

SIVARATRI MAHIMA

(H.H. Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj)

[Scene: Madura temple—In front of the Sundareswar shrine. On the left side of Nandi, many pious people listening to the reading of the Sivaratri Mahatmya by a Sastri]

Sastri: I shall tell you the Puranic account of the origin of Sivaratri. Once upon a time there was in Varanasi a hunter called Suswara. He used to hunt birds and beasts in a forest. One day he went in pursuit of a deer and by the time he shot it, it became dark. He could not return home. He tied the birds and beasts in a bundle and climbed a Bilva tree. He kept awake throughout the night lest he should fall down. He had nothing else to do and so went on plucking Bilva leaves and dropping them down. He was also thinking of his wife and children and when he remembered that they would be starving, he shed tears. The tears and the Bilva leaves fell on the Siva Linga which was at the bottom of the tree. In the morning he came down, saw the Linga, prostrated before it and went home. Just as he was about to eat the deer he had killed the previous night, a stranger came and begged for food. He gave him the food and ate the remainder. Years afterwards when he died, Siva's messengers came and took him to Siva's world. When he was re-born, he took birth as king Chitrabhanu of the Iskwaku dynasty.

Now gentlemen; this hunter was an ignorant man. Yet because he did all this on the 13th lunar day in the dark fortnight of Kumbha, the day when Siva confers His

Grace on all who fast and keep awake in the night, he was able to get the Punya needed to be born as a king. That day is now celebrated as the Maha Sivaratri.

Atmanathan: (a young graduate, rises up and says) This is a stupid story. I cannot understand why such meaningless things are written in the Puranas.

Mahadeva Sastri: (a friend of Atmanathan) Keep quiet my friend. We shall go out now and I will give you the real meaning of the story.

Atmanathan: All right. Come along,
(Both Atmanathan and Mahadeva Sastri go out to another part of the temple.)

Mahadeva Sastri: My friend! You ought not to disturb others. There are many pious people there who gain great satisfaction from our Sastri's narration. If you want further light, you must think about the inner meaning of these accounts. You should not be hasty.

Atmanathan: Well, well, have you anything to tell me about the story?

Mahadeva Sastri: Yes. Listen carefully. Now answer my question. Who is a hunter?

Atmanathan: A hunter is one who chases and kills wild animals in the jungle.

Sastri: True! The story is an allegory.

The wild animals are *kama*, *krodha*, *lobha*, *moha*, *mada*, *matsarya*. The jungle is the mind. The mind is fourfold: *manas*, *chittam*, *buddhi* and *ahamkara*. It is in the *manas* that the wild animals, I have spoken of, roam about freely. They must be killed. Our hunter was pursuing them because he was a Yogi. If you want to be a real Yogi, you must conquer these tendencies. Do you remember the name of the hunter in the story?

Atmanathan: Yes, he was called "Suswara".

Sastri: It means "melodious". This hunter had a pleasant, melodious voice. If a person practises Yama and Niyama and is ever conquering his evil propensities, he will develop certain external marks of a Yogi. The first stage in the development is lightness of the body, health and steadiness, a clear countenance and a pleasant voice. This stage has been spoken of in the Swetasvatara Upanishad. Go home and read the 13th sloka of the 2nd Chapter of that Upanishad to verify what I say. Now, let us resume. The hunter or the Yogi had for many days practised Yoga and had reached the first stage. So, he is given the name Suswara. Do you remember where he was born?

Atmanathan: Yes, his birthplace is mentioned as Varanasi.

Sastri: The Yogis call the Ajna Chakra by the name of Varanasi. That is midway between the eye-brows. It is regarded as the meeting place of the three nadi—*sushumna*, *ida* and *pingala*. An aspirant is instructed to concentrate at that place. That helps him to get over his desires and evil qualities like

anger and so on. It is there that he will get a vision of his *atma jyotis*.

Atmanathan: But how do you explain his getting up the Bilva tree and other details?

Sastri: Have you seen the Bilva leaf?

Atmanathan: Yes. It has three leaves on one stem.

Sastri: True. The tree is *Merudandam* or the vertebral column. The leaves are threefold. They represent the *ida*, *pingala* and *sushumna nadis*, the regions for the activity of the forces of the sun, moon and *agni*, the three eyes of Siva. The "climbing of the tree" means making the Kundalini ascend from the *muladhara* to *ajna*. That is the work of the Yogi.

Atmanathan: I have heard of Kundalini and the Chakras. Proceed further, please.

Sastri: Good. He was in the *jagrat* state when he began his Yogic meditation. He bundled up the birds and beasts he had slain and tying them to a branch of the tree, rested on it. That means, he had suppressed his thoughts and rendered them inactive. Yama, Niyama, Pratyahara, etc. had been gone through. He was in Dhyana and Dharana. He was feeling sleepy. In other words, there was a danger of his losing consciousness in *sushupti*. So he determined to keep awake.

Atmanathan: That is all right; but why did he weep for his wife and children?

Sastri: His wife and children are the world. One who seeks the grace of God must become an embodiment of love. He must have an all-embracing sympathy. His shedding tears are symbolical of his universal love. In Yoga also, one cannot have illumination without Divine Grace. Without

practising universal love, one cannot get that Grace. One must perceive one's own Atma everywhere. The preliminary stage is to identify one's individual mind with the minds of all created beings. That is fellow-feeling or sympathy. Then one must rise above the limitations of the mind and merge it in the Atman. That happens in the stage of Samadhi and not earlier.

Atmanathan: Why did he pluck and drop Bilva leaves?

Sastri: That is mentioned in the story only to show that he had no extraneous thought. He was not even conscious of what he was doing. All his activity was confined to the three *nadis*. The leaves, I said before, represent the nadi—*ida*, *pingala* and *sushumna*. He was in fact in the second state, *i.e.* the dream state, before he passed into *sushupti* stage.

Atmanathan: He kept vigil the whole night, it is said,

Sastri: That means that he passed through the *sushupti avasta* successfully. The dawning of the day is the entrance into the fourth state of *turiya*.

Atmanathan: It is said he came down and saw the Linga. What does that mean?

Sastri: That means that in the *turiya* state, he saw the Siva Linga or the mark of Siva in the form of *jyotis*, *i.e.* he had the vision of the Lord. That was an indication that he would realise the *salokya* of Siva in course of time.

Atmanathan: So, the sight of the *jyotis* is not the final stage, it appears.

Sastri: Oh no. That is only one step, though a difficult step, to be reached. Now,

think of the story. He goes home and feeds a stranger.

Atmanathan: Yes, I remember, what may that mean?

Sastri: A stranger is one whom you have not seen before. That stranger was no other than the hunter himself transformed into a new person,

Atmanathan: How can that be? The story says that the hunter gave the stranger food and ate the remainder.

Sastri: Yes. The food is the *raga-dwesa* which he had killed the previous night. But he did not consume the whole of it. A little still remained. That was the reason why he had to be born again as King Chitrabhanu. Now have you understood?

Atmanathan: Thanks. But I have one doubt.

Sastri: What is it?

Atmanathan: The story says that he went to Siva's world. If one goes there, will he still have to return to the earth as our hunter did?

Sastri: Going to the world of Siva is not enough. That is only *salokya*. There are other stages, *viz.*, *samipya*, *sarupya* and at last *sayujya*. Have you not heard of Jaya and Vijaya coming back from Vaikuntha, even after having attained *saropya* with Vishnu?

Atmanathan: Yes. They were Hiranyaksha and Ravana. Now I have understood everything. How fine would it be, if such meanings were given whenever the Puranas are read.

Sastri: One should not give truths to those who do not seek for them. "Knock and it shall be opened unto you" said Jesus!

(Letter of Swami Chidananda dated 1st April,

THE BIRTHDAY OF LORD RAMA GLORY TO HIS NAME

Immortal Atma Swaroopa!
 Blessed seekers after Truth!

Om Namō Narayanaya.

Om Sri Ram Jaya Ram Jaya Jaya Ram! I wish you all a very, very happy and auspicious NEW YEAR. Upon this eve of the commencement of the first month of *Chaitra*, at the advent of spring when you are about to celebrate the festival of *Yugadhi*, I send you joyous greetings for this New Year and my love and good wishes for your health, happiness, prosperity, all-round progress and success. May God grant you all that is auspicious and blessed throughout this New Year.

