this country on June 6th, 1961, you have offered yourself with one-pointed devotion and in a self-effacing manner to the propagation of Swami Sivananda's message of peace, goodwill, and universal brotherhood of man.

By your charm, sympathy and understanding, you have inspired all those who have come in contact with you with a spirit of hope and cheerfulness and many have been directed to gaze away from the external world to a life within in search of God, that eternal fountain of peace, harmony and bliss.

Not only have you in an unparalleled way been disseminating the gospel of the Master, but have through your person made it possible for the many seekers in this country to feel the nearness, the warmth and the richness of his personality which would never have otherwise been possible for those not fortunate enough to visit the Master at Rishikesh.

By the depth and grasp of all scriptures and by your interpretation for our times of the several media used in the Hindu Scriptures to reveal the truths and the philosophies inherent in them, you have started a renaissance and aroused a profound respect for the Indian culture and the Indian nation.

Your capacity for work cannot be equaled and indeed it has been an inspiration to all of us who have seen you at the linotype machine for close on ten hours daily, with no other thought but that the composing for our monumental work, the Bhagavad Gita, should be completed in time.

You have fulfilled the Master's injunction to you before you left for South Africa, that you should liquidate the liabilities of the Society which at the time of your arrival stood in the region of R. 12,000, That apart you have also been responsible for a program of Ashram expansion itself.

Your repeated tours of the Cape, the Transvaal and the branches in Natal have

been ever refreshing, and have helped to invigorate the flagging spirits of many longing for the light. - indeed many an individual groping in the dark has been guided towards the Divine Light within.

Perhaps your greatest contribution in a divided world has been in the field of unifying the followers of the different religious affiliations, in that you have taught them tolerance, understanding and a mutual respect for one another's views. You have looked for the underlying unity common to all beliefs. In this way you have more than anybody else helped to unify man in accordance with the Vedantic ideals of the universality of man and all creation.

To the officials and members of the Divine Life Movement, you have been an inspiration and a tower of strength. You have by your presence and personality infused in us a new spirit to rededicate our lives and to intensify our efforts in the service of the Master and for the well-being of man.

Wherever you may be, we are sure you will continue to shine as the foremost of Gurudev's disciples and the Crest Jewel of the Divine Life Mission.

May God give you strength and bless you, and may the grace of Gurudev Sivananda be ever upon you.

April 14th , 1964 - Departure

Mauritius: The formalities of a 'Farewell Meeting' have always intrigued me: people vying with one another to stand up and say how sorry they are, etc.. etc. Some of them are pushed to the mike; and they are really sorry, which you can see but not hear. Still others; they who are really sorry keep away. Each one acts according to his own nature.

Both at the Durban airport on March 30th and at Johannesburg on April 6th the clamour for photographs to be taken struck me as rather odd. The photograph may have a sentimental value as 'the last picture, but it will lack the natural freshness of a genuine smile - the lips do form the smile, but the heart itself is in no mood to smile.

At the Durban airport on the 30th, many felt it was a mysterious coincidence that a Boeing 707 should be waiting - though it usually does not land in that small airport - that evening. Bobby Naidoo was so intrigued that he got special permission to have my photograph taken near the aircraft. 'The Swami returning to India' he thought.

What to me was the special grace of God was the presence there of three Roman Catholic nuns, one of them European. Attracted by the unusual crowd, they drew near and I greeted them. The European nun's accent betrayed her French origin. When I said a few words in French, all three of them nearly burst their sides with happy laughter. Happiness is something that can unite us all; and therefore - at least - we should promote one another's happiness.

A few African men and women were watching the proceeding on the airport grounds. They saw photos being taken; they saw the garlanding; they heard Sri P.R Pather speak and my reply; they saw people bowing and touching my feet. Suddenly when there was a little lull in these proceedings they rushed forward, bowed reverently and touched my feet. People like to imitate one another. If there is genuine sincerity in our actions, it is bound to inspire others, too. It is wrong to

underestimate the cultural level of other people; if they are what they are, the fault lies in all probability in us - they are only imitating us, to the best of their ability.

The few days spent at Johannesburg were utilised in meeting wonderful people and also in tape-recording in slow-tempo the whole of the Bhagavad Gita for the Cape Town people.

On the 6th, quite a crowd of people had come to say 'good-bye' at the Jan Smuts airport - both Indians and Europeans. We had prayers and Kirtan singing within the airport; perhaps the first time this has happened in the history of the airport. Then, Mother Shanti of Cape Town offered a prayer. A European friend had obtained permission for his wife and her Indian girl friend to escort me to the plane. There, again, as I was about to board the plane, Kanchan bowed in Indian style and the European lady followed suit?

