THE DIVINE VISION

A Periodical on Spirituality and Health



LIFE SCIENCES FOUNDATION

Founded by : Dr. O.P. Kohli

Regd. Office:

Regd. Office : 1 Rose Avenue,
DLF Farming Area
Chattarpur, New Delhi-110074

THE DIVINE VISION

Founded by
Dr. O.P. Kohli

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Devoted to enlightening the mankind on spiritual evolution through techniques of meditation: raising one's limited consciousness to expanded consciousness; enabling on to liberate from threefold sufferingsof physical, mental and spiritual ignorance; and offering spiritual healing when medical facilities and medicines fail to respond.

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(The publication of this periodical is based on sea knowledge in Gita, Ramayana, Vedas and other Hindu Holy Scriptures and teachings of our Revered Guruji 'Premavatar Sri Sri Paramahansa Yogananda')

EDITORIAL

The impatient waiting of all the devotees and members of different religions who had been eagerly awaiting the consecration of Ram Lalla Idol in Ayodhya on Jan 22, 2024, is now over. In this issue Bhai Sahib describes in his own loving words the consecration of Lord Ram Lalla.

From the earliest days of Independent India there have been occasions when the state had tryst with religion. Somnath Temple, for instance was famously rebuilt on the initiative of India's First deputy Prime Minister, Sardar Patel.The then President of India, Rajendra Prasad, attended the installation ceremony of the Shiva Linga at the new temple ignoring Jawahar Lal Nehru's reservation. But as Prime Minister, Narendra Modi went many steps further and performed the ritual role of Yajman or Patron of Pran Pratishtha at Ayodhya Dham.

With the phenomenal force-multiplying effect of media platforms live-streaming the ceremony across the globe, the event gained unprecedented amplitude. It inspired the public sphere and as such the millions of homes where the devout in-turn enacted rituals of worship like lightening diya and fireworks.

Modi will now go down in history as the Prime Minister who ensured not only the fulfilment of the Sangh Parivar's major goals ie: Ram Mandir and abrogation of Article 370 but has also furthered the cause of establishing a UCC (Uniform Civil Code) by passing the law to ban triple talaq, some significant changes on marriage, divorce, guardianship, adoption and related aspects. The government led by Uttarakhand Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami tabled the UCC Bill in the state legislative assembly on Feb 6th, 2024 and it was passed on 7th Feb 2024. It ,may serve as template for other BJP run states to enact similar legislation.

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RSS Chief Mohan Bhagwat's presence, both at the consecration and on stage at the post ceremony thanksgiving speech along with Saffron soft robed seers, lent ideological cultural weight of the concept of Ram Rajya.

Pran Prathishta ceremony introduces the most mysterious and less understood powers of mantras also.

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Publisher & Printer: **Dr. O. P. Kohli**
Editor : **Dr. O. P. Kohli**
Cover-design : **Dr. O. P. Kohli**
Address : **c/o GH-13/590, Pashim Vihar, New Delhi - 87**
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GOD AND HIS DOMAIN

By: Dr. O.P.Kohli

Is there any entity we call God for lack of better description? I do not believe that He lives on the seventh heaven or the 3rd or the 100th. All the scenarios made for a "supreme being" wearing thick glasses, carefully pondering over the book of Karma and deciding whether we will go through the Pearly Gates or end up as earthworms have been written by vested interests (the Priest). They use our fear of the unknown to subjugate and enslave the rest of us into subservience for their own benefit.

Think of Paramatma as the water in an ocean and the individual Atma's as drops that originate from but are a part of the ocean. The water changes many forms e.g. liquid, semisolid (clouds) and solid ice. Same way Atma occupies many vessels that make up the universe and its varied forms both lives, as we know it and the "non-living" entities. If you look at the atomic and the sub-atomic levels even the rocks are alive and the further you dissect an atom the deeper becomes the mystery as to what is life and what is the soul.

The purely "scientific" approach for definition of life as propounded by the seekers of "truth" in the west, during the last two centuries, is no longer valid. Quantum physics and the sciences more advanced than that have taken us to a stage beyond which even the top experts are stumped and say "beyond this I know not". Even Einstein in his final years was seeking to discover a "combined theory" where physics and Meta-physics meet.

All bodies of water, clouds, rain, ice, rivers etc. end up in the ocean and merge with the

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mighty parent. This is also the aim (Lakshya) of all the living and non-living forms. Man having been given a 'higher' brain and faculties has an easier path to tread. We are 'superior' beings and have been granted the privilege to seek, retain and convey the facts that we know. This is because of that drop that has been sequestrated from the ocean and temporarily resides in the vessel, which we around in.

During meditation, adjustments of state of consciousness can be observed and experienced. With physical relaxation, mental transformation become refined and so our states of consciousness also become refined. When we come to know we can choose to shift awareness to preferred levels at will without physical and mental actions. When concentration improves and the body becomes relaxed, impulses caused by restlessness and arising from unconscious or subconscious mind become diminished in intensity and therefore, our thoughts become more refined and the the mental field becomes increasingly clear. With mental calmness, super conscious state becomes more pronounced. When meditating, if there is a body movement, remain still and relax and try to direct your energy flow from spinal pathway to spiritual eye. If you perceive inner light while meditating try to determine its cause. If it is a twilight try to avoid it. As an individualised unit of God's consciousness you are superior to whatever you perceive. If while meditating you hear some sounds, use them as mantras - listen.

and merge in them, as it is a field of unmanifested consciousness. At this Soul level we are omnipresent and omniscient.

So to seek God one does not necessarily need to go far but to look inside oneself. Realise that God is omnipresent and you and I and all humans are parts of that Supreme Being. He is

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Param (superior/eternal) Atma and not Par (not mine) Atma. There is no God wearing shiny white clothes sitting on a golden throne in heaven waiting for the prodigal sons to come home. He is as near as your own heart and consciousness as His immanent aspect is within us.

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As you look upon creation, which appears so solid and real, remember always to think of it as ideas in the mind of God, frozen into physical forms.

