



Sivananda Yoga Vedanta Centre
Singapore

APRIL 2010 Newsletter

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From Centre: Centre close on Friday, 2 April'10 for Good Friday

Life in Harmony - article

Dharma means righteousness, duty, law, order, harmony, order in society and power. Look at the movement of the stars and planets. There you see the beauty of dharma. Look at nature and the seasons. There is harmony. Look at the work of the bees, ants, birds or the vast travel cycles in the lives of fish. There is balance and sacrifice. There is giving and receiving. There is a conscious and controlling energy behind these creatures. Dharma is the law of this life and this universe. Dharma also means that people need to fulfill their respective duties. Through their duties they support life and society. But what is our dharma?

Moral and Ethical Duty

The first general duty for humanity is to follow the yamas and niyamas. This holds true under all circumstances, whatever our profession, position, etc. The ten yamas and niyamas are: ahimsa (non-violence), satya (truthfulness), brahmacharya (control of the senses, reduction of sensual pleasures), asteya (non-stealing), aparigraha (non-covetousness, absence of greed), saucha (purity in thought, word, dress, company, activities and food), santosha (contentment), tapas (austerities or exercises to develop will power and equanimity), swadhyaya (study of the scriptures) and Iswara pranidhana (self-surrender or devotion). These duties are not limited by religion, culture, nationality or time. They are eternal. They are divine.

Duty to Society and Family

A second aspect of dharma or duty relates to one's profession, position, and economic circumstances within society and one's duty to the family. The responsibilities of each person must be taken seriously as the harmony of society is based on this. Each part depends on the other. The whole world is interdependent. The desire for independence by an individual is often just egoism in action. We cannot be independent on the physical level. Just think about all our daily needs: food, water, electricity, transportation, security, etc. Just think about our daily activities: reading newspaper, requiring medicine, making phone calls to friends, buying toys for a child, buying flowers and plants, travelling, etc. Only through the work of other people can we partake in all these things. We depend on others to fulfill their duty just as they depend on us. We need to remember this. To further understand dharma, we can look at the example of the cells in the body. The analogy of the body and its cells to society and its individual members is a wonderful example for reflection and contemplation. The cells all work together, yet each one is provided individually with what it requires. Each according to its needs. Not every cell receives the same thing. And yet the cells in the body work together and form a beautifully harmonious functioning unit. Similarly, not every human being can do the same work, receive the same salary or have the same duties.

The harmonious and righteous society is described in the ancient Indian scriptures as Satya Yuga, the age of truth, the golden age. How inspiring. Dharma is not a cold law. It is beauty, divinity, a miracle, something which uplift us, inspires us, supports us. Even if we can't expect such a high level of dharma in today's world, in the Kali Yuga, we should still do our best or fulfill our own duties. For example, the duties of the mother and father to take proper care of the child are quite clear and none can substitute for them if they do not fulfill these responsibilities. The duties of the doctor are to heal the patient or even to stimulate the self-healing powers of the body and to support these powers. Other duties go hand in hand with this profession, such as confidentiality and not overcharging for ordinary medicines. The duty of a farmer is to provide food; the duty of a tailor is to sew clothes; the duty of a disciple of a spiritual master is to serve the master wholeheartedly; to be completely open and honest with no fear. When the student is ready the master will initiate the student. Before this happens the disciple's duty is to collect firewood and keep an eye on the household for many years. In the modern world this firewood has been replaced by domestic work, office work, teaching yoga, etc. Another duty for everyone is health. Master Sivananda calls it our first duty and he set a wonderful example of a healthy and balanced lifestyle. Regular fasting, fresh food, purification exercises, sport, asanas and many other techniques will help us to keep fit, healthy and joyful.

Duty to the Self (Swadharma)

The third level of dharma is called swadharma. This means that one finds out about one's samskaras (tendencies) and talents in order to develop them to their fullest. A master or saint can clearly see hidden talents in others, awaken them or point them out in order to quicken the evolution of a person. If we live up to our tendencies we will feel a certain satisfaction, success and recognition from society. If we work against achieve success we will not feel a sense of fulfillment. Sensitive parents should try to find out the

success we will not feel a sense of fulfillment. Sensitive parents should try to find out the talents of their children instead of imposing their ideas and unfulfilled desires on their children. Much suffering is created when children have to follow professions that are against their inner inclinations. And yet a strong samskara or tendency cannot be suppressed for long. Buddha was brought up and educated to become a perfect king. One day his spiritual thirst broke through and he escaped the palace in which he felt imprisoned. His religious samskaras finally came to the fore. However to find everlasting peace and infinite bliss we must look at the last level of dharma.

The Highest Dharma

The fourth level of dharma, the highest duty of human beings, is to realize their divine nature, their oneness with God and the whole of creation. One way this can be attained is through life-long and sincere sadhana under the guidance of a realized master. It is said that love is the highest dharma. If we carefully study the lives of God-realized beings such as Ramakrishna, Saint Francis of Assisi or others, we will find that there is no difference between love and God-realization. The realized sage has lost all selfishness and acts only for the good of others. He or she is compassionate. He or she is ready to sacrifice everything for the sake of others. Look at the lives of Gandhi, Mother Theresa and the Swami Sivananda. The highest dharma of love goes hand in hand with the path of illuminations. To attain this one must lead a life of discipline, worship, concentration and meditation. We must walk in the footsteps of the great souls. They have shown the path to us quite clearly through their lives and scriptures. These sages have become one with dharma; their will is one with God's will.

