



YOGA OF UNIVERSAL LOVE

(H.H. Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj)

There is no virtue higher than love; there is no treasure higher than love; there is no knowledge higher than love; there is no Dharma higher than love; there is no religion higher than love; because love is truth; love is God. This world has come out of love, this world exists in love and this world ultimately dissolves in love. God is an embodiment of love. In every inch of His creation, you can verily understand His love.

The delicious fruit-juice that quenches your thirst, the palatable vegetable and food that appease your hunger, the silken robes that you wear, the sun, the moon and the stars that illumine this world, the rivers, the mountains and the oceans that bespeak of divine glory, divine beauty and divine splendour, the various kinds of flowers that blossom out in your gardens, the music that lulls you to an agreeable slumber, the scents that give you pleasure, nay, each and every thing that gives you happiness and joy has come out of the power of God. When you are tired at night, He envelops this world with darkness to lull you to rest and takes you to His sweet bosom of love to refresh and soothe your tired nerves. At night He sheds light in the dark to show you the path by taking the forms of stars. God is indeed an ocean of love! Have you understood the mystery of His creation? Have you realised His magnanimous nature and wonderful love towards His creations? He serves you in the form of attendants and nurses. He treats you in the form of doctors. He has taken the forms of herbs and medicinal plants to serve your

needs. He is the spoon. He is the medicine. He is the patient. He is the doctor. He is the disease. He is the microbe. This great mystery will be unravelled to you when your mind is absorbed in Him through intense love.

To love man is to love God alone. Man is the true image of God. He is His Amsa. In the Gita you will find: "A portion of mine own Self transformed in the world of life into an immortal spirit, draweth around itself the senses of which the mind is the sixth, veiled in matter" (Ch. XV.7). "Knowledge of sacrifice (Adhi Yajna) tells of Me as wearing the body, O best of living beings" (Ch. VIII. 4). Love is the fulfilling of the law. The aim of charity, social service, altruism, humanitarianism, socialism, bolshevism and so many other 'isms' is to develop this universal love, expand one's heart *ad infinitum*. Theosophy speaks of universal brotherhood and tries to unite all through the common thread of cosmic love. Love is a great leveller. There is no power on earth greater than love. You can conquer this world even if you have a ray of this divine commodity which is absolutely free from even a tinge of selfishness. Pure love is a rare gift of God. It is the fruit of one's untiring service of humanity and incalculable virtuous actions in several incarnations. It is a rare commodity indeed.

He who possesses even a ray of this is a veritable god on earth. He is a mighty potentate. St. Paul says: "Though I speak with the tongues of men and angels and if I have no Love I am become as sounding brass of a tinkling cymbal. And though I have the gift of

prophecy and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, though I have all faith so that I could remove mountains and have not love, I am nothing. And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor and though I give my body to be burned and have not love it profiteth me nothing.”

True religion does not consist in ritualistic observances, baths and pilgrimages but in loving all. Cosmic love is all-embracing and all-inclusive. In pure love no one is shut out from its warm embrace. It is wide enough to include the humblest of us, from the tiny ant to the mighty emperor, from the worst scoundrel to the reputed saint on the surface of this earth. It is hatred that separates man from man, nation from nation and country from country. It is pride and egoism that divide a man from another man. Hatred, pride, egoism are mental creations. They are the products of ignorance only. They cannot stand before pure love. Just as darkness is dispelled by the penetrating rays of the burning sun, so also jealousy, hatred and egoism are dispelled by the rays of divine love.

It is easy to talk of universal love. But when you come to the practical field, you obviously show signs of failure. If anybody talks ill of you and uses harsh words, at once you are thrown out of balance. You get irritated and show angry face and pay him in the same coin. Where is universal love? You do not like to part with your possessions when you see people in distress. A man who is struggling to develop cosmic love and realise Him through love cannot keep anything for himself more than he actually needs for keeping the life going. He will sacrifice even this little to serve a needy one and undergo privation and suffering willingly with much pleasure. He will rejoice that God has given him a rare opportunity to serve Him. People talk of uni-

versal love but are very niggardly in action. They show only lip-sympathy and lip-love. This is absolutely hypocrisy. Those who have developed pure, cosmic love are very very rare in this world. But those who talk of universal love are plenty. He who tries to develop universal love should try to possess various Sattvic virtues such as Kshama, patience, perseverance, tolerance, generosity, straightforwardness, mercy, truthfulness, Ahimsa, Brahmacharya, Nirabhimanata, etc. He should serve humanity untiringly with a disinterested, selfless spirit for many years. He has to kill his little self ruthlessly. He must bear calmly insults and injuries. Then only there is the prospect of cultivating cosmic love. Otherwise it is all vain and flowery talk and idle-gossiping only. It is sugar in paper or tiger in the carpet.

Pure divine love consciously felt and spontaneously directed towards all beings including animals and birds is indeed the direct result of one's vision or realisation of the Supreme Being. Let me repeat here the words of Bhagavan Sri Krishna: “He who seeth me everywhere and seeth everything in Me, of him I never lose hold and he shall never lose hold of Me” (Ch. VI. 30). “The self, harmonised by Yoga, seeth the Self abiding in all beings, all beings in the Self, everywhere he seeth same” (Ch. VI. 29).

How can that Yogi of pure love who has this grand vision of cosmic consciousness hate another, abuse another and show contempt and anger towards another? He is dear to God. That is the reason why Lord Krishna says: “He who beareth no ill-will to any being, friendly and compassionate, without attachment and egoism, balanced in pleasure and pain and forgiving, he, My devotee, is dear to Me” (Ch. XII. 14).

The saints, seers and prophets of the world have spoken of love as the end and aim or goal of life. The Rasa Lila of Sri Krishna is full of Prem and divine mysteries. The stripping of clothes of Gopis means the destruction of egoism. Lord Krishna has preached love through His flute. Lord Buddha was an ocean of love. He gave up his body to appease the hunger of a cub of a tiger. Raja Sibi gave from his own breast an equivalent weight of the pigeon's flesh to satisfy the appetite of the hawk. What a noble soul! Lord Rama lived a life of love and showed love in every inch of His activity. My dear children of love, draw inspiration from their teachings. Tread the path of love, commune with God and reach the eternal abode of love. This is your highest duty. You have taken this body to achieve love which alone is the goal of life.

Dear brothers, if you wish to attain perfection, if you wish to enjoy infinite peace and bliss, if you wish to become immortal, develop pure divine love, cultivate universal love by serving and loving all, for love alone will bring you liberation, love alone can carry you to the other shore of bliss and immortal-

ity, the shore which is beyond all grief, pain and sorrow.

Live and love. Breathe in love. Sing in love. Eat in love. Drink in love. Walk in love. Talk in love. Pray in love. Meditate in love. Think in love. Move in love. Write in love. Die in love. Purify your thoughts, speech and actions in the fire of love. Bathe and plunge deep in the sacred water of love. Taste the honey of love and become an embodiment of love (Prema Vighraha or Prema Murti).

May the divine flame of love grow brighter in you all! May we all feel universal brotherhood and cultivate universal love! May we all recognize God in all beings and see God in all faces! May we share what we possess with others! May we speak at all times sweet and loving words! May we serve humanity untiringly with sweet love! May the cultivation of universal love be the goal of life. May we not forget the Flute-Bearer, the embodiment of Prem, the Joy and Solace of life! May we sing His Name like Radha and repeat His Mantra 'Om Namoh Bhagavate Vasudevaya' at all times! May His blessings be upon us all!

AN IMPORTANT REQUEST FOR DEVOTEES

SHARE YOUR MEMORIES WITH SRI SWAMI CHIDANANDAJI MAHARAJ!

Following the earnest requests from so many noble souls we have started collecting details regarding any interesting incidents, memories or experiences which anyone has had with our beloved and Worshipful Sri Swami Chidanandaji Maharaj. Those who would like to share any kind of information in this regard may kindly send their narrative, preferably typed, to the Ashram by the end of January 2009. You may also send it as an attachment through e-mail address generalsecretary@sivanandaonline.org by mentioning the subject as "Sharing my memories with Swami Chidananda". Those who prefer to send the matter by post may mention on their envelope "Sharing my memories with Swami Chidananda" and send it to: **The President, The Divine Life Society, Shivanandanagar—249 192, Dist. Tehri-Garhwal, Uttarakhand, India.**

DIVINE LIFE

(Sri Swami Chidananda)

Blessed immortal seekers; glorious rays of the Eternal Divine Light; friends, it gives me indescribable happiness, it gives me unique and extreme joy to be amidst you in spirit to give you, the spiritual seekers, this message, on this very holy and auspicious New Year Day. God is amidst you, for when such seeking souls remember Him with earnestness and devotion, He is immensely pleased, for they are extremely dear to Him. You endear yourself to Him by expressing your love. Though all-pervading and ever-present, yet in a special way He is present at this moment, sitting by the side of you, if you could feel Him. He is present amidst you, and I bow to that invisible Presence, that sweet, luminous and blessed Presence of the Supreme Beloved, and I greet you in the name of my Master, Swami Sivananda, and I greet you in Divine Life.

