Yoga-Vedanta Camp Highlights 47-Year History of DLS in Malaysia
Category : October 1983
Published by Anonymous on Oct. 02, 1983

Yoga-Vedanta Camp Highlights 47-Year History of DLS in Malaysia

Ananthan, P. The sun is just rising in the humid atmosphere outside Kuala Lampur. The craggy cliff line above the mouth of Batu Caves becomes visible with the light, and the sound of birds singing announces the new day. Nearby, inside the Sivananda Ashram, dozens of teenagers are awakening, intent on making it to the prayer session on time at the Divine Life Society's one-week Yoga-Vedanta Camp. Cold water baths bring them quickly to waking consciousness.

It has not been easy to fill the vacuum left by Swami Pranavananda when he passed away in March of 1982, but now Swami Jivanmuktananda is here from India, and it was his idea to have this camp, from the 10th to the 16th of April, 1983, at the Malaysian Divine Life HQ situated in the Sivananda Ashram at Batu Caves, 10 km. outside Kuala Lumpur. Through such educational sessions, he wants to introduce more of the younger generation to the teachings of Swami Sivananda, as up till now it is primarily the elder people who would attend classes at the DLS. He also hopes this and other programs will help to fill the gap between the older and younger generations, bringing them closer and uniting them, and awakening their minds to spiritual life.

Most of the participants are young people, 16 to 18 years of age, all eager enough to become engrossed with the lectures of scholars well- versed in religion and philosophy, and the films shown during the one-week yoga intensive.

The chanting of the 'MAHA MRITYUNJAYA MANTRA,' in the large main hall facing the life-like, white marble statue of Swami Sivananda seated in lotus posture, begins the day's activities. This is Lord Siva's Mantra, explains Swami Jivanmuktanandaji - a life-giving mantra capable of warding off death by accidents of all description. After the prayers, before breakfast, one full hour of yoga asanas and pranayama follows under his close tutorship and supervision, each participant locked in total concentration and silence. Though most are new to the subject, they

are eager to learn and catch on quickly.

Lectures in the afternoon draw heavily from the Bhagavad Gita and expound the teachings of Swami Sivananda, explaining: "The Vedanta of Sivananda is neither a dreamy, subjective, world-negating doctrine of illusion, nor a crude, sense-bound, world-affirming theory of societarianism." It is a philosophy of the "oneness of the Divinity of the universe, the immortality of the soul of man, which is identical with the Absolute Self, the essential unity of everything in the universe with this highest Reality. It is also a practical living one, and not simply a theory' of the universe. It is not a theory, but the exposition of the nature of his practical life." The question-and-answer sessions that follow continue to hold the attention of the participants and they zealously inquire into many areas. Films highlight the history of the DLS, its accomplishments through its 47-year history, and further elucidate its spiritual philosophy.

Those who attended said they learned a great deal, and were instructed by the swami to apply it in their daily life. Each received a certificate, a souvenir book, a chart on the basic hatha yoga postures and a picture of Swami Sivananda.

About the DLS: The Divine Life Society was founded in 1936 by His Holiness Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj for the widest possible propagation of spiritual knowledge by training aspirants in yoga and Vedanta. The society is an avowedly liberal Hindu, non-sectarian institution, embodying in its perspective all the fundamental principles of all religions of the world. It accords equal place of honor to all faiths and religious traditions. The DLS places its emphasis on the teaching of yoga and spiritual living, offering those teachings freely to members of all religions, and carries out its object of world- wide revival of spiritually through publication of books, pamphlets and magazines dealing scientifically with all aspects of Yoga and Vedanta, universal religion and philosophy; holding and arranging cultural and spiritual conferences and discourses; establishing training centres for the practice of Yoga; and taking other steps to aid in the revival of moral and spiritual regeneration in the world.

The Batu Caves Branch, headquarters for DLS in Malaysia, was formed in 1953. There are now eleven Malaysian sub-branches, operating in Johore Baru, Kluang, Malacca, Seremban, Raub, Kuantan, Ipoh, Prai, Penang, Sungai Karangan and Alor Star, which endeavor to transform the lives of people by propagating the ideas of divine living summed up by Swami Sivanandaji as the cream and the essence of all

sadhana (spiritual practices): "Serve. Love. Give. Purify. Meditate. Realize."

Article copyright Himalayan Academy.