- Sri Sri Paramahansa Yogananda

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LIFE AFTER DEATH
PARTS I & II

Dr. O.P.Kohli

Man is a human spirit, more or less embedded in the mud-cage of a body, with 'head' as the usual residence. His thoughts and perceptions lead him on.

And what happens on his death? Well, the answer is that a separation occurs between the soul and body.

Man, however, takes with him his old habits and doubts; unending quest for material possessions and physical sensations of heat and cold, pleasure and pain and other polarities. He carries these forward in the next body that he picks up: a body that is produced as per a certain blue print, carried through from the earliest times of life on this planet, until now.

There is a cycle of action, creation, survival and destruction. Death, as such, is nothing to be frightened of. Any fear, if at all, should be equivalent to that of losing your pocket money or a book, a girl / boyfriend: i.e.fear of losing something or someone..that's it!

We experience the first observable phenomenon of death, when we find out that the mind does maintain and preserve images / memories of previous lifetimes. But they remain mere pictures, if we do not understand our sub-conscious and its relevance. Many ailments - such as arthritis, asthma, rheumatics, heart disease, etc. - are consequently the body's reaction to these painful projections from the past. Once these are resolved and cleared, the illness usually abates. All actual diseases are thus a manifestation of these unresolved projections / memories of the previous lifetimes.

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With the myriad proofs scattered around, it would be presumptuous to disregard the existence of reincarnation and other spiritual laws, without testing them or due to lack of awareness. But unaware of the existence of the scientific spiritual laws, people just believe God and reincarnation, with no scientific proofs to offer to the non-believers. The western word, as such, lacks the scientific approach to spiritual laws. Hence the value of religion, as a vital source of energy, has greatly diminished in the life of a man; and rather than being an outcome of scientific investigation, the beliefs in the spiritual doctrines are often tinted with personal bias / prejudices.

Since times immemorial, it has been the observation of all saints and seers that the changeless and eternal nature of the Self can be perceived through constant introspection and detached observation of the self.

Just as electricity does not die when withdrawn from a broken bulb, the life energies not annihilated on returning from the involuntary nerves. One must practise conscious voluntary withdrawal of energy from the heart and spinal organs. For this, the following rules have been laid down by the Hindu saints ~

1. To be conscious during sleep;
2. To be able to have dreams at will;
3. To disconnect the five senses consciously (not passively, as during sleep);
4. To control the action of heart, in order to experience conscious death or the suspended animation of the body.

Lord Krishna taught us that the 'ego' is continuously conscious of itself: be it childhood, youth or old age. The embodied soul is

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both fully conscious of these states as well as life after death. We can follow the ego in all states of existence, by observing the above rules or practices. We can thus follow it consciously through death and thereafter. Those who fail to understand this, cannot retain their sense of personal identity or awareness during the big slumber of death, and perpetually grope in darkness.

The time element is most important in our progress. So a child who dies young, would certainly be given another opportunity to express his potential, human or divine. Though one life span may not offer sufficient time, there is a reason for every premature death. And the concept of life or transitory or fleeting is certainly not pessimistic. Maya, or delusion, makes us feel that the body is real. But as soon as death robs the body of soul, time ceases to be; clothes, food and shelter become irrelevant and we are like free birds.

We have definitely been given the power to reason where we go and whence we come from. But unfortunately, we do not take enough pains to analyze ourselves.

PART II

Death is like a gateway. We discard our bodies when we pass through it, but in all other respects, we essentially remain the same. Our basic disposition and character would not change even after death - the degree of improvement or variance, would largely depend upon our efforts . If we have a violent temper, it would remain so until we conquer it. Likewise, suicide is not a solution to problems and the suicidal tendencies continue to haunt us in further reincarnations, through a different set of problems / challenges, until we learn to conquer them by facing those problems boldly.

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The last phase of life is important than the initial one, because what we are in the final phase, is what we would be at the beginning of next life. 'But are there any ways of finding out our previous lifetimes?' is the question that immediately comes to our mind. And the answer is certainly YES. We can do so by detecting and analyzing our basic tendencies and capabilities in the present. Anything that one creates, however imperfect it may be, is an expression of creative talent.And any talent - be it a flare for writing, acting, woodcarving, painting, music, etc. - exhibited earlier in life, is an indication of similar talents and traits in the previous birth. Furthermore, when you are guided by the conscience - forever striving towards self-improvement - right from the early childhood years, you belong to a Khatria state of spirituality; and if right from the formative years your thoughts are God-directed, you are a Brahmin.

Then again, our choices and tastes - likes and dislikes, reflect upon our previous lifetimes. Say, while travelling, one sometimes likes certain spots more than others. And if we take a special liking for one place, we had probably been there before. Love or repulsion at first sight, is also due to our past association and impressions. Similarly, people with driving ambitions had held important positions before. And yes, there are others who remain unsuccessful throughout - carrying their failure tendencies from the past. Such people must conquer these negative tendencies in this lifetime.

It is also interesting to note that some of our features, from previous lives, remain unchanged. Eyes, which are the windows to our soul, hardly change. Your inclinations tell you about your gender in the

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previous birth. Many men wish to be women and vice-versa. One can thus get a general idea about the past lives.

The entire cosmos is governed by a divine logic and there is a rhyme or reason for everything in this drama of life. For instance, many souls from the East - deserving material possessions are - reincarnated in U.S.A. to encourage spirituality there. Likewise, many souls - formerly born in U.S.A. have since reincarnated in India, in order to benefit from its spiritual riches and also contribute to its material advancement. It is all divine drama: a cosmic conspiracy, for an all round development of all nations.

It is often said that we have to act in this deluded drama of life and death, until we become desire less. A relevant question, often asked, is whether we get birth in accordance with our desires so as to exhaust them…or as per our worth. well, as per the divine plan, we take birth according to what we deserve, but are simultaneously offered opportunities to work and strive towards the desired state. And it is due to our efforts, blessings of the God and our Guru, that we climb the spiritual or materialistic ladder, from one lifetime to another.

