11. By mind alone could this (Brahman) be obtained; then there is no difference here at all. He goes from death to death, who sees any difference here.
The great destroyer of afflictions of Samsara, the powerful light that leads all mankind to the paths of good conduct, replete with Divine Greatness bestowed by the Grace of Lord Siva, the giver of new happiness to all, the bestower of auspiciousness on the whole world,—may this Divine Sivananda-Vani shine everywhere.

Filled with the wealth of inexpressible meaning and significance, and for that very reason greatly appreciated by eminent scholars, most radiant with brilliant letters of a lucid language and straightforward ideas,—may this disseminator of spiritual knowledge, this adorable and excellent Sivananda-Vani illumine the whole world.

Ever intent on showering all auspiciousness, shedding brilliant light of advice on the good path and virtuous conduct for all people, devoted to the welfare of all humanity,—may this Sivananda-Vani shine for ever and ever.

Always carrying the content of the Divine Nectar of the Message of the great Divine Yogi, propounding the quintessence of the Vedas,—may this declarer of the Mahavakya, “Tat Tvam Asi”, this blessed Sivananda-Vani brilliantly shine for ever and ever.
RELIGION IS REALISATION, NOT MERE LEARNING OR DIALECTIC

(H.H. Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj)

(On the 28th of April, 1963 Sri Sankara Jayanti was observed at Sivanandashram with a special function at the evening Satsanga, presided over by Sri Swamiji Maharaj. The following article is published to mark the occasion. —Ed.)

According to the biographical accounts, Jagad-Guru Sri Sankaracharya, the greatest exponent of the Advaita philosophy, and a master-propounder of the Vedanta, trod this earth hundreds of years ago. Though Sri Sankara lived a very short period of thirty-two years, his life was a vital one, crowded with great accomplishments and enshrined in profound philosophical insight. By his brilliant commentaries (with his profound knowledge, keen intuitive insight and convincing explanations) on the Upanishads and the Vedanta-Sutras, he has erected the strong edifice of the biggest and most popular religious phase of present-day Hinduism—called Vedanta. Above all, his philosophy was not merely for the intellectual; it is within the easy reach of even the layman. In his expositions, all doubts and controversies find a harmony, and he resolves every difference to the ultimate source, from which all things evolve.

The secret of his conquest and the charm therein laid on his most apt and reasonable illustrations in every case. He seldom based his arguments on theoretical axioms and untested hypotheses, but entirely on Anubhava (on integral experience) and logic. Further, all his arguments were based on the Srutis, which are genuine records of the religious experiences of various saints and sages, and not merely an imaginary speculation with trivial data. Through his irresistible logic, he planted the triumphant banner of unique intellectual conquest over all the other schools of philosophy in the land. Before him all other theories proved to be phantoms and fallacies, or at best stepping-stones and not conclusions.

Though Sri Sankara’s achievements in the spiritual and the religious field were many, perhaps the best was in the field of philosophy, in developing and interpreting his system of Advaita (non-dualism). The central theme of the Advaita School is that all phenomenal existence is an unreality ultimately, called Maya; that all is One, and only the Ultimate Principle (Brahman) has any actual existence. Sri Sankara had the firm conviction that the system of Advaita is the best suited to reconcile the traditional teachings of his time. And it is said that much of his intellectual virility was a direct reaction against the negative tendency of Buddhism and the ceremonial tendency (Karma-Kanda) stressed by the Mimamsa school of thought. Here, his endeavours and efforts were to save the Vedic texts from exaggerated tendencies (as then practised) and to rationalise them.
His aim was to revive the age-long systems of theism, which were kept down by the prattlers, to their original glory of the times when the Upanishads were compiled and intellectual speculation reached the fullness of its stature. Notwithstanding the fact that everywhere he challenged the leaders of other schools to philosophic debates with a view to establish the supremacy and truth of his opinions and viewpoints which he expounded in his commentaries, he had no religious animosity towards any faith that had the power to elevate man and improve his nature and conduct. He was ready to imbibe true knowledge from all.

