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LET RAMA BE YOUR IDEAL

H.H. SRI SWAMI SIVANANDAJI MAHARAJ

Salutations to Lord Rama, who is an Avatara of Vishnu, who is measureless, who is of the nature of Pure Consciousness-Bliss, who is the consort of Sita, Master of Sri Hanuman, and the Lord of the three worlds, who took his birth at his own will in order to establish righteousness, destroy the wicked and to protect his devotees.

Rama Navami or the Birthday of Lord Rama falls on the 9th day of the bright fortnight of the month of Chaitra (March-April).

Rama was Lord Hari Himself incarnate on earth for the destruction of Ravana. He was well-accomplished, beautiful and endowed with royal marks. His glory and prowess were unlimited. He was peerless on earth. He was free from malice. He was gentle and the protector of the people. He always addressed the people in gentle words. He never used any harsh words even when somebody provoked him. He had his sway over the whole world.

Let Sri Rama be your ideal. Ideals are remembered and adored for the purpose of adopting them in our own life. The Rama-navami celebration, or the *Vasanta Navaratri*, every year is an opportune period for us to saturate ourselves with the spirit of Lord Rama. We love and adore the ideals because we express thereby our yearning to unite

with them. In our worship of God, it is implied that we should be virtuous, good and perfect, even as God is. Hence the wise instruction: One should become divine in order to be able to worship God. One cannot be a real worshipper of Lord Rama unless one makes an honest attempt to grow in the virtues that Lord Rama represents. On the other hand, worship of Lord Rama is itself the surest means to develop such divine virtues.

One who approaches Sri Rama with love and worshipfulness becomes wide in heart, pure in spirit, good in nature, dispassionate in thought, word and deed. A true devotee of Lord Rama is his representative, with his power and his knowledge.

Lord Rama was the prince of the Ikshvaku race. He was virtuous and of manly strength. He was the Lord of the mind and the senses. Brave and valiant, he was yet gentle and modest. He was a sage in counsel, kind and sweet in speech, most courteous and handsome in appearance. Ever devoted to the good and prosperity of his kingdom and his subjects, he was a defender of the weak and the protector of Dharma. Deep and unfathomed like the ocean, firm and steadfast like the Himalayan Mountains, valiant like Lord Vishnu, he was the joy of Kausalya. Though fierce like fire on the battle-field, he was calm like the cool breeze of the Mandara hills, patient like Mother Earth and righteous like Dharma, the Lord of Justice himself. In the pains or griefs of his people, his heart swiftly sympathised with the sufferers, in the festive scenes which held them in joy, he, like a father, shared their joy.

He was a Prema Murti, an image of love. He was an ideal son, an ideal brother, and an ideal husband, an ideal friend and an ideal king. He can be taken to embody all the highest ideals of man. He led an ideal life of householder to teach the tenets of righteousness to humanity.

The noblest lesson embodied in the Ramayana is the supreme importance of righteousness in the life of every human being. Righteousness is the spiritual spark of life. Cultivation of righteousness is the process of the unfoldment of the latent divinity in man. The glorious incarnation of the Supreme Being, as Lord Rama, has exemplified through his own life, how to follow the path of righteousness. Let mankind follow in his footsteps and practise the ideals cherished by him, for it is only thus that there can be everlasting peace, prosperity and welfare in this world.

No one but the righteous can be truly happy. No one but he who has the correct sense of duty and the will for its implementation can be said to live worthily. One must be imbued with a definite conviction about the supremacy of moral principles, ethical values and spiritual ideals, which should guide one's day-to-day actions and serve as powerful means for the culture of the human personality. That is the purpose of life. That is the way to Self-realisation. That is the message and the mission of Lord Rama's life on earth.

To a devotee, Sri Rama is not simply a good and great person, but God Himself. Rama is not merely the son of King Dasaratha of Ayodhya, but is also the Omnipresent, Omniscient and Omnipotent God, Self, Atman or Brahman. The destruction of the ten-headed Ravana is the annihilation of the mind or the ten senses. Worship of Lord

Rama is the worship of the Virat Purusha (All-pervading Godhead) Himself.

Devotion to God is not a simple emotion. It is result of intense Vairagya (dispassion) and Sattvic Bhavana (purity of heart and inner attitude). You should possess the good qualities that are extolled in the Ramayana and exemplified in the life of Lord Rama. Otherwise, emotion may rise up in you temporarily to a kind of ecstasy, but you cannot experience divine consciousness thereby. Devotion is a fruit which ripens gradually through the process of self-restraint and virtue. There can be no Sadhana for God-realisation without intense Vairagya (dispassion). Only after detachment from the world of things, is it possible to have the attainment of God. Remember this.

Devotion has absolutely nothing to do with age, caste, creed, position, rank or sex. Generally, the worldly-minded people say: "We will practise Dhyana, devotion, etc., when we retire from service." This is a serious mistake. How can you do spiritual Sadhana after squeezing all your energy in service? How can you practise the strict means of Yogic discipline in old age? Is there any certainty of life? The spiritual seeds of devotion must be sown in your heart when you are young, when your heart is tender and untainted. Then only it will strike a deep root, blossom and bear fruit when you become old, when you retire from service. Then only you will not be afraid of Yama, the god of Death. You will meet him with a smile.

I shall tell you the means of attaining the final release from the great cycle of births and deaths. Devotion to Lord Rama is a great purifier of the heart. From devotion arises knowledge. From knowledge comes the realisation of the pure Self. Knowing this perfectly, one goes to the Supreme Abode and merges in the Supreme Self.

Without developing devotion to Rama, who is the Supreme Self, who lives in the hearts of all beings, who is all Bliss, who is secondless, how can man cross the ocean of worldly life which has sorrow, pain and misery for its waves?

Do thou, therefore, worship Lord Rama, who is Vishnu and the Consort of Sita, who is Lakshmi. Abandon all foolishness and enmity. Do thou serve Rama.

Lord Rama is fond of those who surrender themselves unto him. He has given this promise in the Ramayana: "To anyone who once takes shelter under Me and solicits 'I am Thine', I give fearlessness from all beings. This is My vow."

Even a great sinner who is full of evil qualities, who is fond of other people's wealth, if he always remembers Sri Rama, he is freed from all kinds of faults that pertain to this course of worldly life. He attains purity and goes to the pure, supreme abode of the Lord.

The Name of Lord Rama is the greatest purifier of the heart. It will wipe away all the sins from your heart. Not only this, it will wipe out all your sinful tendencies, too. The name of Rama is sweeter than the sweetest object. It is the haven of peace. It is the very life of pure souls. It is the purifier of all purifying agencies. It quenches the consuming fire of worldly desires. It awakens the knowledge of God. It bathes the aspirant in the ocean of

divine bliss. Glory to Sri Rama and his Name.

Therefore, recite his Name, sing his glory and serve his lotus-feet. Enthroned in your heart Lord Rama of dark hue, whose image is reflected in the heart of Lord Siva. Blessed is the pious soul who drinks uninterruptedly the nectar of Sri Rama's Name which has been churned out of the ocean of the Vedas, which removes the impurities of Kali Yuga or the iron age, which lives constantly on the lips of Lord Siva, which is a sovereign remedy or unerring specific to cure the disease of worldly existence and is the life of Mother Janaki.

Rama Nama burns ignorance, passion and sin. With knowledge or without knowledge, correctly or incorrectly, when the word "Rama" is pronounced, it showers a rain of good on the devotee. Sri Rama is Brahman who takes one across Samsara. Rama is one in whom the Yogis sport: the Self within. Rama Nama is the essence of Sahasranama. This (Rama Nama) is equal to the Lord's thousand names, or repetition of the Mantra a thousand times. I call this as the anti-gossip tonic. When you find you have wasted your time in gossip, repeat his Name several times. You can make up for the time lost, and the mind will slowly be weaned from the gossip-habit.

On the Rama Navami day take a resolve that you will repeat Rama Nama with every breath and that you will endeavour to lead a righteous life. Rama Navami is one of the most important festivals of the Vaishnava sect of the Hindus (those who adore Vishnu or His manifestations). But, even Saivites (those who adore Lord Siva) also celebrate the occasion. Some keep strict fast on this day.