Meditation can give us a deeper insight into our previous births. We must thus strive to rise to the highest level of spiritual ladder in the school of life.

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The 'true Self' is never born,
and nor does it die.
It is permanent and ageless.

- Bhagavad Gita (2:20)

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SCIENCE OF CONCENTRATION AND MEDITATION

PARTS I & I

Dr. O.P.Kohli

It is said, 'fastest way to realize God is to go within and meditate.' And the fastest way of achieving success in meditation lies in the practice of scientific techniques laid down by the great masters, such as Sri Sri Paramahansa Yogananda and others from Yogoda Society. The sole purpose of these scientific techniques is to bring the mind and life force energy, under the command of the will. Mastering the power of concentration is the first step to meditation and strengthening of will. Perfect concentration, when focused on God as the Object, is called meditation or Rajyoga.

Now, concentration is that power by which one can free ones mind from distractions and focus it on a pre-specified object of study. Mental efficiency depends upon one's expertise in the art of concentration, i.e. focused attention. All men of success have been men of great concentration. Be it those in business or work, students (in schools / colleges) and spiritual seekers, must all know the art of using the power of concentration for success in their respective endeavours. Concentration, basically, is of two types:

1. The first one is an outcome of 'auto-suggestion failure', with a harried mind constantly grappling with some nagging thoughts / fear: the more an individual runs away from it, the more is his mind gripped by that very fear /thought… But the concentration so acquired, being beyond an individual's control, is not real.

2. The second is the scientific concentration, which enables us

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to use our will and focus our mind on a chosen objector as long as we wish. This is real concentration or focused attention.

Great businessmen, social and spiritual reformers have all been men of deep concentration. The art of concentration can be acquired and improved by this simple experiment ~

Sit in any comfortable asana, keeping the spine and neck straight, and concentrate on the flame of a mustard oil / pure ghee lamp - without blinking the eyes - till you feel a burning sensation or tears flow. Then gradually close the eyes, without shifting the focus from the image - in between the eyebrows - on the mind-screen. The lamp can be replaced with any coloured spot or 'AUM', of the size of a twenty -five paisa coin, at a distance of 6-7 feet. The duration of the experiment can be gradually increased, with the improvement in our will and power of concentration.

The above can be practised for hours together. The following benefits are said to accrue by this practice:

1. Improvement in the concentration-level, which gets perfected with time;

2. Cure for all eye-ailments;

3. Reduction and ultimate removal of laziness / indolence;

4. Enhanced levels of concentration & strengthened resolve for achievement of one's goals.

The students who wishes to master the art of concentration, should dwell on the following:

1. What are the objects of distraction?

2. How can the attention be scientifically switched off from them?

The source of distraction could either lie in the external environment, i.e. outside the

body, or could well be from an internal environment, i.e. within the body. With the wee hours of morning (before the sunrise) being just ideal for concentration / meditation, it is easy to find a quiet and calm place, conducive for the same. Once you master the art of concentration, the external environment ceases to bother you. You can remain calm within, despite the noises outside. And it is this inner quietude, which is of utmost importance.

Most distractions reach the mind through the senses of sight, hearing, taste, touch and smell. The sensations then lead to thoughts, which in turn trigger off more associated thoughts, stored in our subconscious mind. Controlling the life force, that feeds the senses, is the only way of controlling sensations. Life force is the electric power in the sensory motor-nerve telephones, that makes it possible for the ego and intelligence to receive the sensations and transmit activating impulses to the nerves. So the scientific approach in attaining calmness and freedom from sensational cravings, lies in monitoring the supply of life force.

During sleep, our mind is disconnected from the sensory receivers. For instance, the auditory, nerve does not carry the sound to mind and the sleeper, therefore, does not hear the bell ring. But this is a passive method, not controlled by will. When awake, the life force in the nerves keeps us entangled in all sorts of sensations, and it is only when this is snapped, does the soul become free of such sensations and enters the blissful state of complete concentration. The great Yogis of India have taught us the art of controlling the life force, by regulating the flow of blood through the heart to the sensory nerve system. The Hong Sau and Aum techniques, taught by our great masters, lead

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to voluntary and conscious attainment of perfect internal calmness, by preventing the sensory nerve from transmitting messages to the mind.

It is interesting to note that the heart normally pumps eighteen tons of blood a day. If you worry or indulge in other emotions of restlessness, you further trouble the heart and it beats faster. Since children are more restless, their heart beats much faster than that of grown-ups. We must avoid emotions, over-indulgence in the senses and wrong eating habits in order to maintain calmness. The overworked heart, which cannot rest when its master sleeps, is a much-abused slave. When it has had enough, it says 'quit' and ceases to function.

Giving respite to the heart or completely stopping the heartbeat, through well-defined techniques taught by our Gurus, indicate that the physical body is perfectly under the command of will and there is nothing to fear.

It is, however, very important remember that if one is to attain the basic serenity, through which one can learn to die daily, then one will also have to learn to live daily in divine consciousness. The living habits must conform to the laws of spiritual advancement. One must exercise moderation and self - restraint in our day to day lives, avoiding those thoughts and actions that make the body and mind restive.

Meditation, as we know, is the other word for focusing one's mind on God. And for best results in meditation, we can sit upright, with a straight spine, in any comfortable posture. The following are some of the well-known asanas:

Padama Asana

Also known as 'lotus posture', it is considered to be the best. For this, place the left foot at the joint of the right thigh and the right one at the joint of the left thigh, such that both the heels

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touch each other below the navel, in the middle of the abdomen. The soles of our feet would thus be on our thighs. One can straighten the backbone and neck, without bending the waist. By placing the hands on the knees, one can relax and be comfortable: looking up with eyes closed and focused at a point, between the eyebrows.

Siddha Asana

For this posture, we can place the heel of our left foot under the testes of the prostrate gland, such that the sole of our foot touches the right thigh. We can the place the heel of our right foot against the pubic bone, or just above the genitals. The above description has to be followed for the back, neck and eyes.