During his brief lifetime he wrote many texts, the most important being his commentaries on the Prasthanatraya. Besides, there are other works that reflect the strength of his mind and the intellectual genius he was, some of which are: Vivekachudamani, Aptavajrasuchi, Atmabodha, Mohamudgara, Dashasloki, Aparokshanubhuti, commentary on Vishnusahasranama, etc.

Sankara’s short, yet dynamic, life was full of events which are object-lessons to the aspirants, and others as well. To consider one such event: it has been recorded, that once when Sankara was returning to his village from one of his debate meetings, he encountered on the way a Chandala (an untouchable). Momentarily, thoughts arose in him about his high Brahmin caste and of his being a learned scholar (Brahmin and scholar Abhimana) and he spontaneously accosted the Chandala to keep out of his way. The Chandala, who, it is stated, was no other than Lord Siva Himself, and had come to help him get over the Abhimana that lurked in his mind, asked: “O learned Brahmin! Whom are you addressing as Chandala? Is it my body, or the soul in me?” Sankara promptly realised his mistake and the veil of ignorance (Ajnana) was at once removed from his mind. And the story goes that he begged pardon from the Chandala for his error, fell prostrate at his feet and thanked the Chandala for enlightening him. Lord Siva, who was in the garb of the Chandala, blessed Sankara and disappeared.

When you identify yourself with your gross physical body, it is gross egoism. When you identify yourself with your mind and the Karana-Sarira (seed body), it is subtle egoism. If you destroy pride, selfishness, desires and identification with the body, the gross egoism will perish, but the subtle egoism will remain lurking. You must annihilate the subtle egoism also. The subtle egoism is more dangerous and difficult to eradicate. “I am a rich man. I am a king. I am a Brahmin. I am a learned scholar”;—this is gross egoism. “I am a Yogi. I am a Jnani. I am a moral man. I am a good Sadhaka or Sadhu”;—this is subtle egoism. If you, through virtuous actions, destroy the idea of ‘I’ at the root (in the mind), then it will not spring up again. Atma-Jnana or knowledge of the Self is the fire which destroys the conceptions of Abhimana, Ahankara, etc., which are the seeds of the tree of mind.

May God bless you! May the blessings of Jagad-Guru Sri Sankara be upon you all!

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Every opportunity is meant for your uplift and development. Therefore miss not any opportunity to see divinity in everything and everywhere.

—Swami Sivananda
In the history of mankind great people have graced all times and climes. When occasions arose, when there was need for some talent and need for some effort which was above the ordinary (where ordinary talent and effort would not suffice), then something above the ordinary, not necessarily miraculous, manifests itself. But it expands its energy and effort upon a widely varying field.

Towering personalities have come, and there have been many who have dedicated their entire lives on earth for political purposes. Unique personalities like Lincoln and others gave up all they held dear in order to achieve emancipation of slaves. Others like Father Damien sacrificed themselves in trying to battle with disease like leprosy. There have been eminent scientists who have given up their lives in effecting certain discoveries which they hoped will benefit humanity. Many great personalities have offered their entire lives for the cause of the freedom of their country. Mahatma Gandhi fought against untouchability and foreign rule in the land. But a unique function has been reserved for an exceptional class, the Children of Light, chosen by God, to awaken man from his sleep of materialism and to direct his eyes inward and upward, towards matters concerning higher life and freedom from the wheel of birth and death. This has been the special function of saints. The inspiring, awakening and guiding of seekers have been the prime motive behind Sri Swami Sivanandaji’s life work. In Sri Swamiji we have such a one who has dedicated his entire life for this last mentioned purpose.