Time is fleeting. Know the value of time. Time is most precious. Utilise every second profitably. Abandon all idle gossiping. Forget the past. Live every moment of your life for the realisation of the ideal and goal. Unfold all latent faculties. Grow, evolve and become a superhuman or a dynamic Yogi. Struggle hard and reach the goal of life.

May you all attain the final beatitude of life through intense devotion towards Lord Rama! May you live immersed in the ecstasy of divine love! May Sri Rama, who is effulgent like a million suns, who is adored by the gods and devotees, protect you all! May the blessings of Lord Rama be upon you all!

BE ESTABLISHED IN THE FOURTH DIMENSION

SRI SWAMI CHIDANANDA

Worshipful homage to that all-transcending, timeless, spaceless, supreme Essence, the eternal and infinite Principle beyond all manifestation—nameless, formless, absolute, non-dual! Loving adorations to revered and beloved Holy Master Gurudev Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj who by his Self-realisation had, in his consciousness, transcended the time and space barriers and was established in a state of timeless, spaceless consciousness!

We spoke about the direct instructions of the world teacher, Lord Krishna, telling us that

we are above and beyond all these seen phenomena. He said, “Go beyond all of them. You are something timeless and spaceless. The whole world is made up of dualities. Go beyond dualities—cold and heat, light and darkness, success and failure, honour and dishonour. Go beyond this throng of dualities. Also go beyond the three qualities of *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*. *Sattvic* people go upwards, *rajasic* remain in the middle and *tamasic* people go downwards. O Arjuna, you go beyond all three. Become established in a state of *nistraigunyo*, beyond the three *gunas* (qualities).”

There is another transcendence as well that is perhaps even more vital, even more important, even more indispensable. Become established in your divine consciousness. Gurudev used to sing the “Song of Immortality” where he emphasised this point. He used to sing: “I am neither mind nor body, Immortal Self am I. I am neither mind nor body, Immortal Self am I.”

Lord Krishna told Arjuna: “It is only the body that has heat and cold, comfort and discomfort, soft and hard, but not I who am not the body. It is the mind that has various moods—*harsha* and *shoka*, *sukha* and *duhkha*, joy and grief, happiness and sorrow. It is only the mind. But the consciousness transcends all. It transcends the body with all its various experiences of heat and cold, hard and soft. It is beyond all these things of this outer, physical, gross material world. It is also beyond the inner subtle mental world, psychological world, where you have courage and fear, serenity and anxiety, joy and sorrow, love and hate, attachment and repulsion. I am beyond even that.

“I am beyond the waking state of consciousness where all these physical sensations and experiences have to be experienced. I am beyond even the dreaming state of consciousness where, though I am sleeping in bed, I go through various experiences that are vivid and real while they are lasting. I am even beyond the absolute silence of deep sleep when I know nothing, I have no experience of any kind.

“You are neither waking nor dreaming nor sleeping. You are beyond that. You are something transcending deep sleep. You must become established in a fourth higher state of indescribable consciousness. It is a state of perpetual wakefulness, spiritual awareness. Beyond even the non-cognisance of deep sleep, which you are aware of, which you experience every day—beyond waking, dreaming and deep sleep—there is a state, *turiya*, the fourth, a state of timeless, spaceless, super-consciousness, transcendental super-consciousness.

“That is my state, O Arjuna. That state should be attained. Attain that state where you are not aware of being a body, a human being, a mortal, not aware of being in the world of the many, names and form. It is simple awareness, devoid of duality, but, nevertheless, luminous awareness, absolute wakefulness, fullest state of Self-experience. It is a positive state of experience, not a non-experience.

“Become established in that timeless, spaceless, eternal, infinite consciousness. That is your destiny, that is your destination. That is your real abode. That is your true natural state. Therefore, attain that and become liberated, O Arjuna.” Thus says Lord Krishna.

May the grace of God and the blessings of Holy Master enable you to attain that state and become established in it in this very life. God bless you all!

YOGA—WHAT IT IS AND WHAT IT IS NOT

SRI SWAMI CHIDANANDA

In Sanskrit, the primary definition of the term Yoga is the state of union with the Divine or the Experience of oneness with the great Reality. Yoga, therefore, represents the experience of Truth, the consciousness of Reality, the union with the Divine. There are also secondary meanings of the term Yoga. Yoga is also a set of scientifically evolved and intelligently formulated practical techniques enabling man to shed himself of all the impurities imposed upon him by the nature of his body, mind and senses, and aiding him to concentrate his thoughts entirely upon the Supreme. Thus Yoga means anything that man may do to purify his lower nature, to restrain his senses, to direct his mind towards God, to come into a deep interior level of worship of the Divine and finally to realise his eternal oneness with the Divine Consciousness.

The application of Yoga is universal. It may be applied within the religious framework. Yet it clearly transcends religion. It is supra-religious, far beyond any dogma or doctrine. The extent and duration of its applicability is commensurate with the whole of humanity for all time. I shall attempt to show you the significance that Yoga holds for everyone in this great and eventful twentieth century.

First and foremost, Yoga is not mere acrobatics. Some people suppose that Yoga is primarily concerned with the manipulation of the body into various queer positions, standing on the head, for instance, or twisting about the spine, or assuming any of the numerous odd poses which are demonstrated in the text-books on Yoga. These techniques are correctly employed in one distinct type of Yoga practice, but they do not form an integral part of the most essential type. Physical postures serve at best as an auxiliary, or a minor form of Yoga.

Secondly, Yoga is not the performance of magical feats. I mention this especially because among the many misconceptions that abound about Yoga, this one is due to certain pretensions which have been made by fake Yogins—pseudo-Yogins. Anything that is good is all too easily corrupted by perverted people. At all times in the history of the world this has happened. Behind the deliberate mystification of things pertaining to Yoga there lies a selfish motive. Unfortunately, the distortion of this true science is the consequence. It will not be out of place, therefore, for me to tell you frankly and clearly that not all that has been put across as Yoga is really Yoga. Yoga is certainly not magic, nor is it the performance of any extraordinary or unusual mystical feat.

Neither is Yoga 'Fakirism', the impression that is obtained by many tourists and travellers, especially by news-people who, with a strong preference for the sensational and the fantastic, have managed to create the fantastic idea that Yoga is some form of self-torture—lying on a bed of nails, burying oneself underground, chewing or swallowing

pieces of glass, drinking acid, swallowing nails or piercing oneself with pins and needles. This has nothing to do with Yoga, and real Yogins have nothing to do with all this.

Neither is Yoga any weird ceremonial or peculiar rite. It is not hedonism. It is not paganism. It is not palmistry. It is not prophesying. It is not astrology. It is not thought-reading, nor is it the dispensing of charms to ward off evil spirits or 'possessions'. None of these is Yoga. If people call themselves Yogins and then explain their Yoga by exhibiting any of these unusual feats, then they are misusing the term Yoga. Yoga is not auto-hypnotism or self-hypnosis. It is not doing of incantations or by the monotonous performance of gestures. Yoga is not experiences like those obtained by taking lysurgic acid or mesacalin or peyote (of Mexican origin) or divine mushrooms. These experiences are not Yoga, nor are they products of Yoga.

Neither is Yoga a religious cult. Certain Eastern concepts do lie behind it. This is true. But these concepts do not have anything to do with the evolution of the science proper. Yoga is comprised of highly evolved and practical techniques which may be applied by persons of any race, nation, caste, creed, church or sect. As philosophical definitions were being formed and as religious concepts of the Hindus were being formulated, the science of Yoga was evolved. Certain metaphysical concepts are peculiarly Hindu and Eastern, but Yoga which is separable from its philosophical and metaphysical background, is a science of universal and practical value. Yoga is essentially a spiritual matter concerning spiritual methods. It is an intensely practical approach towards the realisation of the supreme Reality, the very Centre of all life—God. And it is the heritage of all humanity.

Worshipful Gurudev Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj used to tell a beautiful parable regarding the importance and truth about Yoga: There was a big tree in a jungle. On the top of a branch there was a very big honey-comb. But the ascent to the top of the tree was difficult. One had to cut steps on the trunk of the tree and ascend; but that demanded great patience and intelligent work.

A slender creeper entwined that tree and reached up to a great part of the height. It appeared to be strong, though it perilously dangled in the air.