Sukh Asana

This is a very simple asana. Keep your abdomen in, chest out, chin parallel to ground and gently draw the shoulder blades together. Rest your hands with palms upwards, at the junction of the thighs in the abdominal region. Be comfortable and keep your neck and spine erect as described above.

In all these asanas, your attention - with eyes closed - has to be at the point in-between the two eyebrows. This is the seat of spiritual insight. It is also the centre of concentration. A person, deep in concentration, often focuses at this point without straining the eyes. The upper gaze comes naturally, when one is calm and relaxed. What is more important, is the focusing of mind at the point between the eyebrows. Gradually, we may perceive light at this point. After that, we might see the spiritual eye of three colours. This is actually the eye of intuitive omnipresent perception.

It takes deep concentration and calmness to behold the spiritual eye. A golden halo surrounds the circular field of blue, in the centre of which is a palpitating

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five-pointed white star. Once you see this eye, try to penetrate it. Mentally, with deep devotion, we can also pray to God to help us.

We must be regular in our meditation practice. If possible, we should arrange a separate room or screen a portion of our bedroom, to be strictly used for this purpose. One can even place pictures of the gurus on the altar. We can thus impregnate the spot with spiritual vibrations, which would help us in improving our daily practice.

We can sit on deer / hare-skin or a wooden blanket, in order to insulate our body from the down pull of certain earth-currents. This insulation would help in raising and concentrating the life energy, to the point within our eyebrows. The blanket can be covered with a silk cloth. We should sit facing East or North, as certain currents flowing from these directions assist in concentration and meditation.

We must be perfectly still and relaxed while meditating. Any physical tension or movement can prevent us from body-consciousness.

The intensity of concentration is certainly much more than the duration. Five minutes of intense concentration is better than a half-hearted one hour. Intensity means a complete, loving absorption in the object of our attention. The longer we meditate with intensity, the more we will be filled with the joys of the spirit.

We must be persistent in our efforts, if we want to attract God's attention. Meditation helps in awakening our divine inner cravings, which can take us to the heights of realization and eternal bliss. Meditation must thus be practised with deep devotion and we should not give up until we succeed in our divine objective.

God certainly responds to the meditation and prayers of all his

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devotees, but erosive sensations of touch, smell, taste, hearing and sight usually drown His voice out. Finding us engrossed and entangled in the restlessness caused by the myriad sensations, God's voice recedes into the depth of silence and He sadly turns away. many students try to meditate, but still hypnotized by restlessness they are unable to forget their surroundings. For better results, one must learn to detach one's attention from the distracting thoughts and sensations, and give one's all to God.

In the final summing, it is absolutely essential for a devotee to establish a temple of silence within himself, in order to find God. While the Almighty is like moon, the devotee's mind ia a lake. So long as the mind is disturbed, thus will be the reflection of the divine moon. The divine image can only be clearly seen, once the mental waves have been stilled by calmness, concentration and meditation.

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By deep meditation and living for god alone, calm the waves of thought and desire that constitute your present perception of reality. then in super-consciousness, you will behold everything as it really is.

- Paramahansa Yogananda

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MIRACLES OF SCIENTIFIC MEDITATION

Dr. O.P.Kohli

Every spiritual aspirant desires to contact , see and feel the presence of God. Such a seeker adopts different approaches, based on his reading or guidance of friends and Guru.

I would like to throw some light on the major problem encountered during meditation, a technique mostly used by the aspirants following the path of Yoga.

Well, the restlessness of an ever-wandering mind is the first & foremost problem faced by any devotee on this path. This hurdle can be overcome by understanding the role of 'life force' in our system, as given below -

The blood in our body becomes impure, as the energy required for the constant functioning of the organs and muscles is taken from the blood flowing through our arteries. This results in removal of oxygen from the blood, and its consequent impurity. The impure blood is then purified in the lungs, with the heart acting as a pump for its circulation. With this non-stop process, the heart is always under a tremendous pressure to supply blood to the lungs. And the blocked arteries further aggravate this.

If the muscles and organs are kept relaxed, as during meditation, there is a definite slump in their energy-requirement. The blood impurity is comparatively less and so is the pressure on the heart. Thus with the comparatively relaxed lungs and heart, the life force normally frittered in keeping the overworked organs going, is instead transferred to the mind of a yogi: improving upon his meditation and adding to the calmness of body and mind.

Hence, the golden rule is to reduce restlessness and calm down the physical and mental processes, which would lead to improved concentration-levels and

meditation. The ultimate aim of course is breathlessness, which is the quintessential requirement for 'Divine Bliss'.

And to attain this blissful state, a scientific technique has been advised by our beloved Guruji Sri Sri Paramahansa Yogananda.



When the waves of consciousness are transcended by concentrated meditation practice, consciousness - being purified - experiences oneness with the Supreme Self. The manifested world, the (truth) seeker's consciousness and Supreme Consciousness are experienced as one.

- Lahiri Mahasaya

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PEACE, THE ALTAR OF GOD

Compiled by - - Annieey Mehta

Annieey, a LSF devotee and a prominent member of YSS, along with other few members of LSF visited Mahakaleshwar Jyotirlinga and Omkareshwar Jyotirlinga on 1st January, 2024 at Ujjain in Madhya Pradesh.

It is believed that by having Darshan of all the 12 Jyotirlingas one can attain liberation, from the cycle of deaths and births.

Ujjain is connected with all the roadways, railway lines and airways all around the world. The nearest airport to reach Ujjain from New Delhi is Devi Ahilyabai Holkar Airport, in Indore, the largest city in the state of Madhya Pradesh. Indore is a famous city of old cultural heritage and birth-land of the Indore Gharana of Hindustani Classical Music.

Ujjain, is a divine land that offers a unique blend of solitude and spiritual experiences. The residents of Ujjain speak courteous language and kind words. They are calm, serene and amiable with a harmonious personality. They know, If you want to be loved, start loving others who need your love. If you want others to sympathise with you, start showing sympathy to those around you. If you want to be respected, you must learn to be respectful to everyone, both young and old. They also know what ever you want others to be, first be that yourself, then you will find others responding in like manner to you.

