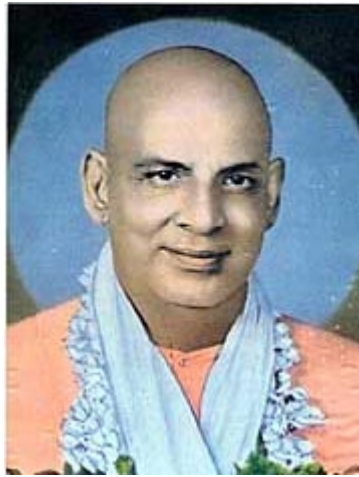


HOW TO MANAGE ONESELF

By

A.K. KRISHNA NAMBIAR



**Sri Swami Sivananda
Founder of
The Divine Life Society**



**SERVE, LOVE, GIVE,
PURIFY, MEDITATE,
REALIZE
So Says
Sri Swami Sivananda**

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**DEDICATED
TO
GURUDEV
SWAMI SIVANANDAJI
MAHARAJ**

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HOW TO MANAGE ONESELF

It is interesting and useful to know about the functioning of our body. It is also equally interesting to know that our heart is said to be the seat of 'Jivatma' or the individual self which is the basis of every life. The Physical Science reveals that the purifying process of our blood and pumping of the pure blood to every part of our body which is absolutely needed for its survival is taking place every moment without any interruption. We breathe in air through our nostrils or mouth and the oxygen which is needed to purify the blood is used and the impure air or carbon dioxide is thrown out through our nostrils or mouth at least once in every second. This process goes on even while we are sleeping; it happens by the grace of Mother Nature.

At the same time, it is also our spiritual understanding that the power which is making this process working within is a spark of spirituality, which is called Soul or Atma or self. There is no death for this spark and it cannot be destroyed by any means. It exercised Its own free will to come in a body and leave the same. When It comes in a body, we call it birth and when It leaves the body we call death. When It continues to remain in a body It helps the growth of it. When It leaves the abode it causes the body to degenerate. Therefore the Soul or Atma or Self is the real sustainer of this physical body. After It leaves the body It goes back to its source. This body which is made of five elements, namely Earth, Water, Fire, Air and Space goes back to its source, i.e., the subtle elements known as 'Tanmatras', under Natural Law.

In order to make progress in spiritual life, one of the techniques used by spiritual aspirants is 'Pranayama' or breath control. In this process, breathing is regulated to purify the heart. The heart becomes an important centre of this purificatory process. Through this method purification of the heart is obtained gradually.

In order to empty impurities from the heart, desires for sensual pleasures, all impurities such as lust, greed, anger, fear are thrown out along with the outgoing breath. Truth, Non-injury, continence, absence of a tendency to grab others' wealth, contentment etc., are taken in along with inward breath which helps a practitioner to maintain smooth functioning of his heart.

In order to make progress in spiritual life, the spiritual aspirant makes his deity sit in his heart which is made pure by doing certain purificatory process such as repeating the name of his favourite deity seated in the heart and concentrating and meditating on It. This enables him to expand his spiritual thought originated from the heart, the seat of self, in absolute purity. This helps an individual to integrate his thoughts, words and actions to enable him to make further and further progress till he attains the goal of realising spirituality.

There are two important things in this life. One thing is this body. The other one is the soul or Atma or Self, which is the Deathless source of life in every body. Now every individual who has a physical form on which his or her entire personality depends, should keep this form in a healthy condition so long as the self remains within the individual form, so that it can be used for further progress in spiritual life. Therefore, one should know the art of managing the above-mentioned two aspects in life so that individual life becomes healthy and happy.

Why is this management of oneself needed? Nowadays, professionals who are well-versed in their own subject are seeking an additional qualification in management. A scientist feels that he should possess the knowledge of managing his own work and so is the case with a Medical Doctor, who wants to know how to manage a hospital, or an engineer who wants to manage an Industrial establishment or an Administrator who wants to manage an Office. Therefore Management studies are made popular in all the universities to raise all-round efficiency in many professions, carried out in a fiercely competitive world.