A greedy man, desirous of possessing the honey, without much effort, began to ascend the tree with the sole help of the creeper. He was too lazy to cut steps on the trunk of the tree and thought that the creeper was strong enough to take him to the top. When he was a few feet above the ground, a violent wind broke the creeper and the man fell down and fractured his limbs.

Similar is the case with those who try to ascend the tree of Yoga (Divinity), in order to drink the honey of Moksha, with the help of the creeper Kamyas (actions with selfish motives and desires) through short-cut paths. The path of Yoga lies along the trunk of the tree of Divinity. You have to improvise steps on it, with some effort, which is Sadhana (spiritual practices). You have to ascend step by step, starting with Yama, Niyama, Asana, Pranayama, Pratyahara, Dharana, Dhyana and then reach the pinnacle of Samadhi. There is no short-cut to this. You cannot evade this responsibility. If, on the

other hand, you climb with the help of Kamya-Karmas,—though they, too, appear to be strong,—they will not take you to the heights of Yoga. When the wind of selfish desires, greed for the things of this world and the pleasures of heaven, blows, this creeper of Karma will break and you will have a terrible fall.

O man! Selfish works will not lead you to the Goal of Yoga. Only unselfish works will help you. Sadhana means something much sterner. You have to ascend the top through the hard way. But once you reach the top, you will drink the nectar of immortality and Eternal Bliss.

There are various systems of Yoga which I shall now briefly describe. The first is the intellectual system in which man employs his human faculties in a supreme exercise: the realisation of the Truth. This is known as Jnana Yoga or the Yoga of Intellect. One listens to the expositions of the nature of God, acquires an understanding of the Reality, then by reflecting upon it again and again, ultimately, one penetrates into it through the power of reason in the depths of meditation.

The second system is known as Bhakti Yoga or the Yoga of Devotion or Love. This is a very sweet path, one which is peculiarly suited and easily adapted to the emotional temperament. One grows into a close relationship with the Supreme Being by constantly thinking about Him, praying to Him, worshipping Him, feeling Him close, so close that one naturally walks with Him, talks with Him, lives, moves and has one's being in Him. A link is set up whereby pure love is directed to God. In this exercise, the human being becomes totally integrated.

In the third system, all phases of life's activities are dedicated to God. On an unselfish basis, man's duties are thus integrated. This is known as Karma Yoga or the Yoga of selfless service. The prime and crucial act in this system is the shedding of the ego. When the personal ego is completely abnegated, all creatures upon earth are clearly apprehended as visible manifestations of God, as moving temples in which the Divine is enshrined. The service of others then becomes natural and easy, and every act is performed not as a secular act, but as an act of worship. Engaged in the transmutation of dynamism into divine realisation, one may do his worship everywhere. The teacher in the school, the doctor in the hospital, the farmer in the field, the business-man in the stock-exchange, everyone engaged in professional activity, can transmute his dynamism into pure devotion by adopting a humble and worshipful inner attitude.

In the fourth system, man is employed in a very special process in which all thought is merged in God. One becomes more and more aware of God as the Centre of being. This is a very beautiful path also. It is known as Raja Yoga or the Yoga of Concentration and Meditation. Thought is movement of the mindstuff. Movement of the mind-stuff is produced by motion of the vital life-force with in called Prana and by movement of the body. Thus, thought, Prana and the body are all interconnected. Total Subdual and control of the body may be brought about by keeping it in a fixed and steady posture. Subdual and control of the inner psychic energy may be obtained by practising techniques of breath-control. And ultimately, all the scattered rays of the mind may be withdrawn from

the multifarious universe and made to concentrate solely upon the one idea of God. In this culminating process, man is raised above the level of the mind, taken into a state of superconsciousness in which the experience of oneness with God is realised, and he is released forever from the bondage to the body and from death itself. There are many heartening signs that this Yoga is being considered by many seekers in the West to be the most suitable method for the solution of the perplexing problems of their civilisation.

LIFE—A PROCESS AND ACTIVITY

SRI SWAMI KRISHNANANDA

The philosophy of the Vedanta makes a distinction between existence as such and the experience of any type of existence. We may say, if we would like, that a fact or an existence is absolute so far as it goes, and a subjective experience of it is relative. Human life is a psychological process, and not an immutable existence. A knowledge of the functions of the mind is essential to understand life in its fullness. In the observation of the mind we can have no instrument. Such as the ones we use in observing, measuring, examining or cleaning outward things. The mind is the student as well as the object of study, when life as a whole is the theme that we wish to investigate and comprehend. In a famous image given in the Kathopanishad, the inner self of man is compared to a lord seated in a chariot, the body to the chariot, the intellect to the charioteer, the mind to the reins, the senses to the horses pulling the chariot, and the objects of the senses to the roads along which the chariot is driven. The Upanishad gives a caution that the supreme state can be reached only by him who has as his charioteer a powerfully discriminative intellect which directs the restive horses of the senses with the aid of the reins of the mind, and not by any one else who may have a bad charioteer. The meaning of this analogy is that the human individuality and personality are outer forms and instruments to be properly used by the inner directive intelligence towards the great destination of life, and not to be taken as ends in themselves or mistaken for reality as such.

Not only the body and the senses but even the self conceived as a limited individual centre of consciousness is a process of intense activity, moving, changing and evolving incessantly. The individual self is the basis of knowledge as well as action. Due to confinement to a spatial existence the individual self is dominated over and harassed by certain urges, felt within itself, pointing to certain external objects and states. The desire for food, clothing and shelter, for name, fame, power, sleep and sex, often appears in the human individual as a violent force which cannot be easily subdued or even intelligently controlled. These deep-rooted urges are an immediate consequence of the self's restriction to a dualistic perception of the world and an arrogation of ultimate selfhood to itself, while the truth is otherwise. The individual has a morbid habit of unconsciously asserting itself as the centre of experience and considering the other contents of the universe as adjectives or subsidiary elements meant to bring satisfaction to it in some way or the other. In this respect, we should say that all forms of human knowledge are different types of activity to achieve certain ends other than themselves. Man never is, he is always to be. This predicament is, as it would be clear, a corollary of the feeling that we

are localised entities forming a mechanical whole, which we call the universe, of which it seems that we can never have a simultaneous knowledge. Our perceptions are always in a series, we know things one after another, and not at one stroke. We never see one and the same picture at two given moments in a cinematographic projection, but yet we seem to see a continuity of the existence of forms on account of a very quick succession and motion of the pictures. Strictly speaking, we never see one and the same thing in a particular act of perception, but the rapidity of the psychoses is so tremendous that there is an illusion of the perception of a static existence. And above all, there is that absolute Self behind all mental functions, from which these draw sustenance and borrow existence as well as light.

Every action, viewed in this light, becomes a symptom of the restlessness of the relative consciousness in any of the human sheaths in which it is enclosed. There is an unceasing attempt on its part to break boundaries, to overcome all limitations and to transcend itself at every step. The environment called life in which it finds itself is only an opportunity provided to it to seek and find what it wishes to have in order to exceed itself in experience in the different stages of evolution. The universe is a vast field of psychological experience of multitudinous centres of individuality for working out their deserts by way of objective experience. The universe is another name for experience by a cosmic mind, of which the relative minds are refractive aspects and parts. The desirable and the undesirable in life are nothing but certain consequences which logically follow the whimsical and unmethodical desires of the ignorant individuals who know not their own ultimate destination. What is desirable today need not be so tomorrow, and today's painful experience may be a blessing for the future. It does not mean that all that we want is always the good. We often grope in darkness and find a cup of poison which we avidly drink, while we are really in search of some soothing food to appease our hunger. There is no error in the world or the objects; it is in the painful fact that we have no knowledge of what is really good for us. It is not enough if a physician knows merely that a particular drug has the power to suppress a particular ailment, he has also to know what other reactions the drug will produce in the living organism. In our life, the mind has to act as its own physician, and in this work it has to exercise great vigilance born of right perception. No thought, feeling or willing can be said to be healthy when it is not in consonance with the health and peace of the universe as a whole. That we are members of a single undivided family demands that we have to be mutually co-operative, and think and act in terms of mutual welfare, which, in the end, is the welfare of the whole. When this knowledge is not given to the mind, it acts blindly and errs with the idea that what appears to bring a temporary sensation of pleasure to it is the true and the good. When it does not learn the lesson of life by enlightened reason, it has to learn it by pain.