The LSF team then reached Mahakaleshwar.

- Mahakaleshwar Jyotirlinga, the sacred abode of lord Shiva, is the heart of Ujjain, situated on the banks of holy river Shipra. According to ancient legends, the foundation of the temple was laid by Lord Brahma. The lingam of Mahakaleshwar is Swayambhu & Dakshinmukhi. It is colossus in itself.

- The temple has three-storeys. The lowest, middle and uppermost parts are respectively installed with the lingams of Mahakaleshwar, Omkareshwar and Nagachandreshwar. There is a large-sized Kund named Koti Tirtha in the temple-complex. The Kund as well as the water in it is celestial. A silver plated esoteric Naga Jaladhari covers the roof of the Garbhgriha adding the extra

grandeur to the shrine. Besides Jyotirlinga, attractive and small-sized images of Ganesha, Kartikeya and Paravati are also seen. Classical eulogies in the praise of Lord Siva are exhibited all around the walls in the Garbhgirah. The Nanda Dipa always remains lit. In the exit-path, there is a wide hall in which a most attractive metal quoted stone Nandi, in a humble sitting pose can be witnessed. The courtyard adds much to the magnanimity of the temple-complex.

- Bhasma aarti is a daily ritual that one must not miss when in Ujjain. The process begins with the 'Abhishek' of the Lingam smearing it with multiple offerings like curd, honey, sandal paste, milk and water and finally the Shiva linga is decorated with Bhasma and Shringar.

By God's grace we got the privilege to do Jal Abhishek on Lingam. The vibrations in the Garbhgriha were limitless. There were loud chants of JAI MAHAKAAL - JAI MAHAKAAL (The one that defeats death and time). Deep in our hearts we thanked Kohli Uncle, who had advised us years back to complete all the 12 Jyotirlingas in this lifetime, for within us is the intelligence to understand and the power to overcome all tests.

Bada Ganapati Temple

- The temple is located next to the campus of Mahakal Temple on the path leading to Harsiddhi Temple. It houses a gigantic 4 meters tall statue of Lord Ganesha.

Harsiddhi Mata Temple

- One of the 51 ShaktiPeeths, this temple occupies a special place in galaxy of ancient spots of Ujjain. According to the legend, when Shiva carried away the burning body of Sati from the sacrificial fire, her elbow dropped at this place. Maa Annapurna is seated between the idols of Mahalaxmi and Mahasaraswati, here the idol of Annapurna is painted in vibrant vermilion. Two soaring Deepastambhas, each adorned with 1008 lamps, stand tall outside the entrance. The glory of the lamps is best sighted during Navaratri festival which is celebrated with much zeal. Harsiddhi Mata is worshipped for granting Siddhis to her devotees.

Our next visit was to Kaal Bhairav and the temples in that zone.

Kaal Bhairav

▪ This sacred 6000 year old temple is dedicated to the fierce manifestation of Lord Shiva. Kaal Bhairav is the guardian deity of Ujjain, and he is considered Senapati of the town. The devotion toward the Ashta Bhairava or eight attendants of Lord Shiva is an integral part of Shiva Bhakti (devotional worship) in Ujjain and since Kaal Bhairav is chief among those eight, so this temple is particularly important in the town.

▪ Liquor is offered to the temple deity as one of the five tantric ritual offerings known as Panchmakara. In older times, all offerings were made to the deity, but now only alcohol is offered; the other four offerings are in form of symbolic rituals. The deity in the Garbhgriha miraculously swallows alcohol offered to him by the priest in a saucer and rest is returned to the devotee as Prasad. The Vahan of Baba Bhairo, a small dog (shvan), in the form of statue stands right opposite to the deity.

▪ **Gadkalika Temple**

▪ It is an ancient temple dedicated to Goddess Kali that dates back to the period of the Mahabharata war. However, the idol of Goddess Kalika is said to be even older than the temple as it is claimed to be of the era of Satyuga. Popularly called Ujjain's Mahakali, the temple is one of the 51 Shakti Peeths where the upper lip of Goddess Sati fell. The temple holds tremendous religious significance, especially among students. Legend states that the great poet Kalidasa, though formally uneducated, was able to acquire unparalleled literary knowledge and skills because of his devotion and blessings of Maa.

▪ **Mangalnath**

▪ Mangalnath is regarded as the birth place of planet Mars, according to the Matsya Purana. In ancient times, it was famous for giving a clear view of the planet and hence suitable for astronomical studies. Mahadev is the presiding deity in the temple. Mangalnath is famous for Mangal Bhat Puja performed for removing dosh in marriages, getting good health, career and business growth.

Maharishi Sandhipani Ashram

▪ It is a true treasure trove of history and spirituality. It is here that Lord Shree Krishna, along with his brother Balram and friend

Sudama stayed and studied under the guidance of their Guru Sandipani. There is a rare idol of standing Nandi and Gomti Kund. Devotees here get to learn about 14 Vidyas & 64 Kalas. Exploring this place is like diving back into our childhood storybooks where every detail comes to life, a beautiful mixture of learning and tranquility.

Ved Shala

- The sacred city is home to Jantar Mantar or Ved Shala. Maharaja Sawai Jai Singh II, constructed this observatory in 1725. It includes 13 architectural astronomical instruments. Vedh Shala was built for determining eclipses, local time, height (of the location), as well as the declination of the Sun, stars, and planets.

On our second day we embarked our journey towards Omkareshwar

Omkareshwar, a town endowed with spirituality and beautiful landscapes is dedicated to Lord Shiva. The two main temples of Lord Shiva here are Omkareshwar and Mamleshwar.

