



Box 32
Windsor, Vt. 05089
Jan. 19, 1972

Dear Swami Nikhilananda,

Thank you for your very kind and warm letter. Any letter from you, message or comment, has always had a wonderfully restorative effect on me.

I'm so sorry about your need of the wheel chair and the chair-lift. I sometimes wish that the East had deigned to concentrate some small part of its immeasurable genius to the petty art or science of keeping the body well and fit. Between extreme indifference to the body and the most extreme and zealous attention to it (Hatha Yoga), there seems to be no useful middle-ground whatever, and that seems to me one more unnecessary sadness in Maya.

Your voice sounds the same, though, Swami. It may be that reading to a devoted group from the Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna is all you do now, as you say, but I imagine the students who are lucky enough to hear you read from the Gospel would put the matter rather differently. Meaning that I've forgotten many worthy and important things in my life, but I have never forgotten the way you used to read from, and interpret, the Upanishads, up at Thousand Island Park.

With great affection and respect, always,

Sincerely,

J. D. Salinger

P. O. Box 32
Windsor, Vt. 05089
Dec. 7, 1973

Dear Swami Adiswarananda,

Thank you so much for your very kind and friendly letter to me.

I was very happy to experience that meeting with you at the Center. How particularly pleasing it is, I think, when good and signal things happen seemingly by chance. I'm grateful to you for seeing me, and I'm grateful to that grave and gentle young man who suggested that you might be free to meet with me for some moments.

I think it's the best kind of news that your printed sermons in the Monthly Announcements will eventually be published in book form. I like them so very much.

Part XVI of "Vital Steps Toward Meditation" is beautifully saturated with Vivekachudamani. That marvellous and incomparable book. It was one of the first books Swami Nikhilananda recommended to me, many years ago. Almost every sloka speaks volumes. "In the forest-tract of sense pleasures there prowls a huge tiger called the mind. Let good people who have a longing for Liberation never go there." I suspect that nothing is truer than that, and yet I allow myself to be mauled by that old tiger almost every wakeful minute of my life.

I think the Center is most fortunate to have you, Swami, and I feel in my bones that your presence there must have been a great comfort and relief to Swami Nikhilananda.

I thank you most warmly for your prayers for my family and me.

I hope so much to see you again.

Sincerely yours,

J. D. Salinger

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J. D. SALINGER

Letters to Swami Nikhilananda and Swami Adiswarananda