Divine Life embraces in itself every group that seeks God; and we identify ourselves with all seekers, absolutely, without any thought of reservation and quite immaterial whether they belong to any specific religion, faith or church or not. So, here are welcome Hindus, Christians, Jews, Buddhists, Parsis, even people who have not found anything yet, but who are seeking something, seeking peace, seeking happiness, seeking a nobler way of life, seeking upliftment of soul, seeking the improvement of their total nature. This is a group which welcomes all such seekers. Therefore this group has the absolutely non-denominational name "The Divine Life Group". We welcome all peo-

ple who aspire for the Divine. We welcome all people who live to seek the Divine and who seek to live divinely. Therefore, in the name of Divine living my warmest and cordial greeting and welcome to you all once again.

Today, I wish to express my regard and my appreciation to all of you and my deep desire to be of humble service to you, by these few words which I especially utter as today's message. This, to me, is an offering which I place at your feet—a flower-offering in the form of words spoken with which I seek to worship the Lord who indwells all.

Divine Life is a life lived in the awareness of your Divine Destiny. Divine Life is a life lived in the full consciousness of your true Divine Nature, a life lived in the knowledge that you are not merely body and mind, but that you are the eternal, all-pure and perfect spiritual Being. That is the innermost central truth of your Being—that is the true fact of your real nature. You are Divine. You are spiritual. Therefore you are imperishable and ever-perfect. You partake of the nature of the eternal and inexhaustible source of your Being—God. Even as every ray of the sun partakes of its radiant and luminous nature, so whatever emanates from Him is also Divine, ever-pure, ever-perfect, of the very nature of indescribable Bliss and Supreme Peace. A life lived in the awareness of this true nature of yours is Divine Life. A life constantly lived in order to express this Divine nature of yours through all your thoughts, all your sentiments and feelings, all your spoken utterances and, more important than anything else, through

all your actions, your practical life—a life thus lived to express your perfect Divine Nature—is Divine Life.

This Divine Life is the great need of the world today, not only of the individuals that live in the world, but of all nations and communities, all groups of people, all races and countries that are trying to evolve in today's world. For, in such an effort to express the higher nature that is within man lies the hope of the emergence of a better society, of a better humanity and a better world from this war-torn and troubled century of ours, from this great and eventful age filled with so much wonderful achievement and advancement, but at the same time oppressed with so much of distrust, mutual suspicion, discontent hatred and strife. Divine Life is indeed individually and collectively the great answer to this great problem of the total break-away from spiritual values, with which the world is threatened today.

This Divine Life being the one message of the great Master, Swami Sivananda, this Divine Life being the great way of life, which he has been trying ceaselessly to spread throughout the modern world, I make that the main theme of this message to you.

Divine Life is a life of divinity in practice. Divine Life is a life of our divine nature expressed in divine thoughts, divine work and divine action. It is, as it were, an expression of the spiritual man through the human man upon the plane of this physical world. This Divine Life should be lived both inwardly as an ascent into its all-full perfection, and also outwardly as beautiful, as love, as goodness, as peace, as humility, as selflessness, as a spirit of service. For, all these great qualities are part and parcel of the ever-perfect divine nature which lies within you and awaits to be unfolded by your wise recognition of its

presence within and your earnest and conscious effort to unfold and make it manifest.

The man of Divine Life seeks to live for a great ideal. The man of Divine Life is a peace-maker, for he beholds the essential spiritual oneness of all mankind. He knows that one great divine essence knits all life into a great oneness and thus ever tries to see the whole world as a manifest expression of the divine essence, and thus deals with all with reverence and with love. He sees God in man and thus seeks to live worshipfully. He seeks to give love as his worship to this immanent divinity.

A person who practises this Divine Life, therefore, spreads love, spreads mutual regard and respect. He works for good-will and understanding and he ever seeks to bring greater spiritual harmony. The person living the Divine Life, wherever he goes will make people feel the oneness of life and the spirit of brotherhood. The liver of Divine Life is a great example of selflessness and service. This is Divine Life which is the practical aspect of the inward spiritual transformation which everyone seeks to bring about through Yoga, through practical religion, through prayer and worshipfulness and what is known as the life spiritual.

The Supreme Self illumines everything, but the Light is overlooked in apparent appearances. When the great Atman was like the absolute void—nameless and formless—there was no creation. The world was not then, and there were no universes either. There was no matter and no motion, but only absolute, ineffable stillness. There was only Pure Consciousness, if a name is to be attributed at all. There was Pure Consciousness, and then the Pure Consciousness sets itself into motion as an act of the Absolute Will Divine. This motion brings into being subtle

matter of Prakriti, as the Indian philosophy terms it. Then, from Prakriti the universe comes into being. From the Atman or the Supreme Spirit is light. From the Supreme is desire. From the Supreme is love. From the Supreme are all the elements from the sky downwards. The Supreme sustains the physical world as physical proof. Even the broad sky above and the boundless ocean around remind you of the Supreme Absolute Spirit. From the Supreme Absolute came the countless universes, and yet the Pure Consciousness remains absolutely unaffected. The sun's rays fall on the pure water of the Ganga, on the ocean, on streams, pools, ponds and on dirty puddles, but the sun is not at all affected in any way by this contact. Even so, the Absolute Being is absolutely unaffected by the later evolutes, such as the countless universes. The world and the universes, however, continue to exist because of the Divine motion set by the Pure Consciousness through the Absolute Will. Motion or energy is not different from Pure Consciousness, but it is the Pure Consciousness expressed or made manifest. Motion or energy cannot exist without matter to play upon. Therefore, the subtle matter or Prakriti was first created.

The subtle matter, the transcendental matter or Prakriti was whirled into motion in its three qualities and it divided itself into various grosser entities. The grosser entities became still more gross and found themselves as different universes. From the universes were created worlds. In the worlds there evolved the various forms of life. The univer-

sal motion or consciousness found at last its expression in the human being, the latest species to evolve upon the worlds. In the human being was created the mind. Mind thus became the most powerful agency of perception, discernment and understanding. It is the ultimate expression of the Divine in his prototype—man.

This mind, if properly utilised, can lead you once again back to the transcendental spiritual source of your Being. Thus the mind is the most powerful agency. At first the mind was gross—only instinctive, a little more efficient than the animal, but as evolution proceeded, it gradually started refining itself. When the higher stage of evolution was reached by the mind of man there came the awareness of the lower and the higher mind. The lower mind identified itself with gross matter. The limited consciousness was thus identified but The higher mind ever sought the eternal. It was dissatisfied with the limitation, bondage and imprisonment and thus started the quest of the discovery of the real nature of your being. When that is realised the cycle is completed. The consciousness which limited itself in the human form having become freed, once again merged in its infinite, all perfect, absolute, original source. This is the cycle. This is the true meaning of your human nature, as well as your human birth. Complete the cycle and culminate in spiritual glory. To lead the Divine Life is the secret of bringing about this achievement in a conscious way here and now.

(To be continued)

If we keep on taking that one step, no matter how rugged or arduous the path, then one day we are destined to reach that Goal Supreme. We are made to claim and obtain our birthright, our divine destiny. This is the truth.

—Swami Chidananda

THE SEARCH FOR TRUTH

(Sri Swami Krishnananda)

[Continued from the previous issue]

VIII

Becoming is an active process of transformation of conditions or events in the direction of a goal that is yet to be reached externally in space and time. Everything changes into something else, transforms itself from one condition to another. And this tendency of things, to transformation into a different state, is indicative of restlessness characterising the condition in which they already are. There is this restlessness because it is dissatisfying to be in that condition for a protracted period.

It is dissatisfying because it does not indicate what one requires. What is required is outside oneself, and, so, there is a spatial movement, a temporal activity, outside oneself, in the direction of some conceivable goal. Thus, *becoming* is an objective movement of consciousness. Meditation is not any movement towards an object outside it, though in certain types of meditation, it may appear that we are meditating on some object. Even here, the movement is only an appearance and is not really an activity in the sense of an alienation towards objects. We shall come to this point again a little later.

'Being' is different from *becoming*. The difference should be ostensible. While *becoming* has a tendency to transformation in the direction of something outside itself, *being* is a tendency to its own self; it is a self-withdrawal into the core of one's own being and not an isolation of oneself into something other than what oneself is. "What is an

object, and what is a subject?" is a question, again, before us. What do we mean by an object? Anything that we cannot regard as identical with ourselves, anything which is, from our point of view, totally disconnected from what we regard ourselves to be,—that is an object, a "This-is-not-me."

And anything with which we are vitally connected in an inseparable manner, in whose context we affirm a self-identity,—that is a subject. When we speak of subjects and objects, we naturally refer to consciousness which plays an important role in all experience. It is the consciousness of some particular circumstance that brings about the distinction between subjectivity and objectivity. The consciousness of a thing dissociates itself from that thing and assumes the presence of some spatial distance or, at least, a spatial difference logically conceived between itself and the object. But when no such spatial distinction can be conceived between the object and consciousness, then, there is no object; it is only subject. Consciousness alone can be the subject; everything else is object.

Anything that is separable from consciousness is an object of consciousness. Now, this separability may be merely notional; it may not be factual. Whether it is an imaginary concept of difference or a factual distinction that is there, as long as the mind or consciousness cannot accept its unity with

that particular context or thing, it remains as an object. In meditation, the consciousness is enabled not by exertion of any force from outside, but by an education introduced into it from within to effloresce into a wider comprehension of facts wherein its notion of objects gets changed and transformed.