It is proved beyond doubt that better management either of government of any country or a business establishment or an Industrial establishment or a spiritual establishment or an individual's own house brings on better efficiency which ultimately brings in the progress of a country and the well-being of living beings at large. When we consider the problems and techniques of management, it is always done by human beings and it is man that remains as the backbone of this process. Therefore the management of human beings is not only important, but also a necessity for a better life.

In order to manage an industrial, business or any other establishment, the activities reorganised under various heads like Personnel, Works, Sales, Accounts etc. But these activities are managed by Man, Money, Material, Marketing and Management. This ensures efficiency, discipline and progress in any business concern. Where it is not properly managed, the progress is always retarded. In Spiritual Establishments also, the activities are regulated under Service, Devotion, Self-discipline, Dedication, Publishing and Study of Scriptures and Practice of Yoga Exercises and Meditation. In all such activities, their management is placed under the charge of well-qualified persons. This leads to better production or Service by any establishment to ensure economic as well as total Well-being of man and to know how to manage oneself and to make men happy. Swami Sivananda, the Founder-President of the Divine Life Society, Rishikesh, taught a unique and modern method of management under SERVE, LOVE, GIVE, PURIFY, MEDITATE, REALISE, 'BE GOOD, DO GOOD,' in order to attain the betterment of the entire living beings and realization of God Almighty by human beings. The Rig Veda Says: "Ekam sat viprah bahudha vadanti" (The One truth is named by the wise in many ways). He is that which is in everybody and in everything in this Universe: this one God manages everybody and everything individually. He manages the microcosm and macrocosm through the Universal Divine Mother Nature and provides us with water, air, fire and space and everything useful for the survival of living beings, in this Universe.

The first one word 'SERVE' contains the entire philosophy of action which is known as 'Karma Yoga' as mentioned in various Scriptures, the essence of which is '*Yogah karmasu kausalam*'—Bh. Gita-Chapter II-50 or 'Skill in action is Yoga'; and '*Karmanyevadhikaraste ma phaleshu kadachana*'—Bh. Gita-Chapter II-47 or 'You are only to perform your duty well without thinking of the fruits thereof'. All the good work done by many noble people, saints and sages in this world have been done only in this spirit. The Great Saint Vasishtha asked Sri Rama to do his duties well in a spirit of 'Purushartha' or personal effort. Nobody can prosper in this world without properly serving oneself or others. When a man recognises that that which is in him is also in everybody else in this world, it becomes easy for him to really understand the spirit of 'SERVE'.

The next word is 'LOVE'. Everybody in this world owes allegiance to Love as we come into existence on account of the Love of God. Love thy neighbour as thyself is a quotation from the Bible. Because God loves us, He has provided everything essential for our survival in this world. This is done in a spirit of Love only and therefore we are to love God, as well as His Creations. Solid, Liquid, Light, Air and Space which are needed for keeping our life to continue are always there in this universe to meet our requirements. There is no lust in pure Love which we get from God, our Creator; we are to learn to love everybody alike. When we cultivate 'SERVE' and 'LOVE' in its true spirit, we become part and parcel of a society where do good and be good alone govern the social quality cultivated by each member of such a society. In this manner the entire humanity can become happy.

'GIVE' means sharing what one has with others who are in need of it. It should be done within one's means, without expecting anything in return. When charity is done in this spirit, purification of mind comes to oneself easily. A pure mind alone can do meditation on God who is actually keeping us alive, living within one's heart as the Self. We are bound to realise God in and through meditation in daily life which is made pure by serving and loving others, thus observing 'Be good and do good'. Therefore what Swami Sivananda asked everyone of us through his spiritual instructions, conveyed in a few words, namely, SERVE, LOVE, GIVE, PURIFY, MEDITATE, REALISE, BE GOOD and DO GOOD is Yoga in itself. Swami Sivananda's aim was to make the entire humanity healthy, happy and prosperous in life in and through cultivation of spiritual values of life to realise God in this very life.