One of the wonderful facts about our Vedic New Year is that it opens with a most auspicious holy day of festive worship. The month of *Chaitra* ushers in the Sri Ramanavami, which is the sacred Birthday of Lord Rama, the grand *avatara* who personified *dharma* in all its aspects and perfection. The advent of this *avatara* heralded the resurgence of *dharma* and the establishment of the rule of righteousness and the moral order. Even as the divine Sri Krishna is the beloved and darling of India, so, too is Lord Sri Rama the ideal and hero of India. His *avatara* leela is the thrilling indication of the sublime heights to which the human individual can attain and should strive to attain. As a divine *avatara*, He constituted

an approach to God-realisation, which is the goal of your life. Devout worship of Rama leads to God-consciousness. He is a link and a channel between you and the transcendental absolute reality. The Lord of Kosala, the crest-jewel of the Royal race of Raghu, is the incarnated personification of the Supreme Divinity, the Paramatman or the Para-Brahman of the Upanishads. Rama Bhakti is an unfailing way to eternal emancipation from the thralldom of birth and death. His Divine Name "RAMA" is the ark which takes us safely across the turbulent ocean of *samsara* to the far shore of immortality and beatitude. This Divine Name is verily the inexhaustible mine of all auspiciousness, the destroyer of the impurity of this iron age, the holiest of holy things, the saviour of this world. It is a seed of supreme satisfaction and veritable bestower of all boons. It is a gateway to the kingdom of blessedness. The glory of Ram Nam verily beggars description. Its greatness is unfathomable. Human speech and intellect ever fail to assess its supreme unparalleled worth. Ram Nam is the most precious, priceless jewel in the treasury of our holy land's spiritual culture. I boldly assert that it is this great Ram Nam that is sustaining Bharatavarsha today.

O beloved children of India! Come, come adopt the Ram Nam way of life.

Saturate yourself with Ram Nam. Bathe in the divine nectar that ceaselessly showers from Ram Nam. Ram Nam is the quintessence of Divine Grace. Ram Nam is your greatest benefactor, dearest friend and unfailing companion. Chant Ram. Sing Ram. Let the tongue repeat Ram Nam in an unbroken and continuous stream. Root yourself in Ram Nam. Enshrine Ram Nam in your heart and mind. Let Ram Nam resound from every cell and pore of your body. Let Ram Bhakti radiate from your entire being. Ram Ram Ram ! Om Sri Ram Jaya Ram Jaya Jaya Ram! Make your life thrill with Ram Nam. Let your heart throb with Ram Nam. Let your breath flow with the rhythm of Ram Nam. Let blood course through your entire being in unison and tune with Ram Nam. Make your life a veritable joyous song of Ram Nam. Supreme blessedness shall accrue unto you. Freedom, fearlessness and joy will fill the entire being. In this age, there is no greater or more effective and unfailing method of God-attainment than the practice of the wondrous Divine Name. The Name of God is verily God Himself. Supreme Divinity is present here for you, as God's Name. Name and God are not two. They are one and the same. Name is God!

What shall any one say about the power, the greatness and the glory of the Divine Name of Rama! The Divine Name will bring you face to face with God. It will grant you *mukti* here and now. It will burn up all impurities. It subdues the turbulent senses. The power of the Divine Name calms the surging passions. It restrains the outgoing tendency of the mind and subdues its

restlessness. The scattered mind now becomes indrawn and one-pointed. Ram Nam tames the arrogant ego and renders it *sattvic* and holy. Purifying the heart, the Divine Name creates devotion and arouses divine *bhav* within your heart. It drives the mind inward and leads to a state of meditation. Repeated persistent *japa* of the Divine Name rends the veil of ignorance and brings on the resplendent experience of God-vision.

Have faith. Be simple and pure. Tread the path of truthfulness. Become selfless. Serve all. Develop noble character. Give up anger, hatred and selfishness. Overcome greed by generosity and sympathy. Overcome hatred by love and forgiveness. Overcome all restlessness through sincere belief and firm faith. Become rooted in Ram and Ram Nam. O seeker! Know that this entire world is verily the manifestation of Ram and His divine power and glory. Now sing with saint Tulsidas:

*Siya Rama Maya Saba Jaga Jaani
Karahun Pranama Jori Juga Pani*

That is, "Knowing that the entire world is permeated by Lord Rama and His power, I salute (everything) with both hands folded together". Whatever you see, hear, touch, taste and smell, all is indeed the manifestation of Rama alone. Recognise all sounds to be Ram Nam in infinite variation. Ram Nam is the quintessence of the Divine Grace of the Supreme. Beloved and Worshipful Gurudev Sivananda Swamiji Maharaj mentioned Namopathy as the unfailing divine medical treatment for the

eradication of the dire disease of *ajnana* and *samsara*. This is the literal truth. Believe and be blessed.

Blessed *sadhaks*, come now, let us meditate upon Sri Ram. Set aside everything. Become silent. Sit on the asana. Close your eyes. Behold Sri Rama with the inner eye standing before you, radiant and gracious. He pours his love, compassion and Divine Grace upon you now. Visualise Him vividly in the heart-shrine. Bask in the radiance of His spiritual presence. Repeat Ram Nam. Cast away all other thoughts and repeat Ram Nam. Forget the world and body, think Ram and Ram alone. Repeat Ram Nam in continuous, unbroken Japa and remembrance. Dwell in Ram and repeat:

**RAM RAM RAM RAM RAM RAM RAM RAM
RAM RAM RAM RAM RAM RAM RAM RAM**

(Ten times)

I leave you now silently and joyously in the glorious presence of Rama. May you be absorbed in Ram. May Ram Nam, Ram Prem and Ram Bhajan enrich your life. Om Sri Ram Jaya Ram Jaya Jaya Ram! Glory be to Lord Rama! Glory be to Ram Nam! May God bless you.

With regards, Prem and Pranams,

Yours in Lord Ram

Swami Bhidanda
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WHY LORD RAMA BEHAVED LIKE A MAN

Some people say: "Sri Rama is only an ordinary man. He is not an Incarnation of God. He wept bitterly when He lost His wife. His bewailings rent the clouds when Lakshmana fell down on the ground in an unconscious state, being struck with the arrow of Indrajit. Why did Rama, the Supreme Being, forget His real divine nature? He was sunk in the ocean of sorrow at the ordeal of Sita. If Rama always knew His true Self, why did He grieve for the loss of Sita?"

The answer to this question is that verily Rama was the Supreme Self. He never moved or did anything. He was never subject to joy or sorrow, birth or death, pleasure or pain. Through His life, Sri Rama behaved like an ordinary man only. He had to do that, because Ravana had a boon that he could not be killed by Devas, Asuras, Rakshasas, Yakshas, serpents, bears, etc. He belittled the strength of man in his pride. Ravana could only be killed by a man. So Sri Rama had to show that He was an ordinary man only. Otherwise, He would be disqualified for destroying Ravana, if He exhibited Himself to be a God, according to the boon of Brahma.

—Swami Sivananda

SIVARATRI MESSAGE

(Sri Swami Krishnananda)

[Continued from the previous issue]

From this point of view of the psychological background of the religious requirements of man, the concept of the trinity has been highlighted in our religion as an object of worship. When we are able to visualise these divinities as three phases of a single entity, the gods of religion become one God. But if we see something taking place as birth and coming into existence, surviving for a time, and then dying some time afterwards—if these three are visualised by us as three different occurrences, and not actually three streams of a single undercurrent of performance—then we have three gods: Brahma, Vishnu and Siva, and we attribute to these gods those characters which are associated with their functions.

In religion, Lord Siva is pictured in manifold ways. On the one hand, Lord Siva is adored as a most easily accessible God—one who is immediately pleased—on account of which, Lord Siva is called Ashutosh. The goodness of Lord Siva and the quickness of his benedictions oftentimes make religious propounders imagine that he grants things without thought, and so he is also called Bhole Baba—one who can be easily duped by devotees. But, Lord Siva is not so easily duped. The Bhole Baba attribute should not be taken as being childish in behaviour or ignorant of the pros and cons of action, as that is not the meaning of Bhole Baba. It means utter simplicity. Utter goodness goes with utter simplicity.