It is not that things actually change in meditation, but our idea of objects changes. To give a common example, we have the phenomenon of the difference that we make between dream objects and waking experience. The objects in dream are totally disconnected from the perceiving subject. We are the dreamers and we do not know that we are such, while we are actually dreaming. The question of dream does not arise when we are actually in that condition. It is as good an experience as anything else. The things that we see in dream are disconnected from us and, therefore, we have pleasures and pains in dream, also.

There are all kinds of things in dream as we have in waking life. There are hills and dales, persons and things, experiences that are pleasurable and miserable. All these objects of the dream world causing pleasures or pains are disconnected from that particular degree of consciousness which experiences them; and that is the reason why there is pleasure or pain. Pleasures and pains are caused by reactions set up between the subjective consciousness and its relation to the object concerned. When we wake up from dream, what happens? The objects which we saw in dream, which were the causes of our pleasures and pains, have vanished altogether. Since they have vanished, the pleasures and pains connected with the objects also have gone. Where have these objects gone? Where have they vanished into?

The objects in dream, which caused us pleasures and pains, were notionally distin-

guishable from the experiencing consciousness, but factually not. This is known by us when we wake up from dream. The tiger that pounced upon us in dream was not really outside us. It was a particular modification of our own mind which concocted a spatial and temporal difference between itself and the content called the tiger, or whatever it is, and the pleasures and pains were due to the space and time difference between the experiencing consciousness and the object. If the dream-space or dream-time were not to be there, we could have no pleasures and pains there. The cessation of pleasures and pains in waking, after the dream, is entirely due to the cessation of the space and time which operated in dream. When the dream-space-time has gone, the dream-objects also have gone. Earlier, we have noted that space-time and objects go together. We also observed the hint from the discoveries of modern physics wherein science has come to the conclusion that objects in the world are indistinguishable from what we call space and time. They are rather configurations of space-time themselves. There are no objects. There is only space-time.

By the dream analogy, we come to the awareness that objects may appear to be outside us and cause us pleasures and pains even though they are really not so. We may have a large fortune in dream and we may feel very happy. We may earn a million dollars in dream by lottery. We may fall from a tree in a dream and break our legs and feel pain. But what are these experiences? They are nothing but the effects of space and time in which we are involved. Our dream-consciousness has got involved in the notion of the difference between itself and the space-time in which it is perceiving the objects.

(To be continued)

MANY FACETS OF IDENTITY

(Swami Shivapremananda)

[Continued from the previous issue]

HUMAN NATURE

The need for truth shows some basic characteristics of human nature. Security is a primary need for survival. There is a built-in insecurity in our consciousness. Through self-effort, facing the cause of fear, and dealing with and overcoming it we gather self-confidence. God or rather the images of Him are a product of our insecurity.

Lacking in self-confidence we project into the unknown our need to be protected. Lacking fulfilment through human love due to our selfishness we seek peace and happiness by attempting to love an amorphous deity. The result is not reassuring.

The fact is, the more we are self-confident the less we need God to be protected, and the more we are altruistic the less we need Him to be fulfilled.

To deepen our consciousness the Kena Upanishad speaks of: the eyes seeing but not really seeing, the mind behind them seeing; the mind not really seeing but the *prana*, the vital energy, seeing; the *prana* not really seeing but the individual soul does; and ultimately it can do so only because of a universal source of all souls. By such backtracking it is, however, easy to get spaced out, and become feckless.

Individual consciousness interacts on various levels. The primal force is to exist. It

makes interaction with the energy fields around possible. Eternal in its longing, this principle of existence is called *sat*. It relates to the body, forming the first identity. The *I* becomes the body, immediately forming its instincts to survive.

After the instinct for survival emerges the instinct to be happy, to be fulfilled. It is called *ananda*. It interacts with its vehicle, the body, with the world around. Such an interaction forms the mind, *chitta*. The yogic definition of our nature *sat-chit-ananda* in reality follows the order of *sat*, *ananda* and *chit*. It sounds rather odd due to being brain-washed.

“I want to exist”, “I want to be happy”, these two longings make thinking possible. Thus, instead of *cogito ergo sum*: “I think, therefore I am”, it actually is: because I want to exist, therefore I think in what form should I exist.

It is only because the interaction of the *I* with the body, seeking pleasure, does not bring real happiness or fulfilment, that one seeks a deeper identity with the spiritual content of one’s being, the soul, and with that of a few others one can selflessly relate with. It is an emotional process starting with the interaction of the body chemistry.

(To be continued)

To define Brahman is to deny the essentiality of its all-inclusiveness. —Swami Krishnananda

SURRENDER AND ACTION

(Sri Swami Atmaswarupananda)

Although Gurudev felt that it was dangerous for seekers to change Gurus, he would always invite other teachers to the Ashram and encourage his devotees to be open to all teachings—to gain knowledge from wherever they could. Pujya Swami Chidanandaji would go even further. He has sent devotees to other Gurus and has occasionally even suggested that someone else would be more suitable for the devotee than himself.

Gurudev and Pujya Swamiji know that we are seldom totally satisfied with our Sadhana. Usually, the problem is our own impatience and misunderstanding, although occasionally a change is necessary. But the change should normally be in the practice that we are doing. Perhaps we have shut ourselves off from parts of Gurudev's teachings. Perhaps our understanding isn't broad or deep enough yet.

Most teachers say that the fundamental of the spiritual life is selfless service; we have to start breaking down our innate selfishness. But then, we also need to understand the spiritual life, understand where our bondage is, what our fundamental problems are. And so, whether it is listening to teachers or studying the scriptures, we must constantly be making an effort to deepen our understanding. But then, once again, no matter how much we deepen our understanding, someone like Pujya Swamiji will ask us, "But what about your life?" In other words, our concentration has to go right back to what we are actually doing in our day-to-day life. We thought that the doing of selfless service was not enough, so then we turned to study and understanding, but now we are told that the test

is what you are actually doing. It seems to be circular.

Finally, Lord Krishna tells us, that no one crosses this ocean of Samsara without taking refuge in Him. And in His final teaching in the Gita, He tells us to abandon all our ideas of right and wrong, of salvation and Sadhana, and simply take refuge in Him. But then, what does that mean? It means that we have no more personal ideas of what is right for us because this whole world, including ourselves, belongs to Lord Krishna. But when we have recognized that, what do we do? We learn more about the spiritual life, we do more selfless service, we do all our other practices but with a different *bhav*, with a clear foundational understanding that everything in this universe including ourselves and our effort belongs to the Lord.

We cannot stay in the emptiness of total surrender, total taking refuge. As Lord Krishna points out, by our very natures we must act. But we're not meant to act with a residual feeling that we are the doer. Rather we are meant to act from the underlying ground that all this is Brahman alone. We then act as we feel prompted to do—sometimes selfless service, sometimes worship, sometimes study, perhaps time for each one of them each day. But the taking refuge is underlying all our practices and actions.

It is a taking refuge where there is nothing left to give away because we have not only, in Gurudev's words, surrendered everything unto the Lord, but we have placed our ego at His feet—we have surrendered the surrenderer. And from that perspective we live our daily lives as prompted by That to whom we have taken refuge in.

Yoga for Health

KAPALABHATI

(Sri Swami Chidananda)

'Kapala' means skull and 'Bhati' means shine. This exercise cleanses the skull. Thus it becomes a purificatory exercise. The regular practice bestows a shining (skull) face to the practitioner. This prepares the student for the practice of Bhastrika Pranayama.

TECHNIQUE

Sit in any one of the sitting postures and keep the spine and neck erect. Exhale quickly through the nostrils with a slight movement of the lower abdomen. Concentrate on the tip of the nose. You should not contract the face muscles. Short inhalation should follow each exhalation. To start with, you can have a speed of one expulsion per second and you can practise one or two rounds, each round consisting of eight or ten

expulsions. Take rest with normal breaths after each round. When one is sufficiently advanced in the practice one can increase at the rate of ten expulsions for each round, per week, till one gets 120 expulsions in each round. Two or three rounds may be done in the morning and evening.

BENEFITS

This exercise cleanses the skull, the respiratory system and the nasal passages. It destroys diseases of the phlegm. It removes the spasm in the bronchial tubes. Consequently, asthma is relieved and cured also. The impurities of the blood are thrown out. Heart functions properly. The circulatory, respiratory and digestive systems are toned up to a considerable degree.

ANNOUNCEMENT

DIVINE LIFE SOCIETY, CHANDIGARH

1st ANIVERSARY OF THE SIVANANDA ASHRAM 7th & 8th MARCH 2009

The Divine Life Society, Chandigarh Branch, will be celebrating the Anniversary of Sivananda Ashram, at Chandigarh on 7th and 8th of March 2009. A zonal Spiritual Conference is proposed to be held on this occasion. Parama Pujya Sri Swami Vimalanandaji Maharaj, President of the Divine Life Society and other senior saints from Sivananda Ashram, Rishikesh will grace the occasion with their holy presence. All devotees are cordially invited to participate in the functions.

For enrolment and information please contact: Sri F. Lal Kansal, President, 09814015237, Dr. Ramneek Sharma, Secretary, 09814105154

Address: Sivananda Ashram, Divine Life Society Chandigarh Branch, Plot No. 2, Sector 29 A, Chandigarh-160 030, Phone: 0172-2639322.

—The Divine Life Society

BRAHMACHARYA AND URDHVARETA YOGI

(H.H. Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj)

WHO IS A BRAHMACHARI

A Brahmachari is one who is attempting to realise Brahman by conducting a life of absolute celibacy. Brahmacharya is the conduct of leading a celibate life. The Anugita says: "One who has passed beyond all disciplinary action and rests in Brahman and moves about in the world as Brahman himself is called a Brahmachari."