At the Sangam of the consecrated rivers Narmada and Kaveri, lies the holy town. Omkareshwar, popularly known as 'Omkar Mandhata', is the fourth among the 12 Jyotirlingas popular among Indian pilgrims. It is a divine blessing by mother nature that Omkareshwar is shaped like Om - the holiest symbol of Hinduism. Lord Shiva has appeared here in Omkar form. The glory of Omkareshwar is mentioned in Shiv Mahapurana. All sins are destroyed by the mere Darshan of Pranab Omkareshwar Jyotirlinga. Lord Shiva comes here every day and rests after traveling in all the three worlds. His resting position is witnessed by the visitors as a special blessing to help them in concentration and meditation.

Located 78 kms from Indore, Omkareshwar is adorned with lofty hills, on the northern banks of Narmada. The name of the place originates from 'Omkara' which happens to be one of the names of Lord Shiva. A 270 ft hanging bridge running over river Narmada adds to the exquisiteness and beauty of Omkareshwar

- Apart from the Omkareshwar Jyotirlinga and Mamleshwar temples the below noted are worth seeing places:-

- A three storey Gauri Somnath Temple built in the shape of a peahen,

- Govindeshwar Caves where Adi Shankaracharya is said to have met his Guru Govinda Bhagavatpada,

- Gurudwara Omkareshwar Sahib where Guru Nanak stayed during his visit to the city.

- Our trip to Omkareshwar was concluded by watching Narmada meeting Kaveri at the sangam. The colourful ghats rippling Narmada and the divinity that reside s in this town, gave us one of the many reasons to visit Omkareshwar again.

I thanked Lord Shiva, Guruji Sri Sri Paramahansa Yogananda, and Kohli Uncle for bringing out the best within me.

I will make up my mind to be happy within myself right now where I am today. I will be the mental sunshine for all who cross my path from today onwards.

And to attain this blissful state, a scientific technique has been advised by our beloved Guruji Sri Sri Paramahansa Yogananda.



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Jai Sri Ram
RAMAYANA AROUND THE WORLD

Compiled by - RAJAY DEWAN RAJAY

JAVA

The first portrayal of the Ramayana in Central Java, is carved onto the courtyard balustrades in the Chandi Shiva and Chandi Brahma temples, locally known as Lara Jonggrang. Ramayana is depicted in a series of magnificent reliefs carved into the walls of the temples of Prambanan in central Java around 900 CE. The first literary version in Old Javanese, in the 10th century the Ramayana Kakawin, written by Yogiswar is based on Bhattikavya, a Sanskrit poem written by Bhatti (6th - 7th century) in India.

Ramayana remains the source of moral and spiritual guidance and aesthetic expression.

SUMATRA

Sumatra version of Ramayana is Ramayana Swarnadwipa, written in the Old Javanese language, composed in the 11th or 12th century. The story is largely similar to the Valmiki Ramayana, with some significant difference, e.g., this version takes place in Swarnadwipa (Golden Island), Rama is called Tamawaka, Sita is called Himegini, and Ravana is called Baramon. The Hikayat Seri Rama, a Malay adaptation of the Ramayana, is also popular in Sumatra.

Maura Takus temple complex features intricate carvings and sculptures referencing the Ramayana.

CAMBODIA

Reamker, as Ramayana is known in Cambodia is the based on the Indian epic poem Ramayana. The Reamker is Cambodia's best known epic.

The name Reamker translates to “Glory of Rama”. The Reamker adapts Hindu ideas to Buddhist themes and shows the balance of good and evil in the world.

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MYANAMAR

The Mynamar (Burmese) version of the Ramayana is called Yama Zatdaw, which translated to “The Story of Rama”. It is considered the unofficial national epic of Myanmar. The story was passed down orally from generation to generation, dating back to the reign of King Anawrahta (1044-77).

It was later written down in verse and prose, and performed as drama.

VIETNAM

Known as Ramavatara, the Ramayana has been adapted in Vietnam into a variety of forms, including literature, performing arts, and puppetry.

The earliest evidence of the Ramayana in Vietnam dates back to the 7th century CE, when it was introduced to the champa kingdom by Indian traders and missionaries and Khmer kings who ruled over much of the Mekong Delta from the 9th to the 15th centuries. Also the subject of many Vietnamese folk songs and folktales.

PHILIPPINES

Filipino version of the Ramayana is called the Maharadia Lawana. It shares many core elements with the original Ramayana, including the themes of love, loyalty, and duty. It incorporates distinctively Filipino elements. It has a distinct poetic style, use of language and additional characters and episodes specific to the Maranao narrative.

Despite facing challenges during the Spanish colonial period, the Maharadia Lawana has been transmitted through generations.

THAILAND

Ramayana known as the Ramakien (Ramakian) 'Glory of Rama' i s Thailand's national epic. Ramakien is an important part of the the Thai literary canon. Many other aspects were transposed into a Thai context, such as the clothes, weapons, topography, and elements of nature, which are described as being Thai in style.

Thailands ancient capital is Ayuthya (Ayodhya) and the current Thai king is King Rama X.

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SRI LANKA

Ramayana is known as Janakiharan in Sri Lanka. Ravana's (the king who abducted Sita) fortress was situated on a plateau between Trikuta Mountains.

The historic Ramayana sites in Sri Lanka included Ashok Vatika forest in Newark Eliya and Sita Kotuwa a small cave in Sitakotuwa where Sita resided during her captivity, Hanuman Kovil temple in Ramboda that commemorates Hanuman's act of setting fire to Lanka, Munneswaram Kovil a temple in Chilaw dedicated to Shiva believed to have been built by Shree Rama himself.

TIBET

The earliest Tibetan manuscripts, "Story about Rama," are dated VIII-X centuries. They all came to Tibet in different times from various areas of India including Kashmir, as well as Khotan and other regions of Central Asia. Most Tibetan versions of Ramayana are similar to the Jain version of Ramayana.

Tibetan Ramayana also made its way to Mongolia. Three notable works include, Story about Rama from commentaries on "Subhashita," and in works by the Mongolian scholar Tubden Rabjamba of 19th century.

JAPAN

Ramayana is believed to have arrived in Japan during 6th. or 7th. century through trade and culture exchange with India and China. The Ramayana's impact on Japanese culture can be seen in various forms.