The mind, in the Vedanta philosophy, is conceived not as any independent entity opposed to matter, as is the case in several systems of Western philosophy, but is understood to be an aspect of the material principle itself appearing in a more rarefied form. The psychology of the Vedanta is a highly scientific methodology evolved out of the fundamental concept that the supreme reality is Absolute Consciousness and anything that may seem to be opposed to it can only be a phase of itself. The fivefold base of

objective perception, viz., sound, touch, form, taste and smell, is found to be inseparable from the reciprocally related to the senses of knowledge working under the direction of the mind. The theory of the Vedanta is that the mind, constituting mainly the functions of understanding, thinking, feeling, remembering and willing, is the resultant of the collective totality of the purified forms of the essences of the five substrata of sensations enumerated above. The sympathy that is observed between sensations and their objects is thus explained by the fact that the causes of the appearances of the two are essentially the same. Not only this. There is the presupposition of the greater truth that at the background of the mind, the senses and their objects, there is the Absolute itself as their very reality. The Vedanta psychology is a direct consequence of its basic metaphysics which lays down that existence is non-dual. It is on this foundation of the ultimate inseparability of the knower and the known that we have to envisage the law governing the universe and regulating individual and social life.

The highest law is accordingly conceived as Dharma based on Rita and Satya. Rita and Satya are two terms that occur originally in the Vedas, signifying the eternal cosmic order and the same as manifest in the diversified world. Dharma is nothing but one's duty as an individual stationed in the cosmos, as its integral part. This at once explains by implication one's duty towards family, society, the nation and the world at large. The fulfilment of this Dharma is expected to be achieved not in a slipshod way or by leaps and bounds, but in a gradual manner following closely the evolutionary process of the cosmos. Material welfare, the enjoyment of desires and relations to society are given due consideration and are equally regulated by Dharma which, at the same time, works with Moksha or the ultimate realisation of the infinite as its aim. Dharma is the ethical value, Artha the material and the economic value, Kama the vital value and Moksha the infinite value of life. As the infinite includes all the finites, the aspiration for Moksha naturally implies the fulfilment of the ends of all other desires and the execution of all other duties in life. This sublime aspiration arises in the mind when it has an inherent feeling of 'enough' with the things of the world. This is the 'divine discontent' which acts as a forerunner of the struggle of the spirit to grasp and know itself in the Absolute. It is here that true knowledge dawns.

Ordinary psychological experience is usually marked off from a life of spiritual insight. The path of the pleasant is differentiated from the way of the good. What the senses report to us need not necessarily be the true or the good. Often they give us false intimations and involve us in tantalising mirages which recede from us as we try to approach them. It is because of this unfortunate predicament that we go on experimenting with one object after another, seeking final satisfaction, but do not find it anywhere. This fruitless pursuit continues until thinking of benefit in terms of separateness discovers its own futility and gives way to a search for peace in terms of more and more integrated realms of being. The individual expands to the family, the family to the community, the community to a wider society or the nation, the nation to the whole world, and the world to the cosmos, wherein the process of expansion finds its limit and begins to turn inward into the centre of experience which, in the end, is recognized to be identical with the Supreme Being. Bearing this in mind, the sage of the Upanishad warns us with the great rule that everything shall desert us if we consider it to be different from our own essential self. As

we have already noticed, nothing in this world can be considered to be merely a means to the satisfaction of another, for in this mutually determined whole there are only ends, not means. The Bhagavadgita states that all pleasures that are born of the contact of the mind and the senses with the external are a womb of pain, for outward contact is not the way of contacting reality. The dissatisfying consequence of sense-gratifications, the fear that usually attend upon them, the chances of getting addicted to the habits and impressions produced by such pleasures, and the inevitability of the rise of further desires and greater distractions, in addition to the wearing out of the senses, should rouse in the man of discrimination a consciousness of the higher life.

COPING IN THE 21ST CENTURY

SRI SWAMI ATMASWARUPANANDA

The scriptures tell us that our fundamental error is wrong identification. It goes without saying that this wrong identification is beyond our understanding. It is not going from one identification to another identification, but rather from a place of no identification at all—where a thought of identification cannot enter—to an identification with a body and mind. The primary result of this error is a passionate desire to look after ourselves and the body. It becomes the fundamental thing that we are concerned with. This means that everyone else and everything else is second, whether we like to admit it or not.

The result is a fundamental law of the jungle, which in civilized society we try to patch up with rules and regulations and customs. We have family ways of working things out to avoid our selfishness; we also have community, national and institutional ways of working together. And to a large extent these adjustments do curb our natural inborn selfishness. However, they also curb our freedom, and because fundamentally we are Spirit—and Spirit is free—there is something within us that doesn't feel comfortable being bound down by family and institutional thinking—even though we know it helps to avoid the law of the jungle.

In addition whether we like it or not, institutions cannot last forever because the world is always changing—now, faster than ever. So unless we are prepared to change ourselves and change our thinking, then our family institutions and our other institutions are going to start breaking apart, and a certain chaos will result.

What should be our attitude under these circumstances? It would seem that Gurudev has given us the perfect model. He was a 20th century man who gave us, and indeed the world, the answer for the 21st century. Gurudev was rooted in the traditions. He understood thoroughly, as no one did better, the value of the traditions and the traditional teachings. And yet he was man of his times meeting the need of his times. There are so many stories of different approaches that he took compared to his contemporaries.

So, as we meet this rapidly changing 21st century, we too should attempt to root ourselves in the eternal truths, knowing that they never change. But on the other hand, unless we're willing to personally change, unless we're willing to see the structures

change, then it won't be possible for us to meet this rapidly changing world in a positive and successful way.

PRESIDENT SWAMIJI WRITES

TO THE READERS OF THE D.L. MAGAZINE

AND TO THE MEMBERS OF THE D.L. SOCIETY

Radiant Immortal Atman!

May the Divine grace of God Almighty and the choicest blessings of Worshipful and Beloved Gurudev Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj shower upon you in abundance! May God and Gurudev grant you long life, good health and fullest success in all your activities including your spiritual Sadhana for the attainment of God Realisation!

We are temporarily suspending this feature for this March issue because we have to give place to a fairly lengthy and detailed "In Memoriam." The God of Death, Yama Dharmaraja has visited the Ashram this month. Our very venerable H.H. Sri Swami Premanandaji Maharaj who has been a senior and highly respected resident of Sri Sivananda Ashram for the past half a century has unfortunately passed away from a heart attack on Thursday, 5th of February. His passing is deeply regretted. Revered Swamiji was known to numerous devotees in different parts of northern India, especially the Punjab, as he used to frequently visit many places on Prachar Tours. He was a great exponent of saint Tulsidas's Hindi version of the ancient epic Ramayana.

We shall resume this feature from April.

-Swami Chidananda

President, The Divine Life Society

NEWS AND REPORTS

NEWS FROM THE HEADQUARTERS

H.H. SWAMI CHIDANANDAJI MAHARAJ AT HEADQUARTERS ASHRAM

From January 18th to 21st and from February 5th to 10th the Ashram was graced by the presence of our most Revered President, Parama Pujya Swami Chidanandaji Maharaj who nowadays has been generally camping at Dehra Dun for health reasons. Pujya Swamiji attended the bi-monthly inmates meeting on January 18, and every morning, as is his custom when he is in the Ashram, Swamiji spoke after early morning meditation in Gurudev's sacred Samadhi Hall.

During his first stay, Swamiji emphasised the necessity of meditation, especially at the three junction points—at dawn, midday and evening—when the atmosphere is particularly

conducive to enabling the mind go inward towards the Reality. Swamiji also encouraged everyone to come to the early morning meditation gathering held each morning in the spiritual presence of Gurudev Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj. Swamiji said, "This gathering must be encouraged. It should be encouraged because it is the one time when all come together, and, therefore, it creates within us the feeling and the sense of being one fraternity, one brotherhood. As I said, not only under the fatherhood of God Almighty, but also under the fatherhood of our spiritual father, Gurudev Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj. Likewise it is equally good, to encourage the evening *satsang* gathering."