There are two types of Brahmacharins—the Naishthika, who is celibate all throughout his life, and Upakurvana, who will become a householder (Grihastha) after the completion of his religious study.

A true Brahmachari only can cultivate Bhakti. A true Brahmachari only can acquire Jnana. Without Brahmacharya no spiritual progress is possible. Therefore, I have given below some practical methods to get success in Brahmacharya.

Brahmacharya is absolute freedom from sexual desire and thoughts. A Brahmachari must be free from lustful looks always. Lord Jesus says: "If you have a lustful look, you have already committed adultery in your heart." A true Brahmachari will not feel any difference in touching a woman, a piece of paper, a log of wood, or a piece of stone.

AKHANDA BRAHMACHARI

An Akhanda Brahmachari who has not allowed even a drop of semen to come out for a period of twelve years will enter into Samadhi without any effort. Prana and mind are

under his perfect control. Bala-Brahmachari (Brahmachari from the very childhood) is a synonymous term for Akhanda Brahmachari. An Akhanda Brahmachari has strong Dharana Sakti (power of grasping), Smriti Sakti (retentive memory) and Vichara Sakti (power of enquiry). An Akhanda Brahmachari need not practise Manana (reflection) and Nididhyasana (meditation). His intellect is pure and his understanding is clear. Akhanda Brahmacharins are very, very rare. But there are some. You can also become an Akhanda Brahmachari, if you attempt it in the right manner with earnestness. Mere matted hair, application of ashes to the forehead and body cannot make one an Akhanda Brahmachari. That Brahmachari who has controlled the physical body and his physical Indriyas (organs) but who constantly dwells in sexual thoughts is a confirmed hypocrite. He should never be trusted. He will become a menace at any time. He cannot be called a Brahmachari.

If you can remain as an Akhanda Brahmachari for a period of twelve years, you will realise God immediately without any further Sadhana. You have already achieved the goal of life. Mark here the word "Akhanda" (unbroken).

Become a Naishthika (lifelong) Brahmachari. Naishthika Brahmachari is one who takes a vow to remain as a celibate throughout his life. He may at once take Sannyasa also without entering the householder's life.

Dear Shyama! You are Naishthika Brahmachari, one who has taken the vow of remaining as a celibate in thought, word and deed, throughout your life. Now even the sun will tremble before you, because he is afraid of being pierced by you through your power of Brahmacharya. You are the glorious Sun of suns now.

URDHVARETA YOGI

An Urdhvareta Yogi is one in whom the seminal energy flows upwards to the brain and is stored up as Ojas Sakti which is used for contemplative purposes in the practice of Dhyana. In an Urdhvareta Yogi the seminal energy is transmuted into spiritual energy (Ojas Sakti). The process of transmutation is termed sex-sublimation. An Urdhvareta Yogi will have no wet dreams. He not only converts the semen into Ojas, but checks through his Yogic power, through purity in thought, word and deed, the very formation of semen by the secretory cells of the testes or seeds. This is a great secret. Allopaths believe that even in an Urdhvareta Yogi, the formation of semen goes on incessantly and that the fluid is reabsorbed in the blood. This is a mistake. They do not understand the inner Yogic secrets and mysteries. They are in the dark. Their Drishti (vision) is concerned with the gross things of the universe. The Yogi penetrates into the subtle hidden nature of things through Yogic vision and Yogic Chakshus (inner vision of wisdom). The Yogi gets control over the astral nature of semen and thereby prevents the formation of the very fluid itself.

According to Yogic Science, semen (Sukram) exists in a subtle state throughout the body. It is withdrawn and elaborated into gross form in the sexual organs under the influence of the sexual will and sexual excitement. To be an Urdhvareta Yogi is not merely to prevent the emission of gross semen already formed but to prevent its formation as gross seed.

An Urdhvareta Yogi will realise Brahman quickly. Mere Sravana (hearing of scriptures) is quite sufficient for him to obtain Brahma Anubhava or Atma Sakshatkara (Self-realisation).

If the sexual energy is transmuted into Ojas (spiritual energy) by pure thought, it is called sex-sublimation in Western psychology. Just as a chemical substance is sublimated or purified by raising by heat into vapour which again becomes solid, so also the sexual energy is purified and changed into divine energy by spiritual Sadhana, by entertaining sublime, soul-elevating thoughts of Self or Atman. In Yoga one is called Urdhvareta Yogi in whom the seminal energy has flown upwards into the brain as Ojas Sakti.

Ojas is spiritual energy that is stored up in the brain. By sublime thoughts, meditation, Japa, worship, Asana and Pranayama practice, the sexual energy can be transmuted into Ojas Sakti and stored up in the brain. This energy can be utilised for divine contemplation and spiritual pursuits.

(To be continued)

Have friendliness with equals; compassion for those in sorrow; joy in the joy of others and superiors, and indifference and absence of ill-will and anger for the wicked men. You will be peaceful and happy.

—Swami Sivananda

Sivananda's Gospel of Divine Life

VEDAS—THE WISDOM-SOURCE

DAYANANDAJI'S TEACHINGS

An admirer of the Arya Samaj had arrived. He expressed his dislike of Karma Kanda, the path of action.

"Yes, there in the cities you have one type of Karma, here you have another type. There it is binding, here it is selfless and free, a type of Karma which liberates you from the thralldom of Maya. This is the Sannyas-Karma Kanda. The difference is one of outlook, but this is in fact an ocean of difference," said the Master.

"Swamiji," said the visitor, "I want some instructions on concentration."

"You do not believe in names and forms also? Concentration without names and forms is not easily possible for all. The mind wants something on which to hang. In the initial stages it cannot hang onto something abstract or on an idea. At least you should have the form of Om.

"This antagonism to names and forms is the creation of individuals who have not correctly understood Swami Dayanandaji's teachings. He himself did not condemn the singing of God's Name. He was in a high stage of evolution and concerned himself only with the fundamental Vedic truths. He did not categorically condemn name and form. He only omitted any mention of them. People should try to understand him in the proper light, instead of reading their own views into his sublime teachings.

"Read my book *Concentration and Meditation*. It will clear your doubts. It contains a solution to every problem that can possibly

confront an aspirant in his practice of concentration and meditation. When you have finished reading it, you will find that you have no more doubts. If you still have any, then come to me. I will explain the subject to you."

THE MASTER'S WIT

A visitor was greatly eulogising the Master's organisation of the Ashram.

"Swamiji, there should be more cottages and rooms for visitors."

"Yes, I also would like to construct many more rooms," came the Master's ready rejoinder, "but the money is in your pocket!"

THE MASTER'S HUMILITY

Sri Thakur Prasad and his family belonged to the orthodox type. The entire family wished to have the Master's Darshan before they took their meals. Sri Thakur made this request to the Master.

The Master had been busily engaged the whole morning and had gone to his cottage. But he suddenly remembered his promise and went at once to Sri Thakur Prasadji's cottage.

He found on arrival that Sri Thakur Prasadji had gone out. So he waited till the disciple returned. He did not consider his waiting a waste of time, nor feel it beneath his dignity. He utilised the period very usefully by making the children sing the Lord's Name and teaching them some Kirtan Dhwanis, following it up with a sweet discourse to these "little devotees".

Children's Page

KALPAVRIKSHA OF THE DEVOTEES

(Sri Swami Ramarajyam)

Dear children, whatever you ask of the Kalpavriksha (a legendary tree, which gives whatever is asked of it), you would get from it. The Kalpavriksha of the devotees is God Himself. He is ready to grant whatever favour you beg of Him. He is attentive to all your desires. Of course, He will not fulfil such desires as will ultimately be harmful to you and others. If the desires are harmless and your faith in Him is strong, God is sure to fulfil them.

I am going to narrate a true incident which tells how God helped a devotee to fulfil his desire.

Once there lived a Brahmin who had borrowed some money from a money-lender for the treatment of the members of his family. He had got a small job. By living a very frugal existence and saving more than half of his salary every month he would repay the loan in instalments. The money-lender was dishonest to the core. In his account-books he would enter the amount of money received from the Brahmin, not against his name but against the name of someone else. After a lapse of a few years he filed a suit against the Brahmin for the recovery of principal as well as interest. When the Brahmin received the summons, he was sitting in the temple of Bihariji (Lord Krishna). He was perplexed by the sight of the summons. He read the contents of the summons and told the messenger (who had served the summons on him) that according to his calculation he has paid the entire money back to the money-lender. The messenger said, "Who will give witness on your behalf?"

"Bihariji, of this very temple. He knows I have paid back my loan," he said.

The peon thought that Bihari was the name of some man. He said to the Munsif (a junior public officer with authority to decide cases in a law court), "Sir, the Brahmin seems to be an honest man. He has paid back his loan in the presence of a man of the name of Bihari, who lives in the temple of Bihariji. If you like, he may also be summoned to appear as a witness. That may help the Brahmin out."

A day before the case was to be heard in the court, the Brahmin, standing before the idol of Bihariji in the temple, said, "You know it very well that I have paid back each and every penny to the money-lender. Now only you can come to my help, I request you humbly to give evidence in the court to prove me innocent. In this way—and this is the only way—I shall be able to redeem myself."