In literature, the Ramayana's influence is evident in Japanese Buddhist texts, such as the "Hobutsushu" and "Sambo-Ekotoba,"which retell the Ramayana story with a Buddhist perspective. In performing arts, the Ramayana has been adapted into Japanese theatre, particularly Noh and Kabuki.

KHOTAN (XINJIANG & E. IRAN)

Khotanese (an extinct eastern Iranian language). of Ramayana (5th to 8th centuries CE) from Khotan, part of the present day Xinjiang, China has Buddha narrating story.

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In this version, Rama avoids violence whenever possible, while Ravana suffers for his attachment to worldly desires. Rama allows Ravana to live, who later takes refuge in Buddha. Buddha identifies Lakshmana as his own previous life.



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QUESTIONS OF DEVOTEES

Answered by: Bhai Sahib

Q.1 What is Life Science Foundation?

Ans. It is a spiritual organisation for healing of body, mind and soul. LSF is a Non Government Organisation setup by LSF Trust with the sole purpose of serving the humanity at large by liberation from three fold sufferings i.e; physical, mental and spiritual ignorance through techniques of meditation.

It was established in April 1996, by the founder and Spiritual Leader Dr. O P Kohli, at 1 Rose Avenue, DLF Farming Area, Chattarpur - 110074. Dr Kohli is a true Kriya Yogi and devotee of revered Guruji Sri Sri Paramahansa Yogananda of Yogoda Satsanga Society of India and Self-Realization Fellowship Center, California, USA.

In the Ashram the following activities are held :-

- On daily basis meditation is held from 07:00 AM to 08:00AM in the morning and 06:00 PM to 07:00 PM in the evening by those yearning to look at truth from within to without.

And on Sunday mornings for LSF members only:-

- Mediation - 30 minutes
- Guru Vandana - 10 minutes
- Group Arti - 5 minutes
- Personal problems - 10 minutes
- Question hour - 10 minutes.
- Parshad and devotional songs - 10 minutes

Q.2 How does meditation help to heal the sufferings?

Ans. Meditation gives you a sense of caring, a sense of humility, a sense of gratefulness, because in meditation you experience that which satisfies you like nothing else in this world can satisfy you. Through techniques of meditation man's limited consciousness is raised to super consciousness with total surrender to God.

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Q.3 Why are colours so important in our life?

Ans. Colours are the manifestation of specific vibrations. So we should always try to wear and surround ourselves with colours that are harmonious with our nature. Golden, blue and white are good for nervous disorders. But for a change, you should use other colours as well. The multicoloured rays of the spiritual eye first formed the astral rainbow, which is the blueprint of the material body.

Q.4 What is the best diet for the nervous system?

Ans. Goat's milk and almonds are good for the nervous system. Natural foods, as such are good for it. And while blue and black berries are good for the brain, golden coloured fruits help the muscles, tissues and blood. But the meat of animals, in all forms, is harmful for the nervous system. We must eat whole grain, cottage cheese, plenty of fruits and fresh vegetables. Besides, rubbing the whole body with a large ice-cube calms down the nerves.

Q.5 Why is the world in turmoil today? What can be done to improve the situation?

Ans. The history of human civilisation is a living testimony to the many trials faced now a days. Well, everything in this universe is cyclic and such phases come and go. There is a continuous rise and fall on this planet of duality. During the downswing, people generally become ignorant of the spiritual aspect of their being and all that is noble disappears in a day. This certainly spells doom for the civilisation. The same could happen to the nations during their ascent. For when man's moral and spiritual evolution does not keep pace with the scientific and technological advancement, the power so acquired is misused, thus paving the path for destruction.

This is exactly the nature of the global-crisis that we are facing today. Arrogance - governed by the emotions of hatred and jealousy, lust and greed - invariably leads to discord between individuals, racial turmoil and conflict amongst nations. Only the spirit of God can dispel the darkness threatening our world today. The answer thus lies in peace and self-restraint, positive thinking, love, goodwill, forgiveness, prayers and an inner harmony with the Divine.

Q.6 Kindly explain the significance of 'AUM'.

Ans. The Spirit decided to create a dream-like reality of matter, i.e. this finite world which is vibrated. Well, every vibration has a sound and 'AUM' is the sound of this original vibration. Extremely subtle and blissful, it can only be heard in deep meditation.

Q.7 What single thought, expression or teaching of Paramahansa Yogananda had the greatest impact on your life?

Ans. Guruji once said, "Live in this world, but be not of it." It is very important to have that kind of attitude. Do your job sincerely and with great enthusiasm, but know that it is not the final reality. It is just a part that one plays, on this great stage, in the drama of life. The Reality, Source and the Doer is all within.



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HINDUSISM IN BALI

Members of LSF visited Bali Island Indonesia in month of December 2023 and they were Intrigued by the presence of purest form of Hinduism in the world's most populous Islamic country Indonesia. The fascination started with Indonesian National Airline being called GARUDA Indonesia and taking note of presence of GARUDA Symbol on the currency of Indonesia.

The curiosity only aroused further with the presence of huge Statues of Lord Krishna and Arjun in the middle of prominent Road crossing near Airport, presence of local market called Krishna Market and a breathtaking view of 400 feet tall statue of Garuda, Vehicle of Lord Vishnu. The Statue picture is also printed on all the currency notes of Indonesia.

An Island full of Unesco world heritage sites with Hindu temples aligned all along residential streets of Bali and presence of Statue of Lord Ganesha at the entrance of each House in Bali encouraged the members to share more on Hinduism in Bali.

One of oldest existing religions, Hinduism originated in South Asia (India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh) and dates back more than 3000 years, beyond 1000 B.C.E. It is the most widely practiced religion in Asia. It has no historical founder, and its authority rests on a large body of sacred texts (the Vedas) that provide Hindus with rules governing worship, ritual, and daily life.

Bali - Embedded in Hinduism

Bali is one among thousands of islands that make up the republic of Indonesia. In the midst of the most populous Islamic country in the world, this small island has remained predominantly Hindu. A thousand years ago many people practiced Hinduism across Southeast Asia. Today Bali is the only place in the entire region where these once-widespread traditions remain strong.