Let us see, what are the broad outlines upon which he would have us proceed, if we make realisation of the Self, the goal of life. He has given us certain working methods in as much as practical ways and means are more to be attended to, rather than mere theory. The spiritual life is to be built upon and sustained by the important supports, viz., a well-conceived clear ideal, a definite programme of life and a background of thought. To proceed upon the spiritual life for any of us, the first requisite, naturally, which goes without saying, is that the individual should have an ideal. He should want something and he should aim at getting something. There are ideas and ideals. One makes up his mind to develop an extraordinary physique, to be the perfect figure; another has got the ideal of going round the world as many times as possible; another to amass a million. At the back of every human effort, there is some sort of an unconsciously accepted ideal. For the aspirant, he must have a spiritual
ideal which he has set himself to achieve. This is the first requisite.

Secondly, after having conceived of the ideal which he wants to reach, any haphazard method will never take him anywhere. It will be wastage of both precious life as well as fast ebbing energy, because energy travels in an arc—man begins with weakness, has got a hay-day of energy in the middle, and afterwards it is a period of decline. So it is only in the little portion in the middle age, in the form of youth, that man can devote all his energy to achieve some purpose. Therefore, unless it is properly directed, planned and channelised, energy will become wasted. It is imperative that after having conceived an ideal, it is the duty of every aspirant (by the word ‘aspirant’, it is not necessarily meant a young Mumukshu, but everyone who wishes to attain the goal of life, be he 15, 50 or 75 in age, is an aspirant and, therefore, the word applies to all people), having conceived of a goal, to have a definite programme. Without programme it is impossible to achieve any progress. While working out this programme and putting it into effect one will experience that it is not all, smooth sailing. On the contrary it is a very rough going. Many a time one is compelled by overwhelming adverse forces to seek temporary refuge; just as a ship when caught up in a terrible storm has to seek some port for safety.

The aspirant who has worked out a programme of life to attain the ideal has to acquire certain means, when he has to seek some refuge. It is, as Sri Swamiji Maharaj has advocated, to cultivate what is termed a concrete back-ground of thought, because the aspirant’s struggles are endless, and he should have a recourse in which he can immediately take refuge, whenever occasion arises, and these occasions are many during the course of his spiritual Sadhana.

A well-conceived ideal and a definite programme of life and then a concrete back-ground of thought to sustain him in his struggle to work out the programme of life, are the three requisites which Swamiji has advocated. While working out this programme of life there are certain facts which are worth remembering, i.e., spiritual progress is very gradual and it is in the nature of a twofold conflict. Just as Swamiji has said, “though physical wars between nations have ended on earth (at least for the time being), the war which has caused these external wars, which is man’s struggle against his lower nature, has not been concluded properly. If man were to attain victory over his lower nature, then he should have possession of himself and should not be the slave of his passions which lead to external, physical wars.” While this inner war prevails, it has got a twofold aspect of offence as well as defence. Many a time a spiritual aspirant has got to carry on his fight against these two positive and negative sides. While he progresses on the path he has to consistently protect himself from forces which assail him from inside.

There is a class of insects called coleoptera. They have two sets of wings. The external wings will be stiff, thick and parchment-like, and they are not fit for flying. There are two film-like wings inside, which are used for flying. They serve the beetle wonderfully well. They take the insect up and forward, but they
are so delicate, liable to be easily damaged that the external wings serve as the protecting armour. That set of wings which takes the Sadhaka forward on the path is intense aspiration and constant Sadhana. Unless the real fire of aspiration is maintained one cannot progress. And to protect this aspiration against temptation, one must have the other set of wings in the shape of Vairagya and Satsanga, and must constantly keep up the current of Vichara or discrimination. Vichara is the chief anchor of protection for the aspirant. It is only discrimination which can protect the aspirant against temptations. With aspiration and the protective covering of Vairagya and Satsanga, one will have to work out the programme of life.