The Brahmin spent the whole night in the temple weeping and persuading Bihariji to accede to his request.

The next day, some people, who had come to know from the Brahmin that Bihariji of the temple had been summoned to appear before the Munsif, also assembled in the court. The Brahmin was not worried at all. He was convinced that definitely his Bihariji would come to the court and give witness on his behalf.

During the hearing the peon called aloud, "Bihari, the witness, should present himself in the court."

None responded.

The peon repeated his call. Nobody responded. His name was called again. A response was heard, "I am present, sir."

The people witnessed that a man, who had covered himself from top to toe with a black shawl, came and stood in the witness box.

The witness uncovered his face a little. The Munsif caught a glimpse of his face. The pen fell off his hand. "Oh, how handsome! how attractive!" he said quietly. He tried to restrain himself and said, "What is your name?"

"Bihari," he replied.

"Do you know that the defendant Brahmin had taken loan from the plaintiff, the money-lender."

The witness said, "Yes, sir. And, I am going to state all the facts."

He mentioned the exact date and the amount that the Brahmin had paid to the money-lender on several occasions.

The plaintiff's lawyer said angrily, "Sir, is he a man or a library? How can one remember all these details?"

Bihari replied, "Sir, I remember all the details accurately. I always accompanied the Brahmin whenever he went to make the payment."

The Munsif said, "Are all the payments entered in the account-book of the plaintiff?"

He replied, "Yes, but they are entered against some other name."

The Munsif said, "Do you recognise the account-book?" He replied, "Yes, sir."

After the court rose on that day, the Munsif along with the clerk, the peon and the witness reached the house of the plaintiff.

Pointing to an almirah, the witness said, "Sir, the account-book used to be kept there."

The almirah was opened and the account-book was taken out. The clerk started checking the dates. All the details regarding the dates and the amounts were checked and found correct. He took some time in opening the page on which the last date was entered. Meanwhile, the witness Bihari disappeared.

The Munsif dismissed the case. The Brahmin was acquitted. That is how Bihariji (Lord Krishna) gave witness on behalf of the Brahmin and freed him from the trap of a false case.

Dear children, are you convinced now that God is truly the Kalpavriksha of devotees and provides everything to them. This Kalpavriksha is spread inside you, outside you, all around you. If you are a sincere devotee of God, you can see this Kalpavriksha.

And, how can you become a sincere devotee of God? You must repose strong faith in God, grow restless, like a fish out of water, for not having His vision, and weep and call Him again and again.

Do you know what happened to the Munsif after Bihari disappeared? The Munsif, like a crazy man, would ask everyone, "Do you know where Bihari is? Help me have his vision at least once." He would go to the temple every day and shed tears before the idol. People say that Bihariji once appeared before him in the same black shawl. God, the Kalpavriksha of the devotees, fulfilled the Munsif's wish too.

The lovers of God have no religion but God alone. —Swami Sivananda

AN IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT

This is to announce that H.H. Sri Swami Padmanabhanandaji Maharaj has been elected as the General Secretary and H.H. Sri Swami Advaitanandaji Maharaj as the Treasurer of the Divine Life Society in the Board of Trustees Meeting held on 04-01-2009.

Revered Sri Swami Padmanabhanandaji Maharaj sends his hearty Greetings in the name of Most Worshipful Gurudev and our Most Beloved H.H. Sri Swami Chidanandaji Maharaj to all the devotees and Members of the Divine Life Society on the occasion of New Year 2009. He also humbly prays for the Divine Blessings of Most Worshipful Gurudev Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj and the Supreme Being on all the Devotees and Members of The Divine Life Society for their excellent health, long life, peace, prosperity and success in all their noble undertakings and progress in their inner life of Spiritual Sadhana!

All letters, correspondences, etc., may be addressed to the “**General Secretary, The Divine Life Society, P.O. Shivanandanagar—249 192, Distt. Tehri-Garhwal, Uttarakhand, India.**” Donations in the form of Cheques/ Demand Drafts, etc, payable at any Scheduled Bank in Rishikesh may be drawn in favour of “**The Divine Life Society, Rishikesh**” and not in any individual name.

—THE DIVINE LIFE SOCIETY

Selflessness is a divine virtue. It is the mother of cosmic love, a friend of spiritual progress, a herald of saintliness and arch-enemy of egoism. It is the jewel of the aspirant. Harmlessness is the offspring of selflessness, because man does harm only due to selfishness.

—Swami Sivananda

**THE FOLLOWING DVDs OF MAHASAMADHI ARADHANA OF
WORSHIPFUL H.H. SRI SWAMI CHIDANANDAJI MAHARAJ
ARE AVAILABLE FOR SALE**

1. Sraddhanjali (Part—I) 50/-
2. Sraddhanjali (Part—II). 50/-
3. Bhandara and Ganga Arati 50/-
4. Prabhat Pheri and Paduka Puja 50/-

And

1. Vedic Sukta Chanting by
H.H. Sri Swami Krishnanandaji Maharaj (Audio CD) 55/-

THE SOURCE OF HAPPINESS

There is no happiness at all in any of the objects of the world. There is not an iota of happiness in objects, because they are insentient. Even the sensual pleasure is a reflection of the Atmic bliss only. It is sheer ignorance to think that we derive any pleasure from the sense-objects or from the mind.

When there is a desire in the mind, the mind is filled with Rajas. It is in an agitated condition. It is restless and unpeaceful. It will be restless till the desired object is attained. When the object is attained and enjoyed, when the desire is gratified, the mind moves towards the Inner Soul. It ceases functioning. It is filled with Sattva. All thoughts subside for a split second; the mind rests in the Soul within. The Soul's bliss is reflected in the intellect. But the ignorant man thinks that he is getting the happiness from the object; just as the dog which is biting a dry bone imagines that it is getting the pleasure from the bone, that the blood is oozing from the bone, whereas in reality, the blood comes from its own palate.

—Swami Sivananda

NEWS AND REPORTS

NEWS FROM THE HEADQUARTERS

SEVA THROUGH SIVANANDA HOME

Sivananda Home is an organ of the Divine Life Society Headquarters to humbly serve the needy and the poor people, those who require medical aid, but have no resources, no human help, no shelter, no attendant and those who are ostracized by society or are suffering from contagious diseases.

Winter has really set in this month, and is especially felt by those who stay on the streets, trying to find some protection against the cold fierce wind at night. One of the newly admitted patients this month was a gentleman, who was brought in from the Ashram Headquarters area, where he had been lying down in a filthy soiled corner, undernourished, dehydrated, and unaware that the body was soaked in its own excreta. He appeared to be in a semi-conscious state of mind, not adequately responding, as if life was passing on, without his being part of it. However, at food time, a complete different kind of person seemed to arise! Not only his own meal, but whatever he could catch, snatch and snare, whatever would be within his reach, he would not even chew, but just swallow and gulp it completely! What a thirst, what an immense hunger, a huge utterly deep pain! The physical hunger was already stilled, but the craving, the wound of intense loneliness, anger of being deprived of basic human needs, forlorn and forgotten, this wound was still gaping and itching. Babaji would continue his habit of not controlling his outflow mechanism, but slowly, under medical treatment, toilet training and social interaction with others, he improved step by step and a spark of new life could be seen in his ini-

tial expression-less face. His physical condition, too, strengthened day by day, though he was diagnosed as being HIV positive, for which, of course, in the Home the necessary precautions are taken as required.

For those once ostracized by society, a secure place is provided, a society in itself, where as it were new families are born, where one can find a former destitute grandmother feeding an orphan boy, a mentally challenged woman assisting in the preparation of rotis, or an inmate guiding a visually handicapped brother along the path. It is a place where amidst distress, pain and desperation, one can meet a ray of hope and joy in faces of those who once had lost all their earthly treasures and even their own dignity and self-esteem as a human being. Glory to Thy Holy Name, Divine Providence, Voice in the Desert, Eyes of the Sick, Smile of a Child, Universal Love, Supreme Indweller, One-for-all, One-in-all, All-in-One! Pray that we all be blessed with the awareness of His ever unconditionally loving Presence, even in a tattered hook or forlorn corner, anywhere, anytime, anyhow, anyway.

"O, Lord, You have searched me and known me. You know my sitting down and my rising up. You understand my thought afar off. You comprehend my path and my lying down and are acquainted with all my ways. For there is not a word on my tongue, but behold, O Lord, You know it altogether. You have hedged me behind and before, and led Your Hand upon me." (from: Psalm 139, Old Testament)

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

65TH ANNIVERSARY OF AKHANDA MAHAMANTRA SANKIRTAN YAJNA

The Headquarters of the Society celebrated the 65th Anniversary of the Akhanda Mahamantra Sankirtan on 3rd December, 2008. The Japa-yajna of this Mahamantra (Hare Rama Hare Rama, Rama Rama Hare Hare; Hare Krishna Hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna Hare Hare) is continuously carried on, round the clock, all the days of the year, by the inmates of the Ashram, guests and visitors who visit the Ashram right from 3rd December, 1943 onwards for the benefit of peace in the world.

A beautifully decorated palanquin, with the portraits of Sri Rama and Sri Krishna, was taken in procession, to the chanting of the

Mahamantra, which wended its way through the Samadhi Shrine, the Eye Hospital, the Annakshetra, Sri Gurudev's Kutir on the banks of the Ganga, and returned to Bhajan Hall after covering some distance on the main road. After Mangala Arati and distribution of sacred Prasad the morning programme concluded.