Stories in the Puranas that bring forward into highlight this particular character of Lord Siva as goodness, simplicity, and being quickly pleased are abundant. Most of these stories are in the Siva Purana, and some of them seem very humorous and make us laugh. But, at whom are we laughing? Are we laughing at Lord Siva himself? It looks that way. When certain behaviours which are incongruous in the ordinary sense are attributed to Lord Siva, we smile and laugh in a gentlemanly manner, imagining thereby that we would not behave in that way. We attribute a sense of wisdom to our own selves which cannot be granted to Lord Siva. These stories are analogies, and analogies and examples should not be stretched to the breaking point. Every example has a specific limitation, and should be taken as valid within that limitation only.

For instance, in Vedanta terminology this world is compared to a snake appearing in the rope which is Brahman. This is an analogy; it has a limited scope, and it should not be stretched beyond that limited scope of meaning. The idea is that as in twilight the illusion of a snake-like feature can be seen while it is actually a rope, this world looks like a diversified multifarious reservoir of objects of sense while it is actually eternal consciousness scintillating in the form of these so-called objects. It does not mean that Brahman is long like a rope or has a tail like a

snake. That is not a permissible way of using the analogy.

Immensely good is God. Sometimes this immense goodness of God may look like breaking the law that He Himself has created. Many times it is said that God made the law, and He cannot break the law which He Himself has made. Karma binds, and so on and so forth, is told to us. But there is some super-departmental executive power which God has that cannot be bound by departmental laws, which of course are created by His own sanction—under His signature, perhaps. Under special conditions, He can suddenly set at naught everything. Normally He does not interfere in things, and the law of the universe works. Karma operates as it ought to operate. But it does not operate in the case of certain specific aspirations emanating from exceptionally great devotees whose hearts have been united in such intimacy with God's existence that the intimacy breaks the distinction between the devotee and the Supreme Being. When this distinction is no more to be seen, all legal enactments cease to operate. When intense love pours itself forth, legal mandates cease to operate. But, intense love is not seen in this world. Therefore, laws very strictly bind us.

Intense love is a love that seeks nothing in return for the expression of that love. A give-and-take policy in love—if you do this, I

do this; if you do not do this, I do not do this—is called Gauna Bhakti, the secondary devotion that ritualistic devotees entertain in their hearts, and the long train of law operates in their case. But unconditional affection—which is not seen and cannot be seen in this world because of the very nature of the world, and therefore transcends the world in many ways—makes God run to the devotee without sending any attendants, messengers, clerks, etc., to ask what the devotee wants.

Narayana Himself ran without even taking weapons in his hand when Gajendra cried, "Narayana, akhila guro bhagavan namaste!" It appears that when Birbal told this story to Akbar, Akbar ridiculed this god who himself runs for the sake of saving a devotee when he has immense powers in the form of angels and lesser gods. He has an army of divine forces; one of them could have gone and taken care of this tragedy of Gajendra. Why should he himself run—that also, without weapon in hand? Narayana forgot to take even the Sudarshana Chakra; it had to follow him because it knew that he had forgotten to take it. When Akbar made this sarcastic remark, Birbal said, "No! It is not like that. God himself will run. I shall show you how it is possible, and how it is not otherwise."

(To be continued)

The experience of the Eternal and the destruction of the ego are simultaneous events. The diverse world cannot, therefore, be said to be a necessary "means" in the individual's struggle for Self-realization. If the world is a means, the world is also the end, and we "reach" nothing "through" the world. A perishable means cannot lead to an eternal end. Knowledge, which is not of the world, is eternal, and it is this that is the means and the end, too.

—Swami Krishnananda

THE NATURAL WAY

(Sri Swami Atmaswarupananda)

One time when J. Krishnamurthi was giving a talk, someone in the audience spoke up: "Please, show It to us." He replied, "That's what I'm trying so hard to do." This seems to be a frustration of all great teachers. What they are teaching is so obvious to them, so simple, but they are unable to make us see it. The fault, no doubt, is ours, not theirs.

What is our fundamental error? We want what we are seeking to be an object to us, so that we can possess it, or we have achieved it. Even if we have in mind some sort of a union, we think that it will be a union that we appreciate, we know, we enjoy. We can't conceive of a union where we disappear, but we are still there. Therefore, frustrated, we keep on seeking, or frustrated, we simply give up the seeking.

But, of course, that is not the answer. Our teachers are talking about something that is very real to them, but because it is real to them, does that mean that it is an object to them or some bliss-filled state? In actual fact, neither seems to be true. Then, what are they pointing to?

Pujya Swami Chidanandaji kept repeating to us, "You are Divine." The *mahavaykya* declares to us, "That thou art." Ramana Maharshi used to say, "You are all realized." When his listeners would object, he

would answer, "That's your problem. You don't believe it."

Perhaps that too is our problem. We just don't believe it. Why? Because, we're looking for something tangible. Even if that experience is the most subtle experience, we want something tangible. But if it is an experience, there is something greater that knows that experience, no matter how subtle it is, no matter how unified it is.

Can we, therefore, be simple enough, childlike enough, to simply believe our teachers, believe the scriptures, and not look for any tangible proof? Can we believe our late revered Vedanta teacher, Swami Brahmanandaji, when he used to say, "Your problem is that you can't believe that this world, just as it is, is God"?

Perhaps, therefore, what we need is faith in the scriptures, faith in our gurus, and faith in ourselves. We need to simply believe the truth that One alone is without a second, and that we are That. If we do, we will feel compelled to express that oneness in our daily life. In a most natural way we will express Gurudev's instruction to all of us to Be good, Do good. Whatever else God wants to reveal to us, He will do so in His own good time.

HATHA YOGIC METHODS

(H.H. Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj)

[Continued from the previous issue]

HINTS ON PRANAYAMA PRACTICE

Do not take bath immediately after Pranayama practice. Rest for half an hour. Have one sitting only in the morning during summer. If there is heat in the brain or head, apply cooling oil or butter before you take a bath.

Always inhale and exhale very slowly. Do not make any sound during inhalation. In Bhastrika, do not produce any violent sound. Breathe only through the nose. A neophyte should do Puraka and Rechaka only, without any Kumbhaka, for some days.

You must so nicely adjust the Puraka, Kumbhaka and Rechaka that you do not experience a feeling of suffocation or discomfort at any stage of Pranayama. You must not unnecessarily prolong the period of exhalation. If you prolong the time of Rechaka, the following inhalation will be done in a hurried manner and the rhythm will be broken.

Gradually increase the period of Kumbhaka. Do Kumbhaka for 4 seconds in the first week, for 8 seconds in the second week, for 12 seconds in the third week and so on till you are able to retain the breath as long as you can.

Repeat Om, Gayatri or any other Mantra mentally during the practice. Have the

Bhava, feeling, that the Daivi-Sampat such as mercy, forgiveness, love and so on enter your system during inhalation and that all Asuric Sampat or devilish qualities such as lust, anger, greed and jealousy are thrown out during exhalation. When you inhale, feel that you draw energy from the divine source, cosmic Prana, and that your whole body from top to toe is saturated with abundant, fresh energy. Stop the practice when you are seriously ailing.

OTHER METHODS

Satsanga, dietetic regulations, Mitahara, Sattvic food, fasting, changing the Drishti and other items mentioned before are common to all the students of Hatha Yoga, Bhakti Yoga, Raja Yoga and Jnana Yoga. Some of the important exercises of Hatha Yoga that help you in keeping up Brahmacharya have already been described.

By the practice of the Navavidha Bhakti (nine methods of devotion) viz., (1) Sravana (hearing of the Lilas of God and study of scriptures), (2) Kirtana (singing His Name or glories), (3) Smarana (constant remembrance of God or the repetition of His Name), (4) Padasevana (worshipping His Lotus Feet), (5) Archana (offering), (6) Vandana (prostrations to the Deity),

(7) Dasyam (service unto the Lord), (8) Sakhyam (friendly attitude) and (9) Atma-Nivedana (total surrender), a Bhakta destroys his impure mind and fixes it on Saguna Brahman (Brahman with attributes). By observing Vrata Anushthana (vows), prayers, Manasic Puja (mental worship), Satsanga, etc., a Bhakta becomes free from Kama (desire), Krodha (anger) and other impurities and attains the immortal abode of everlasting peace, bliss and knowledge.