Bali lies along trade routes connecting the Spice Islands (Maluku or Moluccas islands), China, and India. These ancient routes not only brought goods; they also spread ideas. Two thousand years ago, many Southeast Asians began adopting and adapting aspects of Indian-related civilization, especially literary language, religion, and court culture. More than a thousand years ago elements of Hinduism could be found throughout much of Southeast Asia.

Basic Beliefs of Balinese Hinduism

- Absolute and unlimited god.
- Because unlimited, God has infinite qualities—God can be formless or assume any form.
- Many forms or "Gods" in Hinduism represent different qualities of one God.
- Vishnu has visited the earth in a number of forms during times of trial, to fight various forms of evil.
- In his seventh visit, Vishnu appears as the personification of the ideal man, Rama.

Practices

The majority of Balinese practice a form of Hinduism that is entwined with Buddhist and animistic beliefs. Although the main Hindu gods are worshipped, equal attention is paid to local, agricultural, and ancestral deities. The Hinduism of Bali has been described as a religion that emphasises correct conduct above precise knowledge of a unified religious system. The Balinese conceive of the world as being inhabited by a host of unseen deities, demons, ancestral spirits, and local divinities. The primary focus of much ritual activity is to thank or appease these positive and negative forces to ensure protection and prosperity. An ordinary villager is much more aware of the many offerings, ceremonies, and festivals that are a part of daily life than of any particular religious text. These ritual actions may differ from region to region, village to village, family to family

Storytelling Ritual and Performance, in Bali

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Tales such as the Ramayana are mainly spread through storytelling, shadow plays, masked dance, chants, and other theatrical genres. Dancing, music making, painting, and theatre are offerings to the gods, as well as entertainment for people. Art, ritual, and performance overlap in Balinese culture in various ways. For instance, when properly carved and sanctified by a priest, a mask comes to be thought of as embodied by a deity. Worn during a ritual dance, the same mask takes on the special role of a protective force. These stories and their enactment through daily rituals and performances are integral to keeping balance and order in the universe.

Wayang Kuli is one of the oldest forms of storytelling in Bali. Stories are most often drawn from theRamayana and the Mahabharata (the other major Indian epic), but also from indigenous Indonesian literature. Wayang means shadow and Kulit means leather, because most puppets are made of buffalo hide.

In the centre of many villages in Bali, standing majestically just outside the temples, is an unimaginably huge banyan (Balinese: bingin) tree. Fifty-foot-long branches plunge underground, to resurface and soar again upwards like living dragons. The leaves of these sacred trees hold healing powers. Meetings, prayer, arts, and commerce take place under the shade of their branches. They are living symbols of Balinese culture, connected to nature, place, and history.

Bali Hindu Temples

Bali is home to a plethora of ancient Hindu temples, each with its own unique history, architecture, and spiritual significance. The majority of these temples are still actively used as a place of worship for the local Balinese Hindus.The temples are dotted across the landscape on towering cliff sides and luscious lake sides.

Balinese Hinduism is a mixture of religions brought to the island over centuries and centuries of visiting priests. The merge of these ethics

and rituals has created a totally unique set of practices that other Hindu would not recognise. Each temple in Bali has its own god or goddess, meaning, and role. Along with bright colours, mystical incense, handcrafted offerings and water rituals, the temples are a sight to behold.

Some of the most famous temples in Bali include:

Tanah Lot Temple: Famed for its sunset views, Tanah Lot Temple is one of the most visited temples in Bali located 30 minutes from Canggu. As if floating on the water during high tide, the temple was built in the 16th Century after the travelling Dang Hyang Nirartha – a religious symbol – rested on the rocky island, later telling visiting fishermen that the land felt holy and should be used to worship the sea gods. Venomous sea snakes that live in the rocky caves surrounding the temple are believed to be the guards to ensure no harm comes to the holy space. Still used till this day as a place of prayer and ceremony, on holy days you will see trails of Balinese Hindus navigating the slippery rocks to reach the temple during a low tide.

Tirta Empul Temple:

Built between the 10th and 14th Centuries to honour Vishnu, it is one of the most important and best temples in Bali. A sacred 10th century water temple situated on the outskirts of Ubud. Meaning 'holy spring' in Balinese, the temple has its own fresh water source. This is believed to be created by Lord Indra's arrow. Tirta Empul features pools of water with spouting waterfalls which each represents a different part of healing.Stepping into the water, you allow the running water to fall over your head, reciting a mantra and cleansing. Make sure to listen to the instructions of your tour guide before entering the pool as a few of the water spouts are only to be used for death rituals.

Beisakih Temple:
The biggest and holiest of all Bali's temples, Besakih is considered the 'mother temple' of the island, and features 23 separate temples

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within the complex. The Main 3 complexes belong to Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva.
Sitting on the edge of Mount Agung, the temple amazingly survived the horrific 1963 volcano eruption by just meters, only increasing its beauty and magic capabilities in the eyes of local Balinese. Each of the 23 temples within the complex represents a different God or shrine and have their own significance and status for certain celebrations and ceremonies. The most important is Pura Penataran Agung or the Great Temple of State. First known to be used as a place of worship from 1284, the mystery surrounding the Besakih Temple's history only adds to its allure.

Uluwatu Temple

One of the six most important places of worship on the island, Uluwatu Temple – or Pura Luhur Uluwatu – is one of my must-visit temples in Bali.
The scenery is incredible, and the structure is believed to date all the way back to the 11th Century! Dedicated to Sang Hyang Widhi Wasa, 'the Divine one', Uluwatu Temple is used by the local Balinese Hindus for special ceremonies and celebrations throughout the year.

We trust that these descriptions would encourage members of LSF to visit Bali and explore Hinduism further in their quest for Sanatan Dharma and Spirituality.

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There is no profit motive for the authors, the printers, the editor and the publisher.

The spiritual knowledge in the periodical and other activities of LSF will lead many from darkness to light.

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