The night Satsanga was highlighted by the recitation, in chorus, of the Mantra in the gathering. The Samadhi Hall resounded with the power of the name and a spiritual thrill passed through everyone till the end of Satsanga. The entire programme came to a close after Arati and distribution of Prasad.

GITA JAYANTI CELEBRATION

The Srimad Bhagavad Gita, the Universal Gospel, was delivered by Lord Krishna in the battlefield of Kurukshetra on the 11th day (Ekadasi) of the bright half of the Margasirsha month according to the Hindu almanac. It is said that the war occurred 36 years before the commencement of the present Kali Yuga. The Gita is an epitome of the essentials of the whole Upanishadic teaching. It is a many-sided approach to the practical life of man, and its teaching leads to the realisation of all human aspirations. Lord Krishna was an integral person and hence His Gospel is also integral and to understand His Gospel is to adjust our personality to it—almost as Krishna we should become.

The Headquarters of the Divine Life Society "Sivanandashram" celebrated Gita Jayanti on 8th December, 2008. The day's programme commenced at Brahmamuhurta with Kirtan and Bhajan, peace chants for world peace and a period of meditation.

At 9 a.m. there was a special function during which the Eighteen Chapters of the Gita were read by all the residents Sannyasins and Sadhaks of the Ashram in the Samadhi Shrine. The portrait of Lord Krishna was beautifully decorated on an altar, with various flowers. Simultaneously, there was a special Bhagavad Gita Yajna (Havan) in the Viswanatha Mandir of the Ashram with the recitation of the verses of the Gita for the peace and welfare of the world. After Krishna-Ashtottara Archana (repetition of 108 names of the Lord) Mangala Arati was performed and the consecrated Prasad was distributed to all the devotees.

At night Satsanga Sri Harihar Singhji, one of the senior resident inmates of the Ashram spoke on Srimad Bhagavad Gita highlighting the teachings of the Bhagavad Gita. The night Satsanga concluded after prayer for the world peace, Arati and distribution of Prasad.

SACRED DATTATREYA JAYANTI

The holy Birth-Anniversary of Lord Dattatreya was observed in the Ashram on 12th December, 2008. The venue of the function was the Dattatreya Hill in the Ashram's premises where a hallowed small temple dedicated to Lord Dattatreya is existing since long.

The usual ritualistic worship was performed with Abhisheka, Archana and Arati. Sankirtan and Bhajans were sung by the assembled Ashram inmates, devotees and visitors. The programme concluded with distribution of Prasad as Vana Bhojana in the sylvan forest locality of the temple.

CULTURAL TOUR OF H.H. SRI SWAMI NIRLIPTANANDAJI MAHARAJ

During the month of December, 2008, H.H. Sri Swami Nirliptanandaji Maharaj, Vice-President, The Divine Life Society Headquarters, undertook a cultural tour in Orissa State.

Along with H.H. Sri Swami Vimalanandaji Maharaj, President, D.L.S. Headquarters, Swamiji visited D.L.S. Khurda Road Branch, Jatni, Orissa, on 16th December in connection with its Golden Jubilee Celebrations. The Branch was opened in 1959 and would complete 50 years in 2009. It is having its celebrations as Golden Jubilee Year which would conclude in January 2009. On that day the Branch had a function in which food and clothings were distributed to leprosy patients who are being served regularly through its Divya Jivan Arogya Kendra. There was also a Satsanga-cum-public meeting as part of its Golden Jubilee Celebration.

In the afternoon they visited Swami Sivananda Centenary Boys' High School at Khandagiri, Bhubaneswar, of which Swamiji Maharaj happens to be the President. Swamiji attended and presided over the meetings with the Managing Committee members and with the students and teachers which were organised in connection with the visit of H.H. Sri Swami Vimalanandaji Maharaj.

From 17th to 21st December, Swamiji attended the 3rd State Level Annual Sadhana Shibir under the Sadhana Ganga Programme organised at Chidananda Tapovan Shanti Ashram, Baliguali, Puri. About 3000 delegates and devotees including youth from various Branches of Orissa participated in the Sadhana Shibir. Swamiji presided over the Shibir, took part in various sessions of the Shibir, and gave discourses from morning till evening Satsanga. Besides giving talks during morning meditation session and evening Satsanga, Swamiji also spoke on all days on the "Yoga of Synthesis" of Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj. There was also a Youth Camp as part of the Shibir and Swamiji addressed the students on all the days in the afternoon in the programmes exclusively meant for them, besides answering all their questions. More specifically, Swamiji spoke on topics like "Success in Life and Divine Life", "Duty of the Youth Towards the Country, Society, Family and Self", "Good Conduct", etc. More than 500 Youth from all over Orissa had joined the Youth Camp. The State level Sadhana Shibir and the Youth Camp were a grand success in every respect. They were excellently organised and were of immense benefit and inspiration to the participants. Swamiji also met many devotees who sought interview with him during his stay there.

**CULTURAL TOUR OF SRI SWAMI YOGASWARUPANANDA,
HONY. TRUSTEE, VICE-PRESIDENT OF D.L.S. HEADQUARTERS**

In response to the kind invitation of D.L.S. Hong Kong Branch Yoga Centre to participate in their Annual Yoga Retreat from 9th to 21st November, 2008, Sri Swami Yogaswarupanandaji went to Hong Kong on 9th November, 2008. On 11th November there was a public talk. Swamiji spoke on "Karma Yoga in Our Daily Life". With the help of local devotees and DLS HK Branch Yoga Centre, Revered Swamiji gave a talk and conducted Hatha Yoga class in the Yoga promotion activities organised by Consulate General of India at Hong Kong at the premises of HONG KONG POLYTECHNIC UNIVERSITY. On 13th Swamiji accompanied by some Committee members visited Big Buddha at Po Lin Monastery in Lantau island. On 14th Swamiji issued certificates to Yoga Teachers who had undergone training to teach a set of Yogasanas and Pranayamas. The DLS Branch held its annual Yoga Seminar for three days in Cheung Chau island. The theme of the seminar was "Karma Yoga and the Purification of Our Mind". The morning session commenced with chantings and meditation followed by Yogasanas and Pranayama classes. Swamiji also gave a sequence of lectures followed by question/answer sessions. All the participants thanked Swamiji for sharing ancient wisdom of Yoga with simple analogies and stories. From 17th onwards Swamiji gave lectures at the Yoga centre on Life and Teachings of Swami Chidananda; Guru Bhakti and Karma Yoga. Swamiji taught the Branch members how to perform Paduka Puja so that they can continue to do it every month and on important occasions. Mr. Hariji helped Swamiji in translation and to organise programmes! Gita study group devotees of Chinmaya Mission organised morning talks in many devotees' houses during Swamiji's stay at Hong Kong.

Swamiji left Hong Kong on 21st November, spent two days at Singapore, attended Satsangs organised by Sri H.R. Bhounsleji and Sri R.K. Sulleryji, and returned to Headquarters on 24th November, 2008.

Sri Adi Shankara Ashrama, near Johannesburg, South Africa, founded by H.H. Sri Swami Shankaranandaji Maharaj had its Silver Jubilee celebrations from 1st December to 7th December, 2008. Sri Swami Shivashankaranandaji, present President of Sri Adi Shankara Ashrama invited Sri Swami Yogaswarupanandaji to participate in their functions. With the approval of Worshipful H.H. Sri Swami Chidanandaji Maharaj in the month of July, Swamiji agreed to go to South Africa for ten days programme. Swamiji attended morning and evening Satsangas and spoke about Japa Sadhana and Swadhyaya, etc., at Sri Adi Shankara Ashrama. On 3rd December there was a special Satsanga on the auspicious occasion of 7th Mahasamadhi Anniversary of Revered Sri Swami Shankaranandaji Maharaj. Seeing the presence of a Swami from Headquarters Ashram, Sivananda School of Yoga at Johannesburg organised a Satsanga on 4th December in which Swamiji spoke about "Meditation in Daily Life". The main function for Silver Jubilee was on 7th December, 2008. Swamiji spoke about the glory of ancient wisdom propagated by adorable Adi Shankaracharya, worshipful Gurudev Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj which Revered Sri Swami Shankaranandaji brought to the needy aspirants and citizens of South Africa. As per the request of Revered Sri Swami Shivashankaranandaji, Swamiji released a brochure commemorating the auspicious occasion of Silver Jubilee celebrations of Sri Adi Shankara Ashrama. The function was

well organised and attended by many devotees of South Africa.

In response to the kind invitation of Committee members of Divine Life Society of South Africa, Sivanandashram, Reservoir Hills, Durban, Swamiji attended worshipful Sri Swami Sahajanandaji's first Mahasamadhi Anniversary Day on 10th December, 2008. Swamiji spoke about the yeoman service rendered by Pujya Sri Swami Sahajanandaji Maharaj as Gurudev's Seva for the benefit of spiritual aspirants and also for the poor and needy citizens of South Africa. Rishikumar Dr. Vidyandaji introduced

Swamiji to the audience, and befitting the occasion they asked Sri Swami Yogaswarupanandaji to release two books: "Bhajans & Kirtans" and "Midnight Anecdotes" by Sri Swami Sahajanandaji Maharaj. Mr. C. Kuppusami, 95 years old, revered school teacher of Pujya Swami Sahajanandaji Maharaj also spoke on the occasion. The function was well attended by three thousand devotees from various D.L.S. Branches of South Africa. All the devotees felt immensely happy and appreciated the illuminating discourse given by a Swamiji from Headquarters Ashram.