The human mind is a mysterious mixture of light and darkness. Even after countless experiences of His Saving Grace, it will still entertain anxiety. Throughout most part of the flight, the weather was fine and the Captain announced that the weather at Mauritius airport would also be fine. But, as we were flying over the Reunion islands, the weather suddenly became cloudy and we had a few 'bumps'. The Captain modified his statement by saying that perhaps it might be raining when we landed in Mauritius. For a few brief moments, there was disappointment and anxiety in my heart. I visualised all the people and myself drenching in pouring rain. Well, what shall be, shall be - I consoled myself.

However, His Grace asserted itself again, for the nth time. The weather was fine as we landed. When I rose from my seat, a Port Health Officer politely greeted me and took away my Passport and other travel documents, as also part of the hand-baggage. A big crowd of people was waiting on the tarmac. I could recognise several members of the Council (Parliament) and other leaders. Soon after the garlanding ceremony, I was led into the V.I.P. entrance and lounge. We had prayers and Kirtan there; someone remarked that though it is possible that people might have mentally offered some prayers there, this was the first time there was open singing of his Names. This V.I.P. reception made me feel that this was no entry into a foreign country with the Customs, Health and Immigration authorities confronting the visitor. I saw none of them.

The motorcade took us all straight to the Kabir Mandir in Vacoa where they had taken great trouble to prepare my lodging, painting the room afresh and furnishing it nicely. Good people.

On the 7th in the morning, I called on the Prime Minister of Mauritius, Dr. Ramgoolam, who was also very pleased.

Appendix

On Swami Venkatesananda's Visit to Australia

It is to the Lord and my Guru, Swami Sivananda, that I give my eternal gratitude that they gave me the power and opportunity to arrange the memorable visit of our illustrious Swami Venkatesananda to Perth, the only City in Australia which he could visit. It was the rarest privilege for a city like Perth and for me, a humble servant of the Divine Life Society, to have witnessed a series of God-inspired talks by Swami Venkatesananda which have electrified audiences who perhaps partly have never before heard a word of Yoga, Vedanta or similar messages. It is my deep conviction that a great number of people have been transformed by Swamiji's words.

Swami Venkatesananda arrived here on our invitation on April 6th. 1961 and stayed till April 23rd. We booked him every day somewhere or other and were witness to the most miraculous events, i.e., that a Christian church offered him to hold the Sunday sermon in their church, that the Christian Seekers Centre asked him to speak twice at their luncheons, that the Hebrew Congregation arranged a special meeting to hear him speak to Jewish people, that the Australian Broadcasting Corporation gave him 2 television and I Radio contract. Indeed this visit will have great repercussions on our future and we will endeavour to meet the trust which Swamiji has had in us.

Dr. R.T. Werther, President, Divine Life Society.

April 7th, 1961 - Arrival in Australia

Man's heads turned at Perth Airport yesterday as Indian Swami Venkatesananda walked across the Customs Hall carrying his Veena, an Indian guitar. He arrived from Rishikesh in the foothills of the Himalayas, to begin a 2-week program of public and university lectures and Yoga demonstrations.

Many people associated Yoga with exercises and tumbling, but more recently it was being presented as the inner transfiguring of heart and mind, he said.

'Australia sends us her technicians and scientists. India brings Australia her culture and spiritual understanding,' he said.

The Swami is a disciple of Swami Sivananda who has been honoured as one of the greatest contemporary religious leaders of India. Swami Venkatesananda, formerly a Government official in India, renounced all his worldly goods in 1945 and took vows of poverty, purity and harmlessness. As a member of the Divine Life Society founded by Swami Sivananda, he has promised to love, give, serve and meditate.

An Offbeat Hello

Sitting cross-legged on the floor of the airport lounge, Swami Venkatesananda strummed his Veena - an Indian guitar. This was the crew-cut Swami's 7.30 a.m. greeting to WA after his arrival from overseas.

Swami Venkatesananda, one of the greatest living exponents of Yoga, is here

direct from the Himalayas. The Swami, whose first name means God of bliss, is private secretary to Swami Sivananda, founder of the Divine Life Society and one of the leading Indian philosophers.

Branches

The Divine Life Society has 350 branches throughout the world, three of them in Australia - Perth, Melbourne and Sydney. The 300-member Perth branch invited the Swami to visit WA, demonstrate Yoga exercises and explain the Society's philosophy. The Swami also will play his Veena.

The Swami's lectures in Australia and detailed report of his tour there have already been published in a book entitled 'The Yoga Way to Health, Happiness and God.'

'We try to give people a new outlook on life to do good. If more people achieve this idea of doing good, world peace could result.'

The Swami said the society's headquarters was at the holy village of Rishikesh where there are 300 followers.