By the practice of Yama, Niyama, Asana, Pranayama and Pratyahara, a Raja Yogi conquers lust, and advances in the Yogic ladder. Yama and Niyama are intended for ethical purity. They are the practice of Ahimsa (non-injuring in thought, word and deed), Satyam (speaking truth), Asteya (non-stealing), Brahmacharya (celibacy), Aparigraha (non-covetousness), Saucha (internal and external purity), Santosha (contentment), Tapas (austerity), Svadhyaya (study of scriptures) and Isvara-pranidhana (surrendering the fruits of actions to God). Pratyahara is the abstraction of the Indriyas (senses) from the sensual objects. The Indriyas are disconnected from the mind. If the mind is withdrawn again and again from the objects and fixed on the Lakshya (object

of meditation), Pratyahara will come by itself. This is immensely helpful in keeping up Brahmacharya. By the method of Chitta-Vritti-Nirodha (control of all mental modifications), the students reach the thoughtless state. They do not allow any thought to emanate from the mind.

A Jnana Yogi becomes pure by the practice of Vairagya (indifference to sensual enjoyments), Viveka (discrimination between the real and unreal, permanent and impermanent), Shama (tranquillity of mind), Dama (restraint of Indriyas), Titiksha (power of endurance such as heat and cold), Samadhana (balanced state of mind), Uparati (renunciation), Sraddha (faith in the words of Guru and scriptures), Mumukshutva (keen longing for liberation from the wheel of births and deaths), Sravana, Manana and Nididhysana. By the repetition of Om (Pranava Japa) and meditation on the sexless pure Atman, evil thoughts will not enter the mind. All Vasanas will perish. The student keeps his mind fully engaged in Vichara.

If you can render your will pure, strong and irresistible by eliminating desires, by eradicating Raga-Dvesha, by reducing your wants and by practising Titiksha, passion will die. Will is a powerful enemy of passion.

Being all-pervading, God is present everywhere. Even so, being beyond time, He is now, here. Not even for a split second in the life of a jivatma in this samsara, not even for a split second in the life of any one of us, is He ever absent. It is an impossibility. All other things may be possible, but that God is absent in the life of man is an absolute impossibility.

—*Swami Chidananda*

Yoga in Daily Life

RAJA YOGA

(H.H. Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj)

[Continued from the previous issue]

SIDDHIS

A powerful occultist hypnotises the whole audience collectively through his power of concentration and will, and performs the rope trick. He throws a red rope in the air, gives the suggestion to the onlookers that he will climb in the air through this rope and disappears from the platform, in the twinkling of an eye. But, when a photograph is taken, nothing is recorded.

Yogins of olden times like Sri Jnana Dev, Bhartrihari, Patanjali Maharshi used to send and receive messages to and from distant persons through mind-telepathy and thought transference. Telepathy was the first wireless telegraph and telephone service in the world. Even now there are Yogis who are versed in telepathy. Thought travels with tremendous velocity through space. Thought moves. Thought is as much a solid matter as a piece of stone is. It can hit a man against whom it is directed.

Understand and realise the powers of the mind. Unfold the hidden powers or occult faculties. Close the eyes. Concentrate. Explore the higher regions of the mind. You can see distant objects, hear distant voices, send messages to distant parts, heal persons who are at a distance, and move about to a distant place in the twinkling of an eye. Believe in the power of the mind. If you have interest, attention, will-power, faith, you are bound to succeed. The source for the mind is Atman or the Highest Self. This mind is born

of Atman through His Maya or Illusory Power. Cosmic mind is universal mind. Cosmic mind is the sum total of all individual minds. Cosmic mind is Hiranyagarbha or Ishvara or Karya Brahman. Man's mind is just a fragment of the universal mind. A Raja Yogi becomes one with the cosmic mind and knows the workings of all minds. The Yogi gets omniscience through the cosmic mind. The Yogi experiences cosmic consciousness through the cosmic mind.

Tap the universal mind. You will get higher, super- sensuous knowledge. You will experience cosmic consciousness. You will get knowledge of the past, present and future. You will acquire knowledge of the Tanmatras (root elements) and mental plane. You will experience clairvoyance and clairaudience. You can know what is going on in the minds of others. You will get Divine Aisvarya or Vibhuti of God. There are scientific means to tap this universal mind. Purity, concentration, dispassion, right living, right thinking, right conduct, right action, devotion, moderation in eating and sleeping, purity in food, truthfulness, non-injury, austerities, have to be regularly practised for a protracted time.

Look at the marvels of mind! One is struck with awe and wonder when he witnesses a hypnotised person in trance and hears his narratives. The hypnotised person narrates very lucidly the life history and incidents of a person whom he has not seen in his life.

A maid servant (Jew) who was attending on a Hebrew priest used to hear the Hebrew verses during her service. She suddenly developed a double-personality when she was sick in the hospital and repeated Hebrew verses. She did not know the Hebrew language. All the Samskaras (of hearing from the priest) were in the subconscious mind, and she repeated the verses. No Samskaras are lost. They are indelibly recorded in the gramophonic machine of Chitta.

A priest used to forget his old personality and assume a new personality, a new name, a new avocation for six months. When he developed a double-personality he could leave his old house, entirely forget all about his old life and would return to his native place after six months and would entirely forget all about the second personality he assumed for six months.

(To be Continued)

Children's Page

THE SHOWER OF LOVE

(Sri Swami Ramarajyam)

A farmer sold his field. The farmer who bought this field ploughed it. While ploughing it, he stumbled over a small bag full of gold coins, encased in a box. He said to himself, "This treasure does not belong to me so I must return it to the original owner of the land."

When the previous owner of the land came to know about the intention of the new owner, he said, "Why should I take this treasure? I have sold the field. What right do I have now on the field or the treasure dug out from this field? You have bought the field and found the treasure. Naturally and rightfully you are the owner of this treasure."

The new owner was not ready to change his mind. He said, "It would have been a different matter if I had been the original owner of this field or if I had buried the treasure therein or even if I had known the one who had buried it. Since the field did not belong to me earlier, I have no right over this treasure nor have I anything to do with it."

The argument went on for quite some time. Neither of the farmers were prepared to relent. Gradually a large number of people

gathered there. A saint was passing by. The people called him to intervene. On listening to their arguments, he looked at both of them for a little while, then told the crowd with folded hands. "Be happy, the *satyayug** has arrived. My intervention is unnecessary. God is abiding in the hearts of both of these farmers. When God abides in the hearts, one's own rights are forgotten and others' rights begin to outweigh them. Such hearts—the holy abode of God—brim over with love. Watch this quarrel of love, a quarrel for bestowing the rights on each other. Blessed are those who are involved in this quarrel. And you twin noble souls! Keep showering your love on others, keep bestowing your rights on others."

Dear children, you should also shower your love on others. Whatever belongs to you by right belongs to others too. When this thought is uppermost in your mind and you translate it into practice, then you shower your love on others. This will put an end to all greed and attachment. People will remember their own duties and forget other's duties; will forget their own rights and remember other people's rights.

* * *

*A particular era (period of time) characterised by goodness and nobility

Sivananda's Gospel of Divine

LIVE DIVINELY

CONQUEST OF THE MIND

"I practise concentration but I do not get one-pointedness of the mind," complained a visitor.

The Master advised him, "You can develop concentration through more practice and dispassion. Go to bed at 9 p.m., and get up early. After a bath do a little Japa and meditation. Have another sitting again before you go to bed at night. Reduce worldly dealings. Reduce gossip. Reduce the reading of newspapers. Read less novels. Much time is wasted through gossip, newspapers and novels."

The visitor said, "The mind is not steady even for two minutes. It wanders to numberless places."

"It is the nature of the mind to wander," said the Master, and it is your duty to draw it back and fix it on your Deity. Study the *Gita*. Follow the instructions contained in it. Reduce your desires and cravings.