CULTURAL TOUR OF H.H. SRI SWAMI PADMANABHANANDAJI MAHARAJ

The Director, Indira Gandhi National Forest Academy, P.O. New Forest, Dehradun, invited Sri Swami Padmanabhanandaji Maharaj to deliver a lecture on "Ethical Foundation and Spiritual Quotient" in the Forest Academy for the I.F.S. Probationers 2007-2009 batch. Accordingly Sri Swamiji visited the Academy on 27th November 2008 and delivered an interactive lecture. Besides the course participants the faculty members also attended the talk. Quoting from the ancient scriptures and the life and teaching of Worshipful Gurudev Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj, Sri Swamiji emphasised the need for ethical living to be successful in the professional career and to be happy. The lecture was received very well.

Sri Swamiji visited, along with Revered Sri Swami Dharmanishthanandaji Maharaj, the Divine Life Society Branches Chandigarh and Panchkula. The Chandigarh and Panchkula Branches jointly organised Satsangas at various places during the visit. On 6th December evening and 7th December morning home Satsangas were organised at Panchkula. The Chandigarh Branch also organised a Satsanga at the Sivananda Ashram (Branch Building) from 10.30 a.m. to

12.30 a.m. and it was followed by "Narayana Seva". Sri Swamiji also visited the Association for Social Health in India, Haryana Branch (Ashiana), Panchkula. Ashiana is running a school for the orphans besides various other social welfare activities. Sri Swamiji visited the school and had Satsanga with the children.

From 7.00 a.m. on 7th to 7.00 a.m. on 8th the Chandigarh Branch organised Akhanda Maha Mantra Kirtan for world peace at the Branch Building. Sri Swamiji participated in the Akhanda Kirtan and also in the Satsanga. The Branch also organised Gita Jayanti celebration from 5.00 p.m. to 8.30 p.m. with Parayana of Srimad Bhagavad Gita. Sri Swamiji participated in the Parayana and also spoke on the philosophy of Bhagavad Gita.

On 9th December Sri Swamiji visited Sri Swami Sivananda Community Centre at Kakkad Majra where local children are being trained in computer application free of charges. Sri Swamiji interacted with the students and had Satsanga. The visit and four days programmes at different places helped to bring the devotees together and to spread the message of Worshipful Gurudev.



IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT

As a need of the time and as required by the Government Agencies we are compelled to adopt certain measures in respect of receiving Guests and Visitors to Sivananda Ashram, The Divine Life Society Headquarters at Rishikesh.

Sivananda Ashram is basically a monastic set-up where inmates are Sanyasis, Brahmacharies and Sadhaks pursuing their spiritual practices. They do selfless service and try to maintain the serenity of the Ashram and a spiritually vibrant environment by their Sadhana and collective participation in day-to-day programmes.

Guests and visitors of the Ashram who stay for a few days are expected to spiritualize their days of stay by tuning themselves to the Ashram's atmosphere. Tourists, week-end holidayers and fun seekers are not expected to seek accommodation in the Ashram. They may stay elsewhere and visit the Ashram for prayer, Yoga and meditation, etc.

Guidelines to Guests and Visitors

1. Guests/visitors must write to the General Secretary by letter, E-mail, etc, seeking permission for accommodation, well in advance so that the permission reply letter can be sent. Request for accommodation should be in the following format:

- i. Name:
- ii. Gender and Age:
- iii. Nationality:
- iv. Full Residential Address:
- v. E-mail Address:
- vi. Telephone/Cell No. with Code:
- vii. Passport/Photo Id type and number * :
- viii. Reference of your known person in the Ashram:
- ix. Profession and Brief Spiritual Background:
- x. Are you Associated with Divine Life Society? & How?:
- xi. Purpose of Visit:
- xii. No. of Persons Accompanying (Indicate Name, Gender and Age of each):
- xiii. Date of Arrival:
- xiv. Date of Departure:

2. Request for accommodation over phone will not be accepted.

3. Guests and visitors are expected to co-operate and adjust with the available accommodation allotted by Reception Office.

4. Guests are expected to attend all the programmes of the Ashram during their stay, especially the Morning Prayer and Night Satsang.

5. Guests and visitors are expected to take care of their valuables and belongings. The Ashram Management will not be responsible for any loss.

* The passport or any photo Identity must be presented at our Reception desk on your arrival at Reception.

This is a requirement as per Govt. Rules.

6. Working hours of the Reception Office will be from 6:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m.. The Reception Office will remain closed from 10.00 p.m. to 6.00 a.m. Therefore guests and visitors are requested to plan their travel accordingly to reach the Ashram during the working hours.

7. Guests/visitors seeking accommodation in the Ashram without prior intimation and permission will not be entertained.

Information to The Divine Life Society Branches

Branches recommending guests and visitors to Sivananda Ashram, The Divine Life Society Headquarters, Rishikesh for accommodation are requested to comply with the above guidelines.

The Branches can always recommend the members/devotees to Headquarters for accommodation but they should ensure that the intimation is sent well in advance and confirmation obtained.

Members, devotees, guests and visitors approaching Headquarters for accommodation with recommendation letters from Branches without prior intimation and permission will not be entertained.

—The Divine Life Society

IN MEMORIAM

PATRICIA MARIE GIBBONS

We have received news from America that a long-time devotee of the Ashram, Mrs. Pat Gibbons of Schenectady, New York, passed away peacefully after a long illness on January 20, 2009, at the golden age of 85. Devotedly concerned with the welfare of underprivileged children, Pat was drawn to the field of social service and had a lifetime career as a social worker in New York State.

Pat was around 50 years old when we first met her. After listening to lectures on meditation and Vedanta at the local college, she began attending the monthly Yoga retreats organized by Swami Gurudevananda Mataji (Sita Frenkel) at the Divine Life Society branch in Harriman NY. She met H.H. Sri Swami Chidanandaji Maharaj in 1974 when he visited the Harriman Ashram. As she gazed at a picture of Gurudev Sri Swami Sivananda, it was brilliantly transformed into the likeness of Swami Chidanandaji. From then on, she knew who her Guru would be.

For the next 36 years, Pat devoted herself to the Divine Life Society of MD. She became very close to Swami Gurudevanandaji, travelling with her to India on several occasions. She also attended many European retreats and all of the American retreats where ever Sri Swami Chidanandaji Maharaj was invited. Her love for both these great teachers was expressed through her loyal presence, her service, her knowledge, her generosity and her gratitude. On many occasions the Divine Life Society MD could not have survived through financial struggles if it had not been for Pat's generosity.

In spite of some physical problems, Pat never complained. She courageously dealt quietly with uncomfortable conditions. She was a person of great integrity. She was blessed with a desire to know the Truth of existence and the experience of true freedom. She knew the purpose of life as experiencing the oneness of all creation. She accepted herself where she was and with steady vigilance raised her conscious awareness through meditation. Now Pat has been called back to the Source, back into the Light from whence she came. She is free from the limitations of an ageing and pain-filled body. She will be truly missed by many.

REPORTS FROM THE D.L.S. BRANCHES

SPECIAL ACTIVITIES

1. H.H. Sri Swami Chidanandaji Maharaj's Mahasamadhi

We have received a few more reports from our Branches about special activities on Swamiji's Mahasamadhi and Shodashi, and Guru-jayantis.

Chatrapur (Orissa): Mahamrityunjaya Mantra Japa on August 26 to 28. On the 28th a 12-hour Akhanda Japa commenced at 9 a.m., and on receiving the news of Swamiji's Mahasamadhi, a prayer meeting, 10-day programmes in the morning and evening sessions, Mantra Japa, Sri Sundarakanda Parayana; Svadhyaya of Srimad Bhagavad Gita and Srimad Bhagavatam XI Skanda; Nagar Kirtan on September 5 and 12; distribution of fruits, biscuits and Jnana Prasad to the patients on 7th and to school children from September 8 to 12; Jivadaya Yajna—feeding cows, animals, birds, insects; discourses by eminent persons. On Shodashi Day, Nagar Kirtan, Paduka Puja, feeding Brahmins and the poor with clothes as Dakshina.

Rangabeda (Orissa): Distributed sweets, fruits and Dakshina to students and teachers of a local school on 11th September and distributed Prasad in two schools on 12th.

Hong Kong (China): One hour Mahamrityunjaya Mantra Japa on 27th August (20 participants) and on 30th August (80 participants), and 4-hour Mantra Japa on 31st August (42 participants).

2. Guru Jayanti

Chatrapur: Sivananda Jayanti: Nagar Sankirtan; distribution of fruits and sweets to school pupils. Chidananda Jayanti: Prabhat Pheri, Paduka Puja, Parayana (reading) from Sri Ramayana, Bhagavad Gita Svadhyaya; distribution of fruits and Jnana Prasad to students, poor feeding, distribution of clothing to 21 needy persons, talk on Swamiji's life.

Rangabeda: Sivananda Jayanti: special Satsanga. Chidananda Jayanti: distribution of clothes and cash to 16 needy persons, Prasad Sevan by all the residents of the village.