One morning Swamiji spoke about the great devotee Prahlada and the power of the Divine Name. At one point Swamiji quoted a very telling conversation between Prahlada and his demon father: The demon king said: "Where is your Hari?" Prahlada replied, "Beloved Father, what a question you are asking! You must ask, 'Where is He not?' He is everywhere." "Then why can I not see Him?" "You can see Him if you call upon Him with devotion. But you are not doing that. You have got terrible anger, and you abuse Him. How can you see Him? If you develop devotion you can see Him."

Swamiji emphasised during both the visits the preciousness of time, that time is the very stuff of life. Therefore do not waste time. Swamiji posed the question: "What is the way of utilising your time, life, talents and the power that God has endowed you with in a noble, credible manner?" He went on to answer: "It is that way of life, that way of spending your time and of utilising all the potential you have within you, out of which the highest good comes to you and simultaneously, the greatest benefit accrues to God's creation—from the most evolved creature, your fellow human being, to the least of creatures, even to the vermin crawling on the ground."

Swamiji continued: "If you want to do it, you have to do it here and now. Use every moment in a creative and constructive way. And if you want to live such an ideal life, you must live in the awareness that 'I am a *sadhak* here to live a spiritual life. All other things are secondary.' Then one's whole life will move in a single direction of God-experience, awareness. Similarly if one has the awareness that I am Divine, and daily this inner *bhav* is invoked, then one's life will become divine."

The last morning of his stay Parama Pujya Swamiji gave a gripping talk on the *avatars* of Lord Vishnu as a way of reminding us that the Lord has said, "I am everywhere—within, without—I am under the waters, I am on the surface of land, I also encompass all space. I am all things. I am in the electron, I am in the proton, I am in the neutron. I am more invisible than the most invisible thing because I am subtler than the subtlest. I am also greater than the greatest."

"Therefore, being thus all pervasive," Swamiji continued, "He is here and now at this moment. The only thing is, we have not developed the faculty to feel His presence. One lay brother in a Christian monastery called Brother Lawrence practised the presence of God. We should also practise the presence of God. Then we will never do anything wrong, never deviate from the right course of perfect ethical conduct, of goodness, truthfulness, kindness and compassion, of purity, of perfect character and conduct—a

perfect *dharmic* life.

“We should keep before ourselves Saying: ‘God is watching me every moment. He is here and now. I am living in His presence, so I should acquit myself in a most worthy manner.’ That is the practical value of trying to develop the awareness of God's perennial presence within and without—always. Even when we sleep, he does not sleep. He is awake and present—with us—twenty-four hours of the day and night.”

Thus the Ashram was blessed with Parama Pujya President Swamiji's presence, and inspiring and deeply instructive teachings, both in January and February.

IN MEMORIAM

H.H. SRI SWAMI PREMANANDAJI MAHARAJ ATTAINS MAHA-SAMADHI

The curtain has come down upon one of our very senior and most highly revered Sannyasins of Worshipful Gurudev's Sri Sivananda Ashram. H.H. Revered Sri Swami Premanandaji Maharaj attained to Eternal Peace on Thursday the 5th February around 10:30 A.M. in the forenoon. Sri Swamiji Maharaj had been feeling somewhat restless and inability to sleep properly for about a week or so. The doctor, who was called in, diagnosed it as Hypertension (HBP) and a slight heart condition and ordered a week's complete bed-rest to Swamiji. But, unfortunately even before the week passed, Swamiji had a heart attack and breathed his last. When Swamiji attained Maha-Samadhi he was 83 years in age.

Prior to his arrival in the Ashram in the year 1957 he was engaged in Government service in the state of Uttar Pradesh as a Revenue official in one of the semi-autonomous Zamindaris known as the Nawabi of Rampur. Due to an inner call from the Supreme Being he renounced his secular career, gave up his connection with kith and kin and came away to the sacred area of Divine Mother Ganga and the Holy Himalayas. Here, a doubtless reciprocal karmic connection brought him directly to Sri Gurudev Swami Sivanandaji's presence. Ever since his arrival at Sivananda Ashram in 1957 he stuck to this place until the very last day of his life. Within a couple of years of his arrival Gurudev Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj gave him sacred Sannyas Diksha and conferred upon him the Sannyas name of Swami Premananda Saraswati.

Gurudev made him the head of the D.L.S. Branch Department in the Ashram which is the International Headquarters of the Divine Life Society. Swami Premanandaji took great interest in his work as the In-Charge of the Branch Department. He kept regular correspondence with all the D.L.S. Branches within the country. He also used to go out on tour to visit D.L.S. Branches in Northern India especially in the Punjab, Haryana Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan. Gurudev encouraged him in this work. His visits gave a fillip to the Branch activities and infused new life in them. In addition to this the late revered Swamiji organized many Divine Life Conferences in Punjab, Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan, both at the state level as well as at the all India level. He will be missed by numerous persons who had the good fortune of coming into contact with him and his holy

personality during these wide ranging tours of his and the many spiritual activities he undertook in this extensive field of his influence. The cities of Jalandhar, Chandigarh and Jaipur will particularly miss him because late Holiness Swamiji used to conduct special programs in these cities each and every year with unfailing regularity. In the city of Jaipur (Raj) Sri Swamiji used to hold two Sadhana Camps in the month of October and in March/April with an hour's meditation session in the early morning and Gita discourses every evening for a full week.

Sri Swami Premanandaji Maharaj was a very generous person. Constantly *Sadhus* were coming up to his room to seek help from him and they never returned empty handed. They received the help they went for as revered Swamiji was as sympathetic and understanding as he was generous. He was also interested in the education of poor children. A school was being conducted by him between Muni-Ki-Reti and Rishikesh township.

While we pay this fully deserved tribute as a token of our reverence to the departed Spirit we should also bow down in humility and surrender to the Will of GOD. We have also to clearly perceive the inevitable and accept it as there is no alternative but to do so. Lord Krishna declares in clear unambiguous words that to the one who is born Death is certain (“Jaatasya hi dhruvo mrithyuh.....”). But however, the certainty of death is declared with reference to the physical body composed of the five elements and not with reference to the eternal and immortal Spirit that dwells within it. Thus, while the gross physical remains of late revered Swamiji was consigned to the Sacred River Ganga, the eternal and immortal Spirit that in reality he was, has ascended back unto that Realm from whence it had come for this brief journey called earth-life. Supreme Peace be unto him in the abode of the Divine! Om Shanti!

Hari Om Tat-Sat! Brahmarpnamastu!

-Swami Chidananda

President, The Divine Life Society

THE PERSONAL BELONGINGS OF

LATE H. H. SRI SWAMI PREMANANDAJI MAHARAJ

All devotees, initiated disciples, admirers and followers of late H. H. Sri Swami Premanandaji Maharaj are requested to carefully read this Special Announcement regarding the above subject of his personal belongings (as distinct from the property of the Divine Life Society Trust such as furniture and fixtures like the cot, office table, chairs, electrical lamps, heaters etc.) will be made available to his devotees within a short period of time. The method adopted is as follows:

A special committee has been constituted of four of his very close devotees, i.e. Sri Veerji (Veerendrapratapji) of Jalandhar, Sri Sharad Goel of Gurgaon, Sri H.D. Sharmaji of

Swami Sivananda Cultural Association, New Delhi and Sri Anil Sethi, also of Delhi. This committee will be given all due facilities to meet in the Narayan Kutir Room of late Revered Sri Swami Premanandaji Maharaj and draw up a complete list of all his personal belongings. When exactly they will be in a position to jointly visit the Ashram to do this work, we are not in a position to say at this time. It will depend upon the convenience of all four of them. They will come when they find it possible to spare their time together for a few days to Sivananda Ashram, Rishikesh.

All such devotees interested in the above arrangement and desirous of obtaining some memento to cherish the sacred memory of late Revered Swamiji Maharaj, are requested to contact either Sri H. D. Sharma or Sri Sharad Goel (or both) at their respective Telephone numbers given herein below.