"Practise the repetition of the Divine Name. Repeat, 'Ram, Ram' always. If you cannot meditate, practise Japa and Kirtan. First of all you must have aspiration. If you want to become a *B.Sc.*, you first aspire to become that. Even so, first you should have aspiration for liberation. This keen desire for God is called Mumukshutwa. Then you must have the firm conviction that there is a higher life, that there is one Atma, one God, whose nature is peace and bliss. Aspiration, faith, surrender, mental renunciation—all these should be developed little by little. One cannot become an *M.Sc.*, in a day. First he has to complete the matriculation, then the *B.Sc.*, and finally the *M.Sc.* Similarly, you must progress gradually.

"You should have a programme for your daily spiritual practices. You should study two or three verses of the *Gita* daily. Then the mind will be filled with purity and divine thoughts. You should have Satsanga also."

GITA TEACHINGS

"Swamiji, by the study of the *Gita* can I get peace?" asked a lady visitor.

The Master answered, "You must practise the teachings of the *Gita*. Convert everything into Yoga. The Lord has said in the *Gita*: 'Whatever you do, eat, offer in sacrifice or give, whatever austerities you practice, offer it to Me, O son of Kunti!' So whatever you do—even having your bath or going to the cinema—dedicate it to the Lord."

"How to perform work, dedicating everything to God?" the visitor questioned again.

"Repeat, 'I am Thine, all is Thine, Thy Will be done'. You will get more peace, more strength. Feel the Presence of God. God dwells in your heart. The eyes, nose, ears—all these are His instruments. Everything belongs to God. Through His energy alone you are enabled to see. Seeing, hearing, smelling—all these are due to His energy. Who gives strength to the eyes to see, to the nose to smell, and to the hands to work? It is He only. Through ignorance you feel that you are doing everything. You should feel that He alone does everything. Then work will not bind you in any way."

EXPANDING THE HEART

The Master continued, "By repeating the Lord's Name, by doing Kirtan, you gain strength, the mind is changed, and Rajas and Tamas are destroyed. You gain more purity and discrimination. You have to cultivate many virtues, like humility, tolerance, courage and Ahimsa. You have to watch your mind and control your anger. Energy is wasted through anger. Why should you get angry with others? All are one. One life vibrates in all. Through ignorance you think that he is Sri Gupta, he is Sri Bannerji. All are one. Love all.

"Share with others whatever you have. Do not close the door and eat alone. By sharing your

heart expands. People generally keep the best things for themselves, those of medium quality for friends and relatives, and the worst is reserved for servants. Stale fruit is given to servants. You should give the best things to your servants. You should speak kindly to them. Then your heart will expand. It is not very easy to expand the heart. It has become as hard as concrete. It must melt like butter whenever you see a suffering man at your doorstep. You should hasten to give him milk. This is compassion. This is real Advaita. Therefore, develop kindness, mercy and love. Love unites, love cements."

Concluding his instructions, the Master said, "Next time come and stay here. During your holidays come here."

All the visitors were very happy for having received so many valuable instructions, and with their hearts filled with joy they bowed to the Master and departed.

FIGHT IS GROWTH

While the Master was sitting in the verandah outside his room one evening, some inmates of the Ashram took the opportunity of getting their doubts cleared.

The secretary, Vishnu Swamiji, put a problem to the Master.

"Swamiji, if there is something wrong in the Ashram, should we inform Swamiji and correct it or should we simply ignore it? If we correct it we often wound the feelings of the wrong-doer."

The Master advised, "Try to improve it by intelligent and kind means."

"But that method is not always practicable," replied Vishnu Swamiji.

"In an Ashram of three hundred people there is always bound to be some kind of trouble, some fight," observed the Master. "Fight is growth! But you should be tactful and kind. If in spite of this the feelings of others are hurt, then pray for them."

ON VIOLENCE

Sri K.N. Reddy asked, "Can we use violent methods to fight for justice?"

"Never!" answered the Master.

"Sometimes violence is necessary. Non-violence is not possible everywhere. Is it true?" Vishnu Swamiji queried.

To this the Master replied, "Sannyasins should never use any kind of violence. Householders, in order to protect themselves, may resist. They may defend themselves. But Sannyasins, on the other hand, should never resort to violence, because they are not the body. During the Viraja Homa ceremony the body is burnt."

POWER OF LOVE

Sri bhupendranath placed a problem before the Master.

"According to the *Gita*, one should do one's duties. But in so doing, one may have to fight with one's relatives or friends to attain one's ends."

"Do not fight. If you fight you will not gain anything. Love. Through love alone will you get everything. Love is the highest power on earth. It is the love of the devotees that makes the non-dual, attributeless Brahman assume a form and come into the world. One genuine tear of a devotee brings God to the earth. The tears should come from the heart and not from the lachrymal gland."

Someone then remarked, "Sometimes one sacrifices too much for love and then finds he has lost everything. Due to Gandhiji's non-violence many people suffered."

The Master replied, "There is no real love in the world; it is all selfish love. Due to Gandhiji's non-violence you have freedom now."

BEAR ALL SOUNDS

While the Master was conversing with the aspirants, a propaganda van fitted with loud-speakers was heard approaching, making much sound. One of the inmates was about to hurry out and request the propagandists not to make much noise near the Master's quarters.

The Master halted the aspirant, saying, "Why should we stop them? They may be selling cigarettes. Let them sell. Why stop them? The world-show should go on. We should withdraw within and as far as possible bear all sounds."

NEWS AND REPORTS

NEWS FROM THE HEADQUARTERS

SEVA THROUGH SIVANANDA HOME

By the profound Blessings of Sri Gurudev and the immanent Grace of Sri Swamiji Maharaj, the Divine Life Society Headquarters continues rendering its humble service through Sivananda Home, situated in Tapovan near Laxman Jhula. It provides medical facilities for homeless people who have become ill and are in need of in-patient treatment.

Though all the beds are usually occupied, there is at the same time a dynamic turn, in-patients getting discharged after treatment, and new patients being admitted.

One of the new patients this month was a Babaji with a severe infected diabetic foot. Since he was not aware of having Diabetes, he was never treated as such and had a sugar level in his blood of more than five times the normal value. By Gurudev's Grace, both his sugar level as well as his infection are slowly getting stabilised, since his medical treatment and diet have started.

One of the other newly inmates is a

female patient. Without a single cloth on her weary old aged body, she was just lying at the side of the road opposite the sacred Ashram, amidst a group of male wanderers. Since months she had been ill, not able to digest any food, continuous vomiting, diarrhoea and her whole body was swollen up, so much so, that she could not walk at all. After a proper check-up she was found to suffer from enteric fever, dehydration, scabies, worms in the intestinal tract and having an Hb of only 3.9. Immediate treatment and blood transfusions showed a miraculous relief and she is walking, talking, singing and always in a happy and peaceful frame of mind. *Jai Gurudev!*

Praise and glory be to the Almighty, who keeps His Hand always upon us, His little children, and never leaves us out of His sight. May all of us be blessed with His remembrance, feeling His Presence always and never give in to despondency, loneliness or fear. *Om Sri Ram Jai Ram Jai Jai Ram.*

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

MAHASIVARATRI CELEBRATIONS AT THE HEADQUARTERS ASHRAM

This whole life in this world is 'Ratri' or night for you. Observe vigil during this 'night' of the world, and spend this night in the worship of Siva, who is Brahman.

(Sadgurudev Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj)

The blessed occasion of Mahasivaratri was celebrated with due sacredness and great spiritual éclat at the Headquarters Ashram on 2nd March, 2011. As a part of the celebration, the chanting of Panchakshari Mantra 'Om Namah Sivaya' was done daily for two hours from 26th February to 1st March.

The Mahasivaratri day's programme commenced at 5 a.m. with prayers and meditation followed by *prabhat pheri*. A Havan for peace and welfare of the world was also performed at the *Yajnashala*. There was an *akhanda* chanting of Panchakshari Mantra from 7 a.m. to 5 p.m. by the sadhaks, devotees and visitors of the Ashram at the sacred temple of Lord Vishwanatha. The

temple was splendidly adorned and decked with variety of beautiful flowers, bouquets and colourful lights for this auspicious occasion. At 7.30 p.m., the Mahasivaratri Puja commenced; four grand worships in four *praharas* were offered to the Lord Vishwanatha to the chanting of *Namakam* and *Chamakam*. All the sannyasins, brahmacharins, sadhaks and visitors of the Ashram participated individually in the *abhisheka* and *archana*. Kirtans of the hallowed names of the Lord Siva and soul-stirring hymns extolling His glories were sung throughout the night which filled the hearts of the devotees with indescribable peace and bliss. The celebration concluded at 4 a.m. with *mangala arti* and distribution of sacred *prasad* at Annapurna Dining Hall.