April 12th, 1961 - A Peep Into Yoga

Headstand before breakfast.

Indian Yogi Swami Venkatesananda is a bouncy, dark-skinned bundle of charm. He has a musical voice which he uses at machine gun speed, a close-cut hairdo, ankle-length flowing garb, and he stands on his head before breakfast.

When I saw him at a public lunch-hour meeting at the Adult Education Department's Howard office, he looked something of a leader from a mysterious, even frightening cult. But that was one of the things he mentioned when he spoke to the 50-odd listeners. The 39-year-old God-fearing man from the town of Rishikesh, in the Himalayas, said people sometimes regarded the head-standing activities of Yoga with some fear. 'But there is nothing to fear in Yoga. Yoga is part of life. It is life,' he told the quiet audience.

Yoga simply meant divine living - living with God every day, and all day it could be done by practising for half-an-hour each day. People must learn to take a more lively interest in life and learn to relax more and enjoy the life that God had given them.

The Indian laughed loud and long when somebody asked him about lying on beds of nails, walking through hot coals and laceration of the body. 'That's nothing to do with Yoga,' he replied good humouredly.

'Do we reincarnate into other worlds?' someone asked. Replied the Swami: 'The size of the universe might be unknown, but the spirit goes where it wishes it could go to other worlds.' 'I do that now in astral travel,' the little lady in the front row told him. The Indian grinned understandingly.

'Like the Hindu life, Yoga is not a religion. It is away of life. Reincarnation is the important thing of Yoga. We return to the earth in a superior form each time if we practise Yoga,' he told the group.

April 17th, 1961 - Where To Start

The bell was broken, so I knocked on the front door of the house in Archdeacon-st., Nedlands, and Swami Venkatesananda came to greet me with a small poodle yapping steadily at his bare heels. A slim, brown man of enviable calm, lightly robed in muslin. The only sign of worldliness about him was a wrist watch. Yoga, he told me gently, because of its more spectacular postures, like the famous standing-on-your-head bit, is generally misunderstood. People have the idea that it is a set of exercises - calisthenics with a caste mark. But Yoga is entirely a spiritual aim. The tangled leg attitudes we all remember are merely a means of getting the body into a comfortable position, so the Yogi can forget it as quickly as possible and get on with the business of meditation. He sat down on the floor in the Padmasana - lotus flower position, legs crossed, feet tucked up inside the opposite knees. His spine was erect, he looked wonderfully free from tension.

I pointed out that this might be fine for him, but that if I ever forced my creaky legs into such a snarl, all I would be able to meditate about would be how long it would take me to have two dislocated kneecaps and sprained ankles fixed up. He said no, I would get it quite easily after a little practice.

Supposing a bloke like me, a smoker, a lager lover, and a member of the spiritual awkward squad, wanted to take up Yoga, where would we start? First, said the Swami, the posture. We could learn the lotus position and practise it until I could sit poised and relaxed without consciousness of any physical strains. Then we would learn to breathe properly (few of us do he said) taking calm deep breaths, retaining the breath (the life force) long enough for it to do some good (and this is quite a bit longer than most of us retain it) then exhaling about three times as thoroughly as the ordinary person does. After that we would proceed to concentration, and meditation, not a strained, staring, pop-eyed concentration, but a serene contemplation. Ethical discipline is necessary all the way through. I doubt very much if I will ever achieve the lotus position without compound fractures of the patellas, but I came away seeing better for having met the Swami.

April 15th, 1961 - Music In India

The potential of true music as a great platform of common understanding between all races and countries was emphasised yesterday by the visiting Yogi, Swami Venkatesananda. The Swami said that in India music had always been regarded as the direct approach to God-head. 'It lulls the senses, it stills the mind, and in front of it the granite wall of the doubting intellect crumbles, and the soul communes with the divine.' he said.

'Hence, most of our great composers have been men of God-realisation, too. This has been the case also with the great composers of the West - Beethoven, for instance, who endeavoured to reach the ultimate truth when he composed his Ninth Symphony.

'Music has been regarded and admitted as the voice of the soul, the language of the soul, when it endeavours to break the shell of individuality, of all the limitations that prevent its realization of the ultimate.'

What the politicians failed to achieve with their conflicting isms, the economists

with their theories of distribution of wealth, and even the scientists with their discoveries - peace in the world and the prosperity of mankind - could be brought about by the world's great musicians coming together and creating a new harmony in the hearts of all people.

'But this can only be through the pure music, unpolluted by sensuousness - a canker which seems to eat into the very vitals of real music throughout the world - in the East and in the West,' he said. 'It is a great spiritual force worth rescuing from the hands of the baser elements of society so that it may, in time, be applied to bring about world peace and prosperity for mankind.'