Sri Sharad Goel -Tel No: 09811074919 Sri H.D. Sharma -Tel No: 011-2026407

-THE DIVINE LIFE SOCIETY

IN MEMORIAM

SRI SWAMI GURUPADANANDA

Sri Sivananda Ashram, the Divine Life Society headquarters regrets to announce the death of one of its junior sannyasin named Sri Swami Gurupadananda who was until recently functioning as the In-Charge of the Society's Branch Department-cum its Membership and Divine Life Magazine Department also. He was born in the year 1962 on the 24th of April. Hailing from village Gokarnapur in the District of Ganjam, Orissa bearing the Purvashrama name Senna Babu Reddy, he was educated upto the 10th class (Matriculation) and came to learn of the Divine Life Society organisation in his youth through the local Gokarnapur Branch of the D.L. Society. Inspired by Satguru Bhagavan Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj's spiritual teachings and influenced by the spiritual activities of the local Gokarnapur Branch under the guidance of Sri Swami Tattwabodhananda Saraswati Maharaj, the young man developed keen Vairagya and renouncing his secular life altogether, he came to Rishikesh and joined Sivananda Ashram as a whole-time spiritual Sadhaka and a selfless spiritual worker functioning under the guidance of the senior monastic members there. This was during the middle of the year 1985. Two years later he received Brahmacharya Diksha upon the Holy Mahashivaratri day in the year 1987. After a twelve-year period of Brahmacharya life he entered the Holy Order of Sannyasa in the month of November 1999 upon Holy Skanda Shashti day. Recently during one of his visits to his native village Branch he got some poisonous insect bite while he was in the nearby jungle for a period of seclusion and Sadhana. The poisonous bite proved fatal and in spite of the best efforts of the concerned doctors of the Berhampur hospital he passed away early this week on Sunday, 22nd February, 2004.

Our sympathies extend to his family members for such an untimely death of one among them. We pray to the Almighty Lord to receive the departed spirit into HIS Divine keepings

and grant it Eternal Peace and Divine Satgati!

-THE DIVINE LIFE SOCIETY

IN MEMORIAM

SRI GADIRAJU VENKATA SUBBA RAJU

With deep sorrow, we condole the death of Sri G.V.S. Raju (Gadiraju Venkata Subba Raju) on 6th January, 2004. He was 72. He was working in the proof-reading section of the Y.V.F.A. Press of the Ashram for more than a decade. He hails from Cuddapah District of Andhra Pradesh. He was ailing from Liver Cancer since a couple of months. He was very hard working and totally dedicated to his duty. We humbly pray to Sri Gurudev and the Almighty Lord that the soul of Sri Subba Raju may attain Sadgati and eternal peace.

-THE DIVINE LIFE SOCIETY

SEVA THROUGH SIVANANDA HOME

As an important part of the D.L.S. Headquarters activity, Sivananda Home which is situated near Laxman Jhula has been a place of refuge and shelter for people in need of medical care, who have neither anybody to take care of them, nor any place to go. The Society continued to extend its Seva to the suffering humanity through the Home.

Once it so happened that entering one of the three male wards, the Sevaks were strongly pulled with their cloth, to come quickly inside and were brought near an old aged mentally retarded Baba, lying on the floor. To our amazement, Gopala, the one who was pulling, knelt near the old man, put his hand on the latter's hand on his forehead and remained seated like that. Upon enquiry, we came to know that the Baba had a fall from his bed and could not get up. Most concerned and with fear coming from his eyes, Gopala looked up. One could think of him as though he were one of the attendants serving in the Home. And this is actually true. Though Gopal is mentally retarded, cannot use his left arm, is limping when he walks, needs help for his bath and clothing and is not able to talk with his voice, yet his heart talks very well and sometimes it looks as though he himself feels the pain of others. Gopal is one of Gurudev's beloved children, who are so fortunate to serve Him in and through all these different forms. Since June last year he has been staying in the Home, brought from the roadside, anxious with aggressive behaviour, the bowels full of stones and worms, not able to take his own food and needing to be nursed in separation. But through God's grace only, he has become an asset, spreading joy all around with his innocent smile, even dancing and doing Namaskar to one and all. He reminds us of the saying: "Disability is a matter of perception. If one can do just one thing well, one is needed somewhere."

A few days back, from opposite Mother Ganga, a destitute old aged Baba was brought for admission. He was found lying on the banks in the cold wind, severely malnourished, not

able to walk, having gastro-enteritis and an infected wound outside the anus. All the way from Geeta Bhavan, the three Sadhus came bringing this patient, after they had given him a bath and new clothes. The Baba had been put under a strict diet and medical treatment, the wounds cleaned up and dressed and a special mattress was provided to prevent development of further sores. Slowly he is feeling better, thanking God and those compassionate Sadhus who so lovingly took care of him.

This month also a TB positive patient got admitted in a separate corner room. He has been put on Anti tuberculosis Treatment with dietary requirements. Furthermore, four Leprosy patients were admitted. Three of them have been discharged after treatment. One was operated in a General Hospital for a minor abdominal problem, and one elderly mother with Leprosy and also having eczema is still undergoing treatment in the Home. In this way, everyday one again and again feels and experiences Sri Swami Sivanandaji's all pervading and Loving presence. May His choicest blessings continue to pour upon all of us. Jai Sivananda!

“Feed the hungry. Clothe the naked. Serve the sick. This is
Divine Life.” (Swami Sivananda)

REPORTS FROM THE D.L.S. BRANCHES

INLAND BRANCHES

Ambala (Haryana) During December 2003, the Branch held Satsanga daily and added to it recitation of Sri Hanuman hymns on Tuesdays and Saturdays, and collective chanting of Mahamrityunjaya Mantra for 30 minutes on Sundays. Akhanda Kirtan of 'Om Namah Sivaya' Mantra was held on 31st December, the 60th Anniversary of Sri Viswanath Mandir at the Headquarters. Daily Homoeopathy Seva at one centre in the morning and at another in the evening was continued.

Babanpur (Orissa) On the occasion of inauguration of a new building 'Sivananda Seva Sadan' on the 30th anniversary of the foundation of the Branch on 26th December, the Branch organised various programmes as follows: (a) a 4-day long Maha Yajna from 22nd to 25th December, (b) 24-hour Akhanda Samkirtan of Mahamantra started from the 25th evening and concluded by Revered Swami Sivananda Gurusevanandaji, (c) Nagar Samkirtan on the 26th evening, and (d) inauguration of 'Sivananda Seva Sadan' by Revered Gajpati Maharaja Sri Dibya Singha Debji attended by Revered Swami Sivachidanandaji and more than 6000 devotees.

Balangir (Orissa) The Branch conducted the weekly Satsanga on Saturdays and the monthly mobile Satsanga and Paduka Puja at the residence of a devotee on 14th December. It organised a special programme of spiritual talks on the occasion of visit of Revered Swami Gurusevanandaji and Revered Swami Jijnasanandaji.

Bangalore (Karnataka) The Branch conducted Paduka Puja and Satsanga on Thursday and Matri-Satsanga with recitation of Sri Vishnu-Sahasranama Stotram, Sri Lalita

Sahasranama Stotram etc. on Fridays. The monthly programme of spiritual gathering and 8-hour Akhanda Kirtan were organised on 7th and 21st December respectively. Sivananda Bhajan Mandali rendered devotional music in various Jayanti programmes held in different centres. Sivananda Literature was also distributed on these occasions.

Barbil (Orissa) The Branch conducted the weekly Satsanga on Thursdays. The weekly mobile Satsanga on Mondays were also held at the Branch. Sivananda Charitable Homoeopathy Dispensary treated 535 patients during December 2003.

Bellaguntha (Orissa) The 2-hour daily early morning session included prayers, meditation, recitation, Paduka Puja etc. On Sundays the weekly Satsanga took place in the evening and Matri-Satsanga in the afternoon. Matri-Satsanga on Ekadasis included recitation of Sri Vishnu-Sahasranama Stotram, Sundarakand, Sri Hanuman Chalisa, Swadhyaya etc. On the occasion of Sri Bhagavad Gita Jayanti, a 3-day programme of discourses, Paduka Puja, Havan with oblation offer each Sloka, Narayan Seva etc. was organised. The monthly Sadhana Day of the 14-Branch Circle was on 21st December.

Bellary (Karnataka) In addition to twice a day Puja, the Branch conducted Paduka Puja, Satsanga and Swadhyaya on Sundays. It also organised a spiritual talk on 25th December and Narayana Seva in a Leprosy Colony on 21st December.