LIFE ACTIVITY NEXUS

In this process, life and activities are to be considered complementary and never contradictory. Better and integrated management of any institution or oneself is truly possible only in this spirit. How could one attain management of oneself? It is the co-ordination of various aspects that build lasting and better results as quickly as possible. And at the same time it remains a continuing process till one becomes sure that a perfect and well-integrated management of oneself has been attained. In fact, when these remain so, there is no contradiction in thought, word and action; there develops a dynamic force within one capable of directing an integrated personality to any problem entirely, to find a satisfactory solution to any problem without the least difficulty.

Let us now examine the various aspects that need attention in life. Every living being has a body and as such proper care of the physical self is the first necessity. Next one is how one makes use when he comes in contact with other bodies. It is what governs the social aspect of one's self. The emotional aspect governs feelings like love, devotion etc. The ethical aspects decide the behavioural norms, towards other beings. The intellectual aspect helps to increase the power to discriminate what is good and what is bad. Finally the spiritual aspect generates awareness of happiness and peace not only in oneself, but also in all other fellow-beings.

THE PHYSICAL BASIS

Every one of us should try to possess a healthy body. Food, exercise and rest play an important role in maintaining a healthy body. Taste, place and time determine the food requirements. There are some who like the taste of vegetarian food. In a place like Kashmir or the

North Pole, the requirement of food is different from that of a place like Rajasthan or Central Africa. A young boy has to have less food than a grown-up man and the requirement changes from time to time according to winter or summer. However one thing is common to all, i.e., moderation in food habits. Over-eating and under-eating are the causes of ill-health in most cases. If one eats only when one is hungry and drinks only when one is thirsty, one can retain a good physique. The solid food should be pure and must be properly chewed before it goes into the stomach. What one eats is more important than what quantity he eats. The food should be wholesome and should contain protein, fat and carbohydrates in adequate proportion. Under normal circumstances the intake of solid food should be limited to half the stomach and the liquid one to one-fourth of it. The water one drinks should be pure. If the water happens to be impure, it should be properly boiled before it is drunk. After a full meal, one should have the feeling that he has left one-fourth of the stomach empty for proper ventilation. This must make one feel at ease after a full meal, taken peacefully.

Proper exercise for the body is essential to maintain its health. It should be done intelligently according to one's own convenience and time at one's disposal either in his own house or in a playground in moderation. There are some people who prefer Yogic exercise for half-an hour a day. Many others play games like tennis, cricket, hockey, football etc., for two or three hours every day. Though all these are good, it becomes harmful to oneself when he neglects to do it regularly. Over exercise produces fatigue while under exercise causes laziness, if not dullness. Moderation makes the body healthy and mind alert.

Rest is an art in itself. One should know how to relax. It is not only a state in which one remains sleeping doing nothing, but also the way in which it is done that matters. An hour of sound sleep is far better than hours spent in bed in a disturbed half-sleep. The state of the mind when relaxed also matters a lot since it determines the quality of the rest that one enjoys. If the mind is free from causes of worry while at rest, one is capable of being completely relaxed. It is possible to do so by thorough tuning it with sublime thoughts generated by repeating the names of Gods in one's own Faith. For that matter 'Savasana' is the best pose for physical and mental relaxation. Lie supine on a soft blanket or carpet. Stretch the legs straight keeping the hands closed while the toes remain separated. Keep the hands on both sides of the body. Close the eyes and relax all organs, muscles, nerves etc. Breathe slowly. Now repeat any prayer or name of your personal god according to your faith. Do it mentally. Do not sleep in this pose, but meditate or concentrate gently with a feeling of purity, spiritual or self awareness.