Swami Anantananda

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How to Become a Yogi - guru's teaching

Becoming a yogi does not involve the abandonment of anyone or the neglect of any duties. It entails only a change of your attitude to life and in the methods pursued for liberating yourself. For, true renunciation is, after all, a matter of the mind. By all means, live in the world and play your part in it worthily. But do not allow yourself to be tainted by worldliness.

During and in between your various actions, repeat mentally your Mantra. This will surcharge your soul. In the train, traveling to work, keep Mouna (silence); make it a vow; and repeat mentally the Mantra. At office, once at least each hour, put down the pen, push away the papers, sit back and close your eyes, forget the immediate external claims on your attention, and pray. Repeat the Mantra for a couple of minutes. Then right away plunge into your work. You will doubly fit to do the work at hand. You will never feel tired. On your return trip also, keep the vow of silence; repeat the Mantra mentally. Do not waste even a moment. In the bus queue, or in the railway station, any spare moment, soak it with the mental repetition of the Mantra. Everyone can find sometimes for this. Whenever you find a few minutes leisure, utilize it in Japa (continuous repetition of Mantra), meditation or study of good books. Give plenty in charity. Charity purifies quickly. Observe Mouna as much as possible. Never indulge in idle gossiping; utilize that time in

The Corpse Pose / Savasana - posture



The Corpse Pose or Savasana is the classic relaxation pose, practiced before each session, between asanas and in Final Relaxation. It looks deceptively simple, but it is in fact one of the most difficult asanas to do well and one which changes and develops with practice. At the end of an asana session your Corpse Pose will be more complete than at the beginning because the other asanas will have progressively stretched and relaxed your muscles. When you first lie down, look to see that you are lying symmetrically as symmetry provides proper space for all parts to relax. Now start to work in the pose. Rotate your legs in and out, then let them fall gently out to the sides. Do the same with your arms. Rotate the spine by turning your head from side to side to centre it. Then start stretching yourself out, as though someone were pulling your head away from your feet, your shoulders down and away from your neck, your legs down and away from your pelvis. Let gravity embrace you. Feel your weight pulling you deeper into relaxation, melting your body into the floor. Breathe deeply and slowly from the abdomen, riding up and down on the breath, sinking deeper with each exhalation. Feel how your abdomen swells and falls. Many important physiological changes are taking place, reducing the body's energy loss, removing stress, lowering your respiration and pulse rate, and resting the whole system. As you enter deep relaxation, you will feel your mind grow clear and detached.

Apple & Blueberry Crumble - eat wholesome

Mix 1:

5 green apple; peeled; sliced thin

1 and 1/2 cup fresh blueberries

1 tbsp raw sugar

1 tbsp lemon juice

Combine all the above together.



Mix 2:

3/4 cup rolled oats

1/2 cup whole meal flour

1/2 cup raw sugar

50 gram melted butter

Combine all the above together.

Put the mix 1 on an oven-prove ramekin, then top the mix 2 on it.

Bake for 30 minutes in 180 degree Celsius oven.

Use a big spoon to scoop out while serving.

Apples, known as cleansing food, contain fiber, antioxidant and fruit flavonoids which has anti-inflammatory as well as anti cancer actions. Apples contain vitamin C as well, more in green apples than in red ones. Apples can reduce blood cholesterol levels, control constipation and diarrhea, help joint problem and help prevent disease in general.

Blueberries packed with antioxidant phytonutrients called *anthocyanidins*, blueberries neutralize free radical damage to the collagen matrix of cells and tissues that can lead to cataracts, glaucoma, varicose veins, hemorrhoids, peptic ulcers, heart disease and cancer. Anthocyanins, the blue-red pigments found in blueberries, improve the integrity of support structures in the veins and entire vascular system.

Class Schedule - from centre

Time	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat	Sun
9.30 - 10.30 am						Satsang	
10.00 - 11.15 pm							Beginner
10.45-12.00pm						Open	Course (Beginner) 11.30am-1.00pm
12.30 - 1.45 pm						Beginner	
6.30 - 7.45 pm	Beginner	Open	Beginner	Open	Beginner		
8.00 - 9.15 pm	Open	Beginner	Open	Beginner			

DESCRIPTION:

Satsang:

25 mins silent meditation, followed by devotional chanting and an informal talk on the practical philosophy of Yoga and Vedanta. Kirtan (chanting) books are provided. The program is free and open to all.

Beginner:

Class includes Pranayama (breathing), Sun Salutation, a regular series of asanas, and relaxations. This class provides an ideal introduction for students who are new to yoga and who need to learn a better foundation. Students will learn coordination between breathing and postures, gaining more flexibility.

Open:

This class is open for intermediate and advanced students. The class includes Pranayama (breathing), Sun Salutation, 12 basics postures (and their variations), and relaxations. Students will practice and be assisted in their individual level of competency. Not suitable for beginner.

Course (Beginner):

A systematic introduction to the theory and practice of yoga for beginners or for anyone looking to renew their practice. This is 8-weekly course takes a step by step approach for developing strength, flexibility, good breathing habits, concentration and relaxation.

Special Class:

Check at www.sivananda.com.sg for program details.

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Serve, Love, Give, Purify, Meditate & Realize