Bhanjanagar (Orissa) The Branch had weekly Satsanga on Sundays and the 316th Monthly Sadhana Day on second Sunday. On Sri Bhagavad Gita Jayanti, it organised in two sessions various programmes—Paduka Puja, Sri Krishna Puja, Havan with oblations after each Sloka of Gita, discourses etc.

Bhilai Nagar (Chhattisgarh) The monthly Satsanga of the Branch was on 28th December. The twice-a-week Matri-Satsanga included recitation of Sri Hanuman Chalisa on Tuesdays and of Sri Lalita-Sahasranama on Fridays. The Matri-Satsanga on Ekadasis covered recitation of Sri Vishnu-Sahasranama and Bhagavad Gita.

Bhimkand (Orissa) In addition to the daily morning Paduka Puja and evening Satsanga, the Branch conducted the weekly Satsanga on Sundays. On Bhagavad Gita Jayanti, a Havan with oblations after each Sloka of Gita was performed.

Bhongir (A.P.) The Branch conducted daily Satsanga that included recitation of Sri Vishnu-Sahasranama.

Boudh (Orissa) The Branch had daily Satsanga with recitation of different hymns.

Chatrapur (Orissa) In addition to the daily Satsanga, the Branch conducted weekly Satsanga on Thursdays and recitation of Sundarakanda on Saturdays. Paduka Puja was performed on 8th and 24th December. It distributed Jnana Prasad to 300 participants of a month-long recitation of Ramayana.

Chennai, Annanagar (Tamil Nadu) The Branch organised a special function for New

Year prayers and resolutions. It also included a discourse of 'Yoga-Vedanta Vijnana' and inauguration of Brahma-Yoga Training Course by Revered Sri Suryachandranandaji.

Chennai, Triplicane (Tamil Nadu) The Branch arranged discourses by Revered Swami Padmanabhanandaji of DLS Headquarters from 12th to 14th December. On 7th December, Antaryoga Camp by Revered Swami Ramakrishnanandaji, and a free medical camp for endoscopy and colonoscopy were organised.

Dharamgarh (Orissa) The Branch conducted daily Puja in the temple, Paduka Puja on Sundays and the weekly Satsanga on Thursdays. A 12-hour Akhanda Kirtan of Mahamrityunjaya Mantra was done from 6 pm on 31-12-2003 to 6 am on 01-01-2004. A free health check-up camp was organised on 24th December. A visit to Chidananda Sevashram, Jugsai Patna, Bhawanipatna was organised on 28th December.

Gumergunda (Chhattisgarh) The Branch continued its regular activities of daily Arati, Satsanga, Yogasanas, Paduka Puja on Thursday, recitation of Sri Hanuman Chalisa on Saturday, of Sri Siva Chalisa on Monday and of Sri Durga Chalisa on Friday. It also organised various special programmes in connection with the 12th Punyatithi Anniversary of Revered Swami Sadapremanandaji as follows: (1) Sadhana Week from 22nd to 28th December, (2) 72-hour Akhanda Kirtan of 'Om Namah Sivaya' Mantra, and on 29th December, (3) Prabhat Pheri on conclusion of Akhanda Kirtan, (4) Paduka Puja, (5) Havan, (6) Discourses, and (7) Prasad to about five thousand devotees who attended the programmes.

On the eve of the New Year, 3-hour Akhanda Kirtan of Mahamrityunjaya Mantra and Mahamantra was done from 9 pm to midnight on 31st December.

Hirakud (Orissa) The Branch held the weekly Satsanga on Sundays and mobile Satsangas at the residence of devotees on Thursdays. The monthly Sadhana Day was on 21st December.

Jaipur (Rajasthan) The regular activities of the Branch were (1) Daily discourses in the morning, (2) Swadhyaya of Srimad Bhagavatam in the afternoon, (3) evening Satsanga and Swadhyaya four times a week, (4) weekly Satsanga including Havan with Gayatri Mantra and Mahamrityunjaya Mantra oblations, and Swadhyaya, (5) Matri-Satsanga on Mondays, (6) recitation of Bhagavad Gita and chanting of Mahamantra on Tuesdays, (7) Mahamrityunjaya Mantra chanting on Thursdays, (8) recitation of Sundarakanda on Saturdays, (9) Homoeopathy Clinic which treated 1532 patients during December 2003, (10) daily Yogasana-Pranayama class, (11) Swami Sivananda Library, (12) Doles to 20 poor widows and scholarships to 75 poor students, (13) distribution of food daily, sweets on Sundays, and clothings/fruits occasionally, and (14) supply of dry ration to a leprosy colony.

The special activities during this month were (1) a 9-day programme of discourses on Bhagavad Gita, (2) publication of a book on Bhagavad Gita, (3) on the occasion of diamond jubilee of Akhanda Mahamantra Kirtan in the Headquarters, publication of a

book on Samkirtan and a special number of Sivananda Vani on Samkirtan.

Jeypore (Orissa) The Branch held the weekly Satsanga on Sundays and on Thursdays in the residence of devotees. Revered Swami Sivachidanandaji visited the Branch and gave a discourse on 28th December. A Jnana Satra was organised on Mandukya Upanishad in the morning and Bhagavad Gita in the evening.

Kakching (Manipur) The Branch conducted daily Puja in Viswanath Mandir, meditation from 4 am to 5 am and Yogasana class from 5 am to 6 am. A 45-day Yogasana training which began from 11th November, concluded on 15th December. Another Yogasana Camp in a nearby village commenced from 20-12-2003 to continue till 18-1-2004. The Branch has arranged free Yoga therapy to paralytic patients. It has added to its Manava Seva Ashram, a new building as Sivananda Yoga Vedanta School.

Kantabanji (Orissa) The special function of the month was Gita Jayanti. Recitation of Bhagavad Gita and its explanation were done in two sessions. Poor feeding was also done.

Kasibugga (A.P.) The daily programmes of the Branch are Prabhat Pheri in the morning and recitation of various Stotras in the evening. It held the weekly Satsanga on Saturdays and mobile Satsangas at the residence of devotees on Thursdays. Food is distributed to about 100 destitutes on Saturdays. Sivananda Day is celebrated on 8th of every month with Nagar Samkirtan and a special Satsanga. On Gita Jayanti, various programmes like Nagar Samkirtan, Puja, recitation, discourses and Narayana Seva were organised. About 200 devotees participated in this eight hours programme.

Khurja (U.P.) The Branch organised the 17th Annual Celebrations from 21st to 28th December. After discourses by many leading saints for seven days, a massive Samkirtan was held on 28th. Many Samkirtan Mandalis from various places participated in it.

Kurnool (A.P.) The Branch conducted in Sivananda Mandir daily Satsanga and Swadhyaya and on Sundays the weekly Satsanga. Paduka Puja was performed on all Thursdays and on 8th December. On Gita Jayanti, special Puja of Bhagavad Gita, Sri Krishna and Guru Paduka was done. A special function of X'mas eve and birth of Lord Jesus was organised on 24th December.

Mumbai Circle & Malad (Maharashtra) The Branch conducted the weekly Satsanga and Swadhyaya on Saturdays, special Satsangas and Paduka Puja on 8th and 24th December, and the monthly mobile Satsanga at the residence of Shri Ravi Kapurji on 28th December. The daily Yogasana class which was started more than 25 years ago, is held regularly without any break. The special programme of midnight meditation and New Year prayers during the Millennium Conference was revived again through a special Satsanga on 31st December. On this auspicious day of 60th Anniversary of Viswanath Mandir Pratishtha, Andheri sub-branch was inaugurated and a special Satsanga was organised. The quarterly magazine 'Siva Jyoti' was revived in a new format and get-up.

Nabha (Punjab) The weekly Satsanga was held by the Branch on Sundays regularly and punctually.

Nagercoil (Tamil Nadu) The Branch organised Puja in the morning and discourses by Revered Swami Padmanabhanandaji and Revered Swami Sarvanabhavanandaji to celebrate Sivananda Day on 8th December.