BE OTHER CENTRED

Social quality is inherent in every being. Awareness of the fact that man is not only living for the good of himself, but also for the good of others is essential to make the good out of this concept of life. Needless to stress that that is one way to make the best of oneself. It is only a man with such an attitude who can help others. It is practice oriented. The lives of many industrialists, businessman, philanthropists, saints etc., prove that the highest form of social quality is to work for the betterment of others without expecting anything in return. Recently in our own country Mother Theresa demonstrated the use of the social aspect by looking after many people who were dying in the streets of our big cities for want of food and medical attention. This is still fresh in our memory and every individual can emulate this example of selfless service within his own capacity.

There cannot be anyone without emotion. The feeling generated in oneself is emotion. Feelings are generated when one comes into contact with objects and subjects. Feeling of love towards fellow beings is inherent in everyone. The feeling to adore something (God in most cases) is also ingrained in man. Anything that is emotional in man can be improved upon or altered by oneself. Surroundings, circumstances and contacts help to improve the emotive aspect. Emotions can be discriminated and controlled before being acted upon for the overall improvement in one's personality. The experience of one's self makes the emotion subside in knowledge and integrate the emotive and intellectual aspects in one's self.

MORAL VALUES

The ethical aspect regulates the behaviour in oneself. Where this quality is absent, one's behaviour causes disturbance in society. To maintain the necessary rhythm in the proper functioning of society, proper attention to this fundamental aspect is necessary. Laws of ethics have been formulated by man for the good of society as a well-organised group of men and every member of it owes a certain responsibility towards it. It may vary from place to place and group to group. But wherever it is disregarded or violated confusion is bound to prevail.

WHAT IS INTELLIGENCE?

Intelligence is the quality of a higher mind. It is steadily acquired by the conscientious integration of theory and practice. A really intelligent man uses this quality and overcomes all disturbances which cause unhappiness in life or in his social ramifications. The ability to discriminate is the means employed by the intelligent man to triumph over his difficulties. For that matter a knowledgeable and well-experienced man is an asset to any institution or establishment, since he is able to arrive at a decision that may do good to him as well as to others. When other qualities are neglected, intelligence gets perverted and does the individual more harm than good. It therefore goes without saying that intelligence has to be integrated with other qualities. A truly intelligent mind is capable of deciding what is good and what is bad for itself as well as for society at large with a correct analysis of the pros and cons behind every question.

The spiritual aspect is the final one. All of us are essentially spiritual. The presence of that Power which exists in oneself, but which is unknown, is the spiritual aspect in man. When all other qualities are fully developed and man is completely satisfied with himself, he becomes aware of the ESSENCE which is inherent in him.

In order to attain this, one has to direct all other attendant qualities to work simultaneously towards this. A man possesses a healthy physique. He is well-set socially and ethically. He has integrated his intellect and emotions and is quite capable of arriving at just and proper decisions relating to his work. Notwithstanding such attainments something that lurks within craves for fulfilment. It is here that he finds refuge in the spiritual aspect and tries to direct all other qualities towards the spirit within him. True happiness descends on him only when he becomes conscious of the spirit within.

In order to develop this awareness of oneself Nature has provided man with another aspect of this life, known in common parlance as the mind. This mind is always struggling within us to

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know as to what is oneself as also on what basis it has been set in this universe. This is because man has by his own effort garnered the knowledge that his physique has been structured out of the five elements, i.e., earth (solid), water, (liquid), fire (gas), air (oxygen), space-mind and the self. It works harmoniously in and through the inbuilt provided for all by Nature. He also observes even with his naked eyes that the whole universe is also working harmoniously on a bigger scale employing the very stuff, i.e., Earth, Water, Fire, Air, Cosmic space and an overself or unmanifested Spirituality. Individually it is termed as the microcosm where the Atma or Self is the basis. The manifested Universe is a natural Product and functions under the fundamental laws formulated by Nature. The unmanifested spirituality remains unaffected by changes taking place in this universe under the laws of physics.