3. Sadhana Shibir, Surendranagar

As a part of the Golden Jubilee programmes of the D.L.S. Surendranagar (Gujarat) Branch, it organised a 3-day spiritual retreat from November 7 to 9. H.H. Sri Swami Nirliptanandaji Maharaj, H.H. Sri Swami Padmanabhanandaji Maharaj, Revered Sri Swami Tyagavairagyanandaji Maharaj, Revered Sri Swami

Sivananda-Gurusevanadaji Maharaj, Revered Sri Ramrajyamji, Sri Swami Nirakaranandaji, Sri Swami Dharmanishthanandaji and Sri Swami Bhaktipriyanandaji Mataji gave discourses, and Sri Swami Bhaktibhavanandaji and Sri Brahmachari Atmanishthanandaji rendered devotional Bhajans. Revered Sri Swami Asutoshanandaji also graced the retreat. About 600 Sadhakas from Gujarat, Rajasthan, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Kerala and Delhi joined the retreat. 10 books were released and distributed free in a beautiful handbag.

All along the Golden Jubilee Year, the Branch has arranged to feed animals, birds and insects; and in the memory of H.H. Sri Swami Chidanandaji Maharaj, it has spread this activity by offering rotis for dogs, food grains and flour in neatly packed bags to all the participants. It also gave sanctified Padukas to the 20 Branches, along with big size pictures of Sri Krishna, Gurudev and Swamiji.

It had organised, on this occasion, two Yogasana Camps by Sri Swami Dharmanishthanandaji. It also organised a visit of H.H. Sri Swami Nirliptanandaji Maharaj and Revered Sri Swami Tyagavairagyanandaji to D.L.S. Branches of Dhrangadhra and at Wankaner (on its 53rd Foundation Day), and to Satsanga Kendra at village Kathada, and also at Botad where a new Satsanga Kendra was started. 47 devotees were given Mantra Diksha on 8th November.

4. Visits of Sannyasis from the Headquarters

Agra (U.P.): In the newly constructed Swami Sivananda Prarthana Bhavan building of the Branch, an Ayurvedic Dispensary was declared open by H.H. Sri Swami Padmanabhanandaji Maharaj. He gave a talk in a public Satsanga in which many devotees attended.

Chandigarh: Revered Sri Swami Ramarajyamji gave discourses from November 12 to 16.

Jaipur (Rajasthan): H.H. Sri Swami Vimalanandaji Maharaj, Swami Sevanandaji and Swami Yogavedantanandaji gave discourses from October 22 to 24, and Sri Swami Dharmanishthanandaji conducted a Yogasana Training Camp from October 19 to 25.

New Delhi, Swami Sivananda Cultural Association: H.H. Sri Swami Padmanabhanandaji Maharaj inaugurated the Golden Jubilee Programme of the Branch in Swami Sivananda Satsanga Bhavan and gave a talk on The Essence of the Upanishads on 27th July. Hon'ble Sri T.N. Chaturvedi former Governor of Karnataka State was the Chief Guest.

5. Foundation Day

Bhanjanagar (Orissa): The Branch organised Paduka Puja, Havan, discourses in two sessions on the Foundation Day of its 'Chidananda Cultural Centre' which was inaugurated by H.H. Sri Swami Chidanandaji Maharaj on 19th October 1981.

Nandini Nagar (Chhattisgarh): The Branch celebrated its Foundation Day on 23rd November in its Swami Sivananda Bhajan Mandir with Havan and spiritual programmes.

Patiala (Punjab): The Branch conducted Sri Sundarakanda Parayana and Narayana Seva on 23rd November, the Foundation Day.

6. Seasonal Festivals

(1) Navaratri and Vijaya Dasami

Ambala (Haryana): Collective Japa of Devi Mantra.

Bellary (Karnataka): Special programme on Vijaya Dasami.

Bhanjanagar: Discourses on Devi Bhagavat in the evening and on Viveka-Chudamani in the morning.

Bikaner (Rajasthan): Recitation of Sri Durga Saptashati, Sri Lalita-sahasranama and Sri Ramacharit-manas; special Puja, Akhanda Deepa, Kanya Puja and distribution of sweets, clothing and utensils; Prasad.

Ghatpadmur (Chhattisgarh): Akhanda Deepa, daily Puja, daily Parayana of Sri Durga Saptashati and Sri Ramacharit-manas, Havan, Japa, Sankirtan, Kanya Puja.

Gumergunda (Chhattisgarh): Akhanda Deepa, Sri Durga Saptashati Parayana, 12-hour Akhanda Sankirtan, Kanya Puja.

Jaipur: Daily Puja, Havan, Arati and Prasad.

Nandininagar (Chhattisgarh): Daily Satsanga Bhajan-kirtan.

Nimapara (Orissa): On Sri Durga Ashtami: early morning session, Yogasana, Paduka Puja, Devi Puja with one lakh Archana with Devi Mantra, evening Satsanga.

Raipur (Chhattisgarh): Special Puja, Havan, Bhajan-Kirtan.

Visakhapatanam: Daily 6-hour programmes in two sessions—Puja, recitation, Parayana of Sri Devi Bhagavatam.

2. Dipavali and Kartika Month

Ambala: Special Satsanga and Deepa decoration.

Badakuanl (Orissa): Daily early morning session and Svadhyaya throughout this holy month.

Bellary: Special Puja.

Bikaner: Puja, Archana with 108 names, recitation of Devi hymns.

Chatrapur: Sri Ramacharita-manas month-long Parayana.

Gandhinagar (Gujarat): Distribution of sweets and biscuits to the poor on Dipavali. A special Satsanga on Purnima.

Ghatpadamur: Deepa decoration, special Puja on Dipavali, 2-hour Akhanda Kirtan, special Puja on Ekadasi. One hour Akhanda Kirtan on Purnima.

Gumergunda: Dipavali: Deepa (lamp) decoration, special Puja. Purnima: 6-hour Akhanda Kirtan, special Puja, Havan, Bhandara (free food to all).

Jaipur: Month-long Katha.

Raipur (Chhattisgarh): Akhanda Jyoti, daily Puja.

Sunabeda (Orissa): Puja, recitation, Arati.

7. Other Special Activities

Bargarh (Orissa): Study class and Yogasana class at Sivananda Yoga Vidyalaya. Study of Bhagavad Gita on Sundays. Spiritual talk by Revered Sri Swami Sivachidanandaji on 17th October.

Jaipur: Sri Ramayana Katha and Assembly of saints from October 18 to 25. A talk on Ekadasi and also on 17th October. Bhajan-kirtan on Maharas Purnima.

Kothavalasa (A.P.): Adhyatmika Mahasabha on 21st September—600 participants. Revered Swami Ramayogiji released a book.

New Delhi, Swami Sivananda Cultural Association: Srimad Bhagavata Katha from July 28 to August 3. Revered Sri Swami Sivachidanandaji attended the entire Katha.

Salipur: Srimad Bhagavata Jayanti—A spiritual talk, Yoga Training Camp in a local college on 30th September—50 trainees. Yeoman service to flood affected people: saving many lives by reaching them in tree-trunk rafts and even through swimming, supplying food packets, water, and daily needs for a week. Yoga Training Camp on 18th November—256 trainees. H.H. Sri Swami Krishnanandaji Maharaj's Punyatithi—Paduka Puja in the morning, 3-hour Akhanda Kirtan in the afternoon, and a special Satsanga in the evening.

South Balanda (Orissa): Srimad Bhagavata Saptah—Katha and Parayana—from November 7 to 13.

IN MEMORIAM

Srimathi Beena Ben

We received information from Ahmedabad that a devotee of the Ashram, Srimathi Beena Ben, passed away on 14th December 2008 morning at 3.30 a.m. after a protracted terminal illness of cancer. She is the wife of Sri Shreya Pandya who, under the inspiration of his father, Sri Vishnu Pandya, has rendered inestimable service to Gurudev's Ashram in 1980s and 1990s by printing every year two books and a lot of other material freely as their loving service to the Ashram through their printing press,

Sahithya Mudranalaya, which was at that time the biggest private press in the whole of Gujarat State. In the late 1980, our Most Worshipful Sri Swami Chidanandaji Maharaj inaugurated their four-colour offset machine and on another occasion inaugurated their new house. We join in the bereavement of the family and fervently pray to the Almighty Lord and Sadgurudev to bestow on the departed soul Satgati and the Peace of the Eternal Soul. Hari Om Tat Sat.

Applicable in India only

MEMBERSHIP FEE AND BRANCH AFFILIATION FEE OF THE DIVINE LIFE SOCIETY HEADQUARTERS SHIVANANDANAGAR 249 192, UTTARAKHAND

1. New Membership Fee	Rs	150/-
Admission Fee	Rs.	50/-
Membership Fee	Rs.	100/-
2. Membership Renewal Fee (Yearly)	Rs.	100/-
3. Life Membership Fee	Rs.	3000/-
4. Patronship Fee	Rs.	10,000/-
5. New Branch Opening Fee**	Rs.	1000/-
Admission Fee	Rs.	500/-
Affiliation Fee	Rs.	500/-
6. Branch Affiliation (Renewal) Fee (Yearly)	Rs.	500/-

** Prior written permission has to be obtained from the Headquarters for opening a New Branch.

⇒ Kindly send Membership Fee and Branch Affiliation Fee by I.P.O. or by DD payable at any Bank in Rishikesh.

⇒ Regarding Membership Enrolment, Magazine Despatch and matters related to D.L.S. Branch please contact Magazine/Branch Department, Phone: 0135-2442340