

## Swāmī Śivānanda and Divine Life

Gurudev Swāmī Śivānandajī used to constantly remind his disciples that the goal of life is God-realization. God-realization means to make God real. God can become real as an object to us, but that is not the ultimate goal. The goal is to see that there is nothing except God, to see it by experiencing it, to experience it by becoming it. Because if God alone is, then everything is That, not only the world, but we ourselves.

What is the great barrier between ourselves and the realization of the truth? It is that instead of recognizing that we are a harmonious part of the Whole, we think that we are the center of the universe. Everything else is simply an object to us, including God.

Thus we can understand the strife and fights and confusion of this world, when the truth is that we are all One, part of that one fabric. Yet through our illusion, through wanting to be someone, through wanting things, through judging good and evil, we take the position of being something special, something different from the rest of the world. Therefore, we feel isolated; we feel aggressive because we feel threatened by others who don't recognize that we are the center of the universe.

We have to first recognize this weakness in ourselves and in everyone else. And repent, which means to turn away from this falsehood and seek the truth. To help us seek the truth, Gurudev Swāmī Śivānandajī formed The Divine Life Society. Which means to live a life based upon the truth that all is One.

Therefore, we practice non-injury—consideration for others who are also part of this One. We tell others the absolute truth and are honest with ourselves. And we do not exploit others, treat them as just something for our own pleasure. Instead we serve others. We're devoted to the truth. We meditate and find God within. And we keep up the enquiry of who we really are. This is divine life and what Gurudev Swāmī Śivānandajī wanted us all to follow—so that we can know in our own lives the true happiness that is available to all human beings.