It may therefore be observe that the unmanifested Spirituality never changes, but ever remains in Cosmic consciousness. Under Natural Laws, it is possible for an individual to realise, both the Self and the Unmanifested spirituality using the mind in its conscious state and Cosmic consciousness, respectively, step by step; one after the other. This is because while oneself remains in the consciousness of an individual, the unmanifested spirituality remains in Cosmic Consciousness, as one without a second for all and at all times.

It is therefore obvious that in case an individual wants to realise his own Self, he should seek Him in his heart as Self or with a feeling that God in the form of his personal deity is seated therein and that he must concentrate and meditate on Him. However God abides only where Purity abides. Hence a seeker after Self should ensure that his body, heart and mind are pure. It is through the practice of a daily purificatory process as laid down for us by our Saints and Sages that one can purify oneself.

We were all born at a particular time and are growing in every moment in time. We are also very well aware that we shall all end at a particular time. Hence, each individual in point, is time only since each life-span remains within a particular or appointed time only. This happens to every living being on earth. When a body ceases to perform its vital functions, we term it as death. As death seizes us, our body made up of five elements returns to its source, referred to as 'Tanmatras'. The Self or soul or Atma which entered into our body when our mother conceived us returns to its spiritual source. And Modern Science also tells us that nothing in this world gets destroyed completely; it only gets transformed into a subtle form, invisible to the naked eyes.

Death is a backward movement towards the Deathless source of our life known as Atma and Tanmatras. This Atma can never be destroyed in any way, (Bhagavad Gita. ch. II-23, 24). A personal effort to remain in tune with this backward movement towards the Deathless source of life, while an individual is alive is called spiritual life. There are various methods and techniques to maintain this spiritual course and they vary from individual to individual. But all are complementary and help a Spiritual Practitioner to develop and maintain his concentration on a single point and thus meditate on the Self within. In this way when the self-surrender is attained by the Grace of the Guru or God, one attains the State which can be referred to as 'Spirit over Matter'. This is what Patanjali Maharshi in his Yoga Sutra refers to as 'Pratiprasava' (backward movement) Patanjali Yoga Sutra Ch. IV. 4. This expands in an earnest seeker after truth and expands in life-space. This experience, i.e. 'Spirit over Matter' expands, spreads into higher realms slowly, but steadily even as 'nimisha' expands into a second, second into minute and minute into hour, thus

passing on with expansion from hour into day, day into fortnight, fortnight into month, month into a year, year into a century, century in Yuga, Yuga in Kalpa. And Kalpa expands in the Cosmic form of God, that is Space. The whole Universe consisting of Suns, Moons, Stars, Planets, animate and inanimate things are created and contained in space, by the will of God. This Self is to be abjectly surrendered at the Lotus feet of the Omniscient, Omnipotent and Omnipresent God.

It then assumes a completed integrated state of Universal Pure, Natural, Expanded, Spiritual Awareness in Chittakasa or mind-space wherein Spirit and matter are integrated in Love. Even so do father and mother, husband and wife, Siva and Sakti, Narayana and Lakshmi, Brahma and Saraswati, Rama and Sita, Radha and Krishna, Father in Heaven and His son, Allah and His creations, Subramanya and Valli and so on—examples can be multiplied, but not necessary a never-ended stream, all integrated by love. The thinking that continuously permeate through our brain when alert and the feelings that crowd our heart-it goes without saying are also, for that matter closely integrated, in Love. As has already been stated earlier, this awareness develops in the seeker after Truth by the grace of his Guru or God, causing him to see and feel everything manifesting as Cosmic Love.