May the Lord Siva and Sadgurudev bless us all to make our lives a continuous Vrata, an unbroken worship, a ceaseless Sivaratri.

INAUGURAL FUNCTION OF THE SIXTY-SEVENTH BASIC YOGA-VEDANTA COURSE (MARCH – APRIL 2011)

The Sixty-Seventh Basic Yoga-Vedanta Course of the Yoga-Vedanta Forest Academy was inaugurated on 1st March, 2011 at YVFA Lecture Hall. Thirty four students from eleven states of India and two from South Africa joined the Gurukula of Sivananda Ashram to be blessed with the Divine Knowledge.

H.H. Sri Swami Vimalanandaji Maharaj, President, DLS Headquarters and H.H. Sri Swami Nirliptanandaji Maharaj, Vice-President, DLS Headquarters graced

the Inaugural Function by their august presence. The function commenced with the Puja at the holy temples of Mother Durga and Dattatreya Bhagavan. After the chanting of Jaya Ganesh Prayer and Guru Stotra, Sri Swami Yogavedantanandaji Maharaj, Registrar of the Academy extended a hearty welcome to all those present. H.H. Sri Swami Vimalanandaji Maharaj lighted the Deepa (lamp) as an auspicious token of the commencement of the Course. Sri Swami

Yogavedantanandaji Maharaj, then introduced the students to the gathering.

Thereafter, H.H. Sri Swami Nirliptanandaji Maharaj gave an elaborate description of the Yoga Vedanta Course emphasizing its distinctiveness from the formal education in colleges and its usefulness in leading a purposeful and happy life. H.H. Sri Swami Vimalanandaji Maharaji, in his inaugural address, reminisced some inspiring incidents associated with Sadgurudev Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj and Worshipful Sri Swami Chidanandaji Maharaj and in his sheer humility, accredited all his knowledge to them. Sri Swamiji

Maharaj wished all the students success in life and invoked the blessings of Sadgurudev upon all.

Sri Swami Yogavedantanandaji Maharaj presented vote of thanks and advised the students to lead a disciplined life during their two-month stay in the Ashram and utilize their spare time fruitfully by doing Japa, Swadhyaya and selfless service. The function concluded with the worship of Mother Saraswati and distribution of *prasad*.

May the Lord Almighty and Sadgurudev Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj shower abundant blessings upon all.

**THE DIVINE LIFE SOCIETY
SPIRITUAL CONFERENCE—JALANDHAR**

By the grace of Most Worshipful Gurudev Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj, a Zonal Conference of Divine Life Society (North Zone) and 92nd Birth Anniversary celebration of H.H. Sri Swami Premanandaji Maharaj will be held on 5th to 7th May, 2011 at Om Premanand Mandir, Jalandhar, Punjab.

The Conference will be blessed by senior monks from DLS (H.Qrs.). All Devotees are cordially invited to participate in the programme aimed at dissemination of spiritual knowledge and world peace.

For Enrolment and other information please contact:

1. Sri Virender Partap (Vir Jee)-09888997192
2. Sri R.K. Chopra-09878803601, 0181-2254322

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

H.H. SRI SWAMI VIMALANANDAJI MAHARAJ, THE PRESIDENT OF THE DIVINE LIFE SOCIETY VISITS CHANDIGARH

At the kind invitation of the Secretary and the President of the Chandigarh Divine Life Society branch, Sri Swami Vimalanandaji Maharaj along with Sri Swami Ramrajyamji, Sri Swami Dharmanishthanandaji, Sri Swami Vaikunthanandaji, Sri Swami Bhaktibhavanandaji and Sri Gopiji participated in the three day Sadhana Shivar and Annual Day celebration on 6th, 7th and 8th March, 2011.

The Programme commenced each day with morning prayers and meditation. The first day Sri F. Lal Kansal, the President of the branch welcomed everyone and gave brief introduction of all the participants. All the Swamis who accompanied the President Maharaj spoke on all the three days. Revered Sri Swami Tyagavairagyanandaji Maharaj who came all the way from Bhavnagar, Gujarat gave discourse on all the three days on different topics.

On the 7th March in the afternoon session revered Sri Swami Brahmeshanandaji Maharaj of Sri Ramakrishna Mission, Chandigarh, spoke on "Synthesis of Yoga". Sri A.P.N. Pankaj ji a learned scholar and also a seeker gave a thrilling talk which was appreciated by everyone.

The three day Sadhana Shivar was concluded on the 8th of March with the sacred Paduka Puja, followed by Ashirvachan of all revered Swamis and vote of thanks by Dr. Ramneek Sharma, the Secretary of the Divine Life Society, Chandigarh branch which was followed by Sadhu Bhojan.

May the benedictions of Sat Gurudev Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj ever be upon all those who tirelessly worked for the success of this function.

SANNYASA DIKSHA AT SIVANANDA ASHRAM

(The Divine Life Society Headquarters)

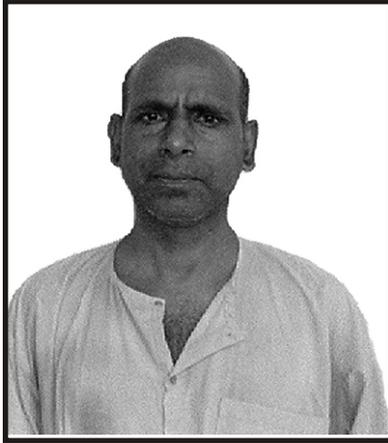
On the Holy Sivaratri Day, Wednesday, 2nd March, 2011, H.H. Sri Swami Vimalanandaji Maharaj, President, DLS Headquarters, ordained Sannyasa Diksha, in the spiritual presence of Worshipful Gurudev Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj and Worshipful H.H. Sri Swami Chidanandaji Maharaj at Gurudev's Kutir on the sacred bank of Mother Ganga, at Sivananda Ashram, Shivanandanagar.

The following are the resident Sadhaks initiated into the Holy Sannyasa Order of Dasanami Parampara.

<u>Purvashram Name</u>	<u>Sannyasa Name</u>
1. Sri S. Nagaraja Rao	Swami Shankarananda Saraswati
2. Sri Pawan Kohli	Swami Prasantananda Saraswati
3. Sri Rajinder Bhardwaj	Swami Akhilananda Saraswati
4. Smt. Sudha Bhardwaj	Swami Shivashritananda Saraswati
5. Ms. Purnamasi Mohapatra	Swami Tattvanishthananda Saraswati

—THE DIVINE LIFE SOCIETY

IN MEMORIAM



We regretfully inform our readers that a long standing resident of our Ashram, Swami Gurucharananandaji, attained the feet of Worshipful Gurudev on Tuesday, the 15th March, at 23.10 hours, in the Nirmal Hospital in Rishikesh town where he was admitted for some complications in his health condition a day earlier. Thereafter, past midnight, the body was brought to the Ashram and laid in state in the Ashram's hospital wing till the morning.

As the preparations for the funeral were under way, keeping in view his special interest in the chanting of Rudram and Chamakam in which he always joined with amazing regularity during various worships in Viswanath Mandir and Samadhi Mandir, Revered Swami Padmanabhanandaji Maharaj and other Swamis in the full presence of Revered Swami Vimalanandaji Maharaj recited those Veda Mantras near the body before it was taken in procession to the Ashram's ghats at about 10 a.m. There, the officials and the residents of the Ashram gathered in large numbers and gave him a fitting final farewell with all honours by meticulously observing all the customary rites and procedures before consigning the body to the holy Mother Ganga.

During the night Satsang, Revered Swami Vimalanandaji Maharaj and Revered Swami Padmanabhanandaji Maharaj paid glowing tributes to the departed soul. They movingly related the various aspects of his life and personality and highlighted at length his outstanding contribution and Seva to the Ashram.