Nalgonda (A.P.) The Branch continued its weekly Satsanga and Swadhyaya on Wednesdays. A 4-day programme of Lalita-Sahasranama Yajna and Pancha Sukta Maha Yajna from 8 to 11 am, and Sapta Rishi Sadhu Maha Sabha (an assembly of seven Sannyasi Saints) from 11 am to 12.30 pm and 4 pm to 6 pm was organised from 10th to 13th December in collaboration with Vyasashram, Yerpedu. On the concluding day Paduka Puja was done with Gurudev Sivanandaji Maharaj's 108 names. Sivananda Literature was also distributed. On 31st December night a special prayer session was held.

Nandini Nagar (Chhattisgarh) The weekly Satsanga of the Branch also included recitation of Sri Hanuman Chalisa, Sri Vishnu-Sahasranama Stotram, etc. The programme of 12-hour Akhanda Kirtan of Mahamantra was organised on 3rd December. Recitation of Bhagavad Gita was done on Gita Jayanti. Paduka Puja was performed on the birthday anniversary of H.H. Sri Swami Madhavanandaji Maharaj. Bhagvat Saptaha Parayana Maha Yajna was organised at four different places and on its conclusion Havans were performed on 4th, 15th, 22nd and 30th December. 100-150 devotees attended each Saptaha.

Nagpur (Maharashtra) The Branch organised a special programme to celebrate Gita Jayanti.

New Delhi, Lajpat Nagar Branch: Besides the meditation class five days a week, the Branch conducted the weekly Satsanga, which included recitation of Sundarakanda, Sri Vishnu-Sahasranama Stotram and Bhagavad Gita on the first three Sundays, and Paduka Puja on the fourth Sunday. H.H. Swami Premanandaji Maharaj presided over the Annual General Meeting and provided necessary guidance and inspiration. A special function was organised on Gita Jayanti: Puja was done in a traditional way. Sankalpa (resolve) of leading divine life and working for the welfare of humanity purification of Hotas, invocation of Lord Ganesh, Puja of five main deities, Navagraha Puja, Puja and Abhisheka of Lord Krishna etc. Gita Yajna was done by offering oblations at the end of each Sloka and the Samput (supplement) 'Om Namoh Bhagavate Vaasudevaya'. The Yajna was concluded with meditation, Arati and Pushpanjali. Milk and fruits were served to Vratis, a grand dish to all other participants and sweets to school children.

Nimapara (Orissa) In addition to the daily evening one hour session of Mahamantra Kirtan and Gita recitation, the Branch held weekly Satsanga on Thursdays and mobile Satsangas on Sundays. It organised the monthly Sadhana Day on 28th December and an additional Sadhana Day on the Mantra initiation anniversary of some members. On Gita Jayanti, a Havan was done.

Ningthoukhong (Manipur) The daily activities of the Branch were Paduka Puja and reading of Holy Scriptures in the morning, and Satsanga and study of Upanishads in the evening. The weekly Satsanga was on Sundays. 2000 copies of the monthly 'Gurukripa' was sent free to readers.

Panchkula (Haryana) In addition to the daily Satsanga and study of "Vivekachudamani," the Branch organised weekly mobile Satsangas on Sundays at the residence of devotees. On Gita Jayanti, recitation, Kirtan and other programmes were arranged.

Raikia (Orissa) The Branch held the weekly Satsanga on Sundays.

Raipur (Chhattisgarh) The Branch had the weekly Satsanga on Sundays. On Ekadasis Puja is done in the morning, and recitation and Archana of Sri Vishnu-Sahasranama in the evening. On the 27th anniversary of the foundation of the Branch on the sacred Gita Jayanti day, various programmes like morning meditation and prayers, Nagar Samkirtan, a special Satsanga in the evening were organised.

Rajkot (Gujarat) Besides the daily Satsanga, the Branch also conducted weekly Satsangas on Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays in three Satsanga Kendras. It started discourses on Narayana Sukta and Narad Bhakti Sutra, and recitation of Bhagavad Gita. The Mahila Kendra (ladies section) arranged recitation of Bhagavad Gita on Gita Jayanti. Dr Merghani, a reputed doctor, continued to give free medicine in the Homoeopathic Clinic. Free Eye Camps were organised on 15th, 25th and 28th December.

Rourkela (Orissa) In addition to the daily Puja in Viswanath Temple and Paduka Puja on Thursdays, 8th, 24th and 25th December, the Branch conducted the weekly Satsanga in Sivananda Ashram on Thursdays and mobile Satsangas at the residence of the devotees on Sundays. A special Satsanga and prayers were organised on the birthday anniversary of H.H. Sri Swami Madhavanandaji Maharaj. On Gita Jayanti, various programmes--recitation, Havan, Narayana Seva etc.—were organised for nine hours. A special Sadhana Day was held in the Blind School in which all the students, staff and organising members also participated. Free medical service and thorough examination of eyes were arranged. Food was served to the students. On 16th December, food and clothing were distributed to the destitute. Akhanda Kirtan was organised in a leprosy colony and 180 residents were served food.

Rourkela, Fertilizer Township (Orissa) The Branch arranged recitation of Bhagavad Gita and a discourse on it on Gita Jayanti.

Rourkela, Steel Township (Orissa) The Branch held weekly mobile Satsanga at the residence of devotees on all Sundays. On Gita Jayanti, a Havan was performed. A discourse on Guru Tattva by a visiting saint was organised on 21st December. A special prayer session was held on 31st December night.

Salipur (Orissa) In addition to twice-a-day Puja and daily Satsanga, the Branch conducted 3-hour weekly Satsanga and Swadhyaya on Sundays, and the last Sunday

Satsanga was a monthly mobile Satsanga. The monthly Sivananda Day was observed with Paduka Puja and group chanting of the Mantra 'Om Namō Bhagavate Sivanandaya' in the morning and a special Satsanga in the evening. The monthly Gita recitation was on 7th December. On Gita Jayanti, an 8-hour programme of Gita recitation, Havan, etc was organised. The monthly Yogasana-Pranayama training class for 2 1/2 hours was on 14th December. 329 patients were treated during the month through Sivananda Charitable Homoeopathy Dispensary.

South Balanda (Orissa) The Branch had the weekly Satsanga on Fridays and Matri-Satsanga on Sundays. A 3-hour Akhanda Japa of Mahamrityunjaya Mantra was done on the Sankranti Day. It organised Akhanda Kirtan of Mahamantra for 12 hours on the 3rd and for 6 hours on 31st December night.

Sunabeda (Orissa) The Branch conducted daily study of Ramayana and on its conclusion a special Satsanga was held. It had Satsangas twice a week on Thursdays and Sundays, and Satsanga of the ladies section on Wednesdays and Saturdays. On Gita Jayanti Paduka Puja and recitations were done. Two Sadhana days were arranged. A special X'mas Satsanga was organised. It conducted Yogasana class daily in two batches. Medical camps on Sundays were continued.

Tikabali (Orissa) The Branch held its weekly Satsanga on Sundays.

Vadodara (Gujarat) The Branch conducted Akhanda Kirtan for six hours of Mahamantra and Panchakshari Mantra on the 60th Anniversaries of Mahamantra and Sri Viswanath Mandir on 3rd and 31st December respectively. On the monthly Sivananda Day and Chidananda Day, it organised distribution of fruits and biscuits, Paduka Puja, and Akhanda Kirtan of 'Om Namō Bhagavate Sivanandaya' on 8th and 'Mahamrityunjaya' Mantra for 9 hours on 24th December. It arranged discourses on three Saturdays. The Homoeopathy Dispensary gave treatment to the patients on four days a week, Ayurvedic Dispensary on two days and Acupressure treatment on two days.

Varanasi (U.P.) The Branch held the fortnightly Satsanga on 2nd and 4th Sundays and a mobile Satsanga at the residence of a devotee.

Vikrampur (Orissa) In addition to twice-a-day Puja and daily Swadhyaya of Srimad Bhagavatam, the Branch conducted the weekly Satsanga on Wednesdays and 3-hour long Matri-Satsanga on Thursdays. Paduka Puja was done on three days. The monthly Sadhana Day was on 28th December. It also organised a special programme on Gita Jayanti and Akhanda Kirtan for three hours on the Diamond Jubilees of Mahamantra Kirtan and Viswanath Mandir.

OVERSEAS BRANCHES

Bristol (U.K.) The Branch held the monthly programme of Satsanga - prayers, Bhajan-Kirtan, recitation, meditation etc. on 13th December.