In this state of mind-space or Chittakasa, one's pure mind comprehends the truth conveyed in the Bhagavad Gita, Chapter X-20; Lord Krishna tells Gudakesha or Arjuna in the battlefield of Kurukshetra that He as the Self is present in all the elements and the very same Self is the beginning, the middle and the end of all elements in this Universe.

As such, one feels Lord Krishna's presence in everything and everywhere in this set up in and through one's own self and sing 'Sarvam Krishnamayam Pasyantam' 'Krishna Krishna' iti Sada japantam'. In this way one feels the presence of Krishna everywhere; hence he sings mentally 'Krishna, Krishna' at all times even when he is fast asleep. This becomes possible for a Spiritual Practitioner only when he acquires a mind and a heart, absolutely pure or free from any blemish, one like the 'Gudakesha' with perfect control over his mind even when he is asleep.

Similarly, devotees of their own personal deities can install it in their pure heart and sing 'Sarvam Sri Guru-mayam Pasyantam, Sri Guru . . . Sri Guru iti Sada japantam' or 'Sarvam Rama-mayam Pasyantam, Rama, Rama iti Sada japantam' or 'Sarvam Siva-mayam Pasyantam Siva, Siva iti Sada japantam' or 'Sarvam Sakti-mayam Pasyantam, Sakti, Sakti iti Sada Japantam' or 'Sarvam Subramanya-mayam Pasyantam, Subramanya, Subramanya iti Sada Japantam' or 'Sarvam Surya-mayam Pasyantam, Surya, Surya iti Sada Japantam,' thus one is completely free to worship any God or Goddess in his spiritual path as the Ultimate Reality or Spirituality that created this Universe under Its Free Will. The spark of this Free Will alone will make us worship Him as our own Self. Under the Natural Law there are three qualities inherent in every human being. These three qualities are Sattva (Purity), Rajas (Activity) and Tamas (Inertia). Every individual is prompted to act when he is under the influence of one of these qualities predominant in him. In this way evolution of every human being takes place under an impartial Law which guarantees just and proper reward for an individual's actions under the Law of Nature. Thus good actions lead to good results and bad actions to bad results to the doer concerned. When one undertakes a Spiritual Venture that is intuitional in character, one has to pass through five different states of the mind. The first state is the awakened one or the conscious state. Next is the Dream or sub-conscious state. When we are awake we see everything around us limited by the power of our sense organs, while as

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we dream, we gravitate between the awakened and the dream states, since we do not dream when we are either in the awakened or in the 'deep-sleep state' which is the third state the mind passes through a state in which we are not normally aware of anything that happens around us. In order to pass beyond this state one has to have complete control over one's 'deep sleep state' like 'Gudakesa'. Such a state is the 'Turiya' or the 'state transcendental' or the 'Serene and Blessed state' that the Mystic Poets and Saints like Sri Aurobindo are reported to have experienced. It is the Natural Law that controls the entry into the 'Turiya State'. This entry is possible only to one who has completely purified the mind. 'Turiya is absolutely intuitional' and can be experienced only in meditation or sequestered contemplation. The fifth state is 'Turiyatita'. The great Saints and Sages remained in 'Turiyatita' when they attained a mindless-space (Chidakasa) in Cosmic Consciousness. Here the Self or the one ceases to function since the 'mind-space' transforms itself into mindless-space in unmitigated Spirituality, that never manifests itself. In this state, there is no question of return to the oneself, since it becomes one with the source by the Grace of Unmanifested spirituality.

Attainment of the capacity to manage oneself is therefore not a negative approach, but an entirely positive one. It enables a person to develop an 'integrated personality' which in its turn helps the dynamic and scientifically-oriented man of the present-day to acquire the spiritual wisdom—the sine qua non for harmonious personality, a relaxed heart and an enlightened soul in the midst of all the pleasures and pains brought about by science in a sweating, struggling and fiercely competitive world. To conclude, such an integrated personality is necessary not only for the individual, but also for all living beings moving around him. 'Let the entire world be happy; even so shall I be happy.'