His father was a naturopathy doctor and he shifted his family from Gudivada, Krishna District to Dowalaiswaram, East Godavari District, Andhara Pradesh, where he started Shri Pottisiramulu Prakriti Chikitsalaya Clinic. Swami Gurucharananandaji born in this pious family as the fourth son.

He studied in the Polytechnic Institute in Tanuku town under the lecturer Sri N.S.V. Rao who was himself a great devotee of our Ashram and with whose introduction he joined Sivananda Ashram in 1967.

Perhaps, he was a rare exception in having served in most of the departments of the Ashram credibly. Being a stickler to perfection, he did anything with an element of that quality which was naturally ingrained in him. He served in the hospital, in the office, in the kitchen, in the cash office, in the marketing, in the Printing Press, to name a few. He attended many national level and state level Divine Life Society Conferences. But his forte was in composing, editing and reading of proofs in the Press which work he did quite creditably and delightedly. He was lovingly called 'Brahmaji' by everyone in the Ashram.

May his soul rest in the Peace of the Eternal.

—THE DIVINE LIFE SOCIETY

REPORTS FROM THE D.L.S. BRANCHES

Ahiwara (Chhattisgarh): During the month of February 2011, the Branch conducted daily Satsanga and Puja and Mahamrityunjaya Mantra Japa on Ekadasis.

Ambala (Haryana): The Branch held the weekly Satsanga with half-an-hour collective Japa of Mahamrityunjaya Mantra on Sundays, Sri Hanuman hymns and Bhajans on Tuesdays and video Satsanga on 13th February. On the occasion of the Golden Jubilee of marriage ceremony of Dr. O.P. Sharmaji, the President of the Branch, a special ceremony—Puja, Bhandara, felicitation etc. was held in the Headquarters' Sivananda Ashram—57 relatives also participated. Homoeopathy Seva through two dispensaries is continued.

Badakuanl (Odisha): In addition to 2-time Puja followed by Sri Vishnu-sahasranama Stotra Parayana in the morning and Srimad Bhagavat Svadhyaya in the evening, the Branch had weekly Satsanga on Thursdays and Paduka Puja on Sundays and Sivananda Day.

Badhiausta (Odisha): The Branch organised the 3rd and 4th Youth Camps in two nearby villages—328 and 250 students participated. Brahmamuhurta prayer, Paduka Puja, Yogasana class and talks on moral and ethical values, divine life, ideal life routine etc. were the main features. The Branch distributed Jnana Prasad, as well as Anna Prasad, Sivaratri programme at Chidananda Ashram included Brahmamuhurta prayer-meditation, Paduka Puja, Nagar

Sankirtan, Bhajan-Kirtan, Nightlong Puja, etc.—200 participants.

Balasore (Odisha): The Branch holds Paduka Puja on 2nd Sunday every month, and Paduka Puja and poor feeding on all the holy days. It had organised a seminar which was graced by Revered Swami Sivachidanandaji and Prof. Hrudananda Ray. On the D.L.S. Platinum Jubilee Day, 15th January, 2011, it arranged Paduka Puja in the morning, and a public meeting with Revered Swami Dharmaprakashanandaji and Sri Bhagirathi Patra among the speakers in the townhall. A debate competition was held for High School students.

Bangalore (Karnataka): The Branch conducted Paduka Puja and Satsanga with Swadhyaya and recitation on Thursdays, and Sri Vishnu-sahasranama Stotra Parayana and Kumkum Archana along with Sri Lalita-sahasranama Stotram on Fridays. It held on 2nd January, grand Abhishekam, floral decoration, recitation of hymns, Mahamrityunjaya Mantra Japa, Arati, Maha Prasad. It organised 4-days programme of devotional music on the occasion of Platinum Jubilee from January 13 to 16. The monthly programme of devotional music was on 23rd January.

Baripada (Odisha): Regular Paduka Puja, monthly Sadhana Day on 6th February, and supplying monthly requirement of medicine free to 82 inhabitants of a Leprosy Colony were the main activities of the Branch.

Bellary (Karnataka): Besides daily

Puja, the Branch conducted Paduka Puja and Satsanga on Sundays. It held special Puja and Satsanga on the Punyatithi of H.H. Sri Swami Devanandaji Maharaj on 7th January, and on 13th January, the Platinum Jubilee Day Special prayer meetings were arranged to pray for the departed souls of Sri Pola Basavraj, past President of the Branch on 30th January, and of Sri Channamallappa, past Treasurer on 9th January.

Bhilai (Chhattisgarh): The Branch had its monthly Satsanga with Paduka Puja, Sankirtan, Bhoga, etc. on 16th January. Matri Satsanga included recitation of Sri Hanuman Chalisa on Tuesdays, of Sri Lalita Sahasranama Stotram on Fridays, and of Sri Vishnu-sahasranama Stotram and Srimad Bhagavad Gita (complete) during the Ekadasi Satsanga. It organised a public meeting in a specially erected pandal to mark the Platinum Jubilee. Eminent speakers gave enlightening discourses—300 participants. Devotional music was another salient feature.

Bhubaneswar, Khandagiri (Odisha): The Branch conducted weekly Satsanga on Sundays, Matri-Satsanga on Mondays, Paduka Puja on Thursdays, and 12-hour Mantra Japa on Chidananda Day. A special Satsanga was arranged on the New Year Day with a spiritual talk for auspicious beginning of the New Year. The Platinum Jubilee programmes included Morning Prayer, Nagar Sankirtan, Paduka Puja, Japa, Sri Vishnu-sahasranama Stotra Parayana, Srimad Bhagavat Path, a talk by Revered Swami Sivachidanandaji, etc. It distributed food and clothings to 75 leprosy patients. It

had also organized a free Health Check-up Camp—12 specialists and super specialist doctors examined 600 patients, free medicines were given to needy poor patients. Earlier, hundreds of devotees had participated in Gita Yanja on Sri Bhagavad Gita Jayanti.

Chatrapur (Odisha): In addition to the daily evening Satsanga and weekly Satsanga, the Branch had eight mobile Satsanga at the residence of the devotees during February-2011. Paduka Puja was performed on Sivananda Day and Chidananda Day. Besides the monthly programme of Sri Sundarakanda Parayana, two more parayanas were done in nearby villages. Vasanta Panchami was celebrated with special Puja-archana of Devi Saraswati.

Chikili (Odisha): All the 55 members attend with devotion the weekly Satsanga on Saturdays and mobile Satsanga on Thursdays. 12-hour Akhanda Mantra Japa and Paduka Puja are done on bright fortnight Ekadasis and on Sivananda Day. The Platinum Jubilee programme included Paduka Puja, Srimad Bhagavad Gita Parayana and Bhajan-kirtan. 27-hour Akhanda Japa of 'Om Namah Sivaya' and Paduka Puja were the main features of holy Maha Sivaratri celebration. A Youth Camp was held in a High School. Yogasana class, talks and guidance to the participating students were the main features.

Chitrakonda (Odisha): The Branch conducts weekly Satsanga on Sundays, mobile Satsanga on Thursdays, Paduka Puja on Sivananda Day, 12-hour Akhanda Japa on Chidananda Day, Sri Sundarakanda

Parayana on Sankranti Day, and the monthly Sadhana Day on the last Sunday of the month with Havan along Sri Vishnu-sahasranama and Narayana Seva special programme on the New Year Day included early morning meditation, Paduka Puja, Japa, Svadhyaya, Narayana Seva and special Satsanga. Distributing food to 17 destitutes on all Sundays and free Homoeopathy clinic services were continued.

Ghari (Manipur): The Branch conducted the District level Satsanga with talks on 'Srimad Bhagavad Gita' and 'The Divine Life Society'. The 150 participants took Prasad (midday meals).

Hyderabad (A.P.): The Branch held a daylong programme in commemoration of the Divine Life Society Platinum Jubilee. Eminent persons gave talks on "The Role of the Divine Life Society in spreading spirituality", "The Publications of the Divine Life Society", and on "Swami Sivananda". Yogasana demonstration, video show on the lives and teachings of Gurudev Swami Sivanandaji and H.H. Sri Swami Chidanandaji Maharaj, and prize distribution by Dr. Ramanachari, Principal Secretary, Revenue Department to the winners of elocution competition for students held earlier were the other main features.

Jeypore (Odisha): The Branch conducted twice a day Puja, biweekly Satsanga on Sundays and Thursdays, four mobile Satsangas and Havan, Puja and Prasad Sevan on Sivananda Day. It held special Satsanga on the New Year Day, Punyatithi of H.H. Sri Swami Devanandaji Maharaj, and on 13th and 14th January on

the occasion on the Platinum Jubilee. In the programme of 108 Avartana of Sri Hanuman Chalisa 80 devotees participated. Srimad Bhagavad Gita Yajnas, after collective chanting of each Sloka followed by Dwadasakshara Mantra as Sampat oblations were offered—were performed on January 2nd and 23rd. The Homoeopathic Dispensary treated 450 patients during the month.

Kanpur (U.P.): The Branch conducted monthlong Sri Ramayana Path concluding on 10th February, the monthly Satsanga, and Path from Ramayana on Tuesdays. A Havan with Ahuti along 10,000 Mahamrityunjaya Mantra was performed on 11th February. It distributed food on Makar Sankranti and also dry ration worth Rs. 6,000/- to the poor.

Kantabanji (Odisha): The Sunday Satsanga of the Branch included Svadhyaya of Bhagavad Gita.

Khatiguda (Odisha): In addition to 2-time Puja, the Branch conducted weekly Satsanga on Thursdays, one mobile Satsanga, Ekadasi Satsanga with Sri Vishnu-sahasranama Stotra Parayana, and the monthly Sadhana Day on 6th February with 12-hour Akhanda Kirtan of Mahamantra and Narayana Seva.

Khurda Road, Jatni (Odisha): The Branch held daily Satsanga, one mobile Satsanga, Bhajan Sandhya on 1st February, and Srimad Bhagavad Gita Parayana on February 6th and on 13th. It organised "Inter School Divine Life Students Meeting" for Quiz and Elocution competition on 7th January. On the Anti-leprosy Day dry ration food

packets and steel plates were distributed to 40 leprosy patients.

Khurja (U.P.): The Branch conducted weekly Satsanga with Svadhyaya and Sankirtan on Sundays, Matri Sankirtan Satsanga on Ekadasis, daily morning Yogasana class for men with meditation class on Sundays, and daily evening Yogasana class for women. It held special programme on the 11th Punyatithi of H.H. Sri Swami Devanandaji Maharaj, social service through Shri Swami Devananda Homoeopathy clinic and Jnana Prasad.

Manjhiguda (Chhattisgarh): The Platinum Jubilee programme of the Branch was Sri Ramayana Parayana. After a grand procession followed by Paduka Puja Bhandara Prasad was offered to all.

Nalgonda (A.P.): The Branch held daily Satsanga with Bhagavad Gita and Sri Ramayana Svadhyaya and recitation of Sri Vishnu-sahasranama Stotram and Sri Laxmi-ashtottaranama Stotram and Sri Lalita-sahasranama Stotram on Fridays. On the 11th Punyatithi of H.H. Sri Swami Devanandaji Maharaj, fruits were distributed to the in-patients of leprosy and T.B. ward of the Government Hospital and a special Satsanga was arranged in the evening. On the Platinum Jubilee Day, biscuit packets were distributed to 300 inpatients of this hospital and in the special Satsanga, a talk was given on 'The Divine Life Society', and 'The Message of Swami Sivananda'. 54 Avartana of Sri Hanuman Chalisa were done on 20th January.

Nandini Nagar (Chhattisgarh):

Regular Activities: Brahmamuhurta prayer-meditation, Japa, recitation of Sri Vishnu-sahasranama Stotram, Sri Hanuman Chalisa and other hymns; Daily evening Satsanga; weekly mobile Satsanga on Thursdays; Matri-Satsanga with Sri Sundarakanda and Sri Hanuman Chalisa Parayana on Saturdays; Ekadasi Matri-Satsanga covering Sri Vishnu-sahasranama Stotra and Srimad Bhagavad Gita (complete) Parayana every month; and Akhanda Sankirtan of Mahamantra on 3rd of every month.

Platinum Jubilee Activities: (1) Debate Competition: It was in two stages: At school level and Inter school competition among the school level winners. It was at three levels: primary, middle, high school, 33 students from 9 institutes participated; (2) Yogasana competition: on the same lines—4 schools participated; (3) Yogasana class: Held in 3 schools; (4) Re-activate Branches: This Branch office-bearers arranged Satsanga in January in Durg and Rajnandgaon to reactivate these old Branches, and again visited Durg Branch on 8th and 20th February.

New Delhi, Vasant Vihar: The weekly Satsanga on Sundays include Sri Sundarakanda Parayana on the first Sunday, meditation on the second, Svadhyaya of Gurudev's books on the third, and a spiritual talk on the fourth Sunday.

Phulbani (Odisha): The Branch conducted 2-time Puja, weekly Satsanga on Sundays, and Paduka Puja on Sivananda Day and Chidananda Day.

Salipur (Odisha): *Regular Activities:* Daily morning prayer, Puja, Dhyana, and in the evening Yogasana, Svadhyaya, Puja, Dhyana and recitation of various Stotras; Satsanga on the fourth and fifth Sundays of January; Srimad Bhagavad Gita Parayana on the first Sunday; Yogasana-Pranayama, meditation on the second Sunday; monthly Sadhana Day on the third Sunday; Paduka Puja on Sivananda Day; Sri Sundarakanda Parayana on the second Saturday; and health service rendered to 136 patients.

Special Activities: (1) Yogasana Training: imparted to 35 students/teachers; (2) New Year Day: A special Satsanga; (3) Platinum Jubilee Day: Sadhana and a special Satsanga; (4) Akhanda Japa: Mahamantra Japa for six hours on 26th January.

South Balanda (Odisha): In addition to 2-time Puja, the Branch conducted weekly Satsanga on Fridays, 'Bal-vikas' Satsanga for children on Sundays, Paduka Puja in the morning and special Satsanga in the evening and 3-hour Akhanda Japa of Mahamantra Japa as regular activities. It also held 3-hour Akhanda Sankirtan of Mahamantra followed by Anna Prasad Sevan by 130 devotees.

Sunabeda (Odisha): The Branch held biweekly Satsanga with Svadhyaya on Thursdays and Sundays, and on the Platinum Jubilee Day Paduka Puja, Havan, Bhajan-Kirtan, meditation in the morning session and a special Satsanga with Svadhyaya in the evening.

Sunabeda, Ladies Branch (Odisha): *Regular Activities:* Daily Puja, Srimad Bhagavat Path and Mantra Japa in the morning, and Mahamantra Akhanda

Sankirtan followed by recitation of Bhagavad Gita in the evening; biweekly Satsanga on Wednesdays and Saturdays; Satsanga for children on Sundays; Paduka Puja and Sri Vishnu-sahasranama Stotra Parayana on Ekadasis; 12-hour Akhanda Japa of Mahamrityunjaya Mantra on Chidananda Day and Narayana Seva on Tuesdays.

Special Activities: (1) New Year Day: Special Satsanga; (2) Vasanta Panchami: Special Puja-Abhisheka of Devi Saraswati.

Vadodara (Gujarat): The Branch had Satsanga on Thursdays, and Paduka Puja, Mantra Japa and distribution of Biscuit packets to the in-patients of the Government Hospital on Sivananda Day and Chidananda Day. It continued social service through Homoeopathic (4 days a week) and Ayurvedic (2 days a week) clinics, and distribution of free medicines to the poor. It also organized Paduka Puja and Mantra Japa on the death anniversary of Sri U.V. Swadiyaji, and Paduka Puja and Satsanga on the Platinum Jubilee Day.

Varanasi (U.P.): The Branch held the fortnightly Satsanga with Svadhyaya on February 13 and 27. It also sent Rs. 6,000/- to Chandigarh Branch for the treatment of a kidney patient.

Vikrampur (Odisha): *Regular Activities:* Early morning prayer-meditation; 2-time Puja; weekly Satsanga on Wednesdays and Paduka Puja on Sivananda Day.

Special Activities: (1) Platinum Jubilee: Paduka Puja and mobile Satsanga; (2) One mobile Satsanga on 11th January.