While working out the programme of life, one should have a background of thought. Unless the aspirant is established in this background, he will not be able to habituate his mind to slip back automatically into this background. Perhaps in the case of a Bhakti-Yogi, it will be the Lord; in the case of a Jnana-Yogi, it may be the Mahavakya; that he is the Absolute; in the case of the Japa-Yogi, it may be the Name. Thus to habituate himself to become established in the background of thought he should have what the Lord has prescribed in the Gita,—constant Abhyasa (practice). Without constant Abhyasa one cannot expect to have any success in spiritual life. This fact I would have every one of you to remember forever, that is, in spiritual life it is either progress forward or slip back. There is no such thing as being in a static condition. One cannot say, “I have attained the goal. Now I cannot progress.” If you remain idle, you will slip back. Therefore, this Abhyasa is necessary to enable man to march forward, and forward constantly. In order to console the aspirant, sometimes, Swamiji has said, “If you cannot progress much, do not be depressed. It does not matter.” That is only a consolation because the mind should never be depressed.

An aspirant should always be wary to see that he always proceeds upwards, and has the protecting armour of Vichara, Vairagya and Satsanga to achieve the ideal, while working out the programme of life. There is the tortoise. The moment an enemy approaches to harm it, it withdraws itself into the shell, immediately. This is the exact purpose which the background of thought serves the aspirant. He has to withdraw himself into it. There is one difference in this particular case: the tortoise goes into the shell and comes out in the same condition as when it went in, but every time the aspirant takes refuge in the background of thought, he comes out with added strength.

To sum up, in order to tread the path of spiritual life:

(1) let the aspirant conceive of an ideal;
(2) let him put up a general programme of life;
(3) let him practise Abhyasa and Vairagya; and
(4) let him have a background of thought in which he can take refuge in times of external stress.
THE MESSAGE OF ACHARYA SANKARA

(Sri Swami Krishnananda)

(Spoken on Sankaracharya Jayanti in 1992)

The advent of a mastermind is observed today throughout the country—the coming into our midst of the well-known philosopher-saint Acharya Sankara, who was on this Earth plane several centuries back. It is said that he mastered all the four Vedas when he was only eight years old, and all the arts, the sciences, and the literature of the day when he was only twelve years old. He brought forth his magnum opus, the commentary on the Upanishads and the Brahma Sutras, when he was sixteen years old. He left this world at the age of thirty-two. Like a whirlwind, like a comet, like a meteor that shoots through the sky, this philosophical and spiritual genius shone through the firmament of Indian culture and spirituality.

We may say Acharya Sankara was a philosopher in the sense that he went deep into the causative factors behind every kind of conceivable or visible phenomenon, or we may say he was a scientist in the sense that he never took anything for granted. Arguments and deductions followed in a logical sequence in the process of his expositions and writings, and he took his stand ultimately on indubitable facts and never came to any kind of dubious conclusion.

Is there any fact in this world, any truth, which can be considered as entirely free from any kind of doubt? If such a thing is possible, we can take our stand on the rock bottom of this great indubitable fact; but if there is no such thing, there cannot be anything certain in this world. Uncertainty everywhere will reign supreme. We cannot even believe that we will be alive tomorrow. We all know very well that we will be alive tomorrow, though there is no logical ground to substantiate this belief. We know that we existed yesterday. Are these not facts that are free from every kind of doubt in our minds? We cannot argue in a semantic or logical fashion the conclusion—namely, that we were yesterday and that we shall be tomorrow. Here is something that defies logic and refutes the requirements of human scientific observation and reasoning. Which observation, which reasoning can prove that we will be alive tomorrow? And yet, it is an indubitable fact.

The fact referred to on which Acharya Sankara based his entire philosophy and religious outlook may be said to be twofold in its operation and manifestation. Firstly, it hinges upon the existence of one’s own self; and, secondly, from this consciousness of the existence of one’s own self there follows another fact—namely, that this indubitable self has a characteristic of its
own which is different from the nature that we observe in things in the world. We cannot ultimately believe in the presence of anything except the presence of our own self. Everything may be an object of suspicion, finally. The only thing that we cannot suspect is that we are. If we begin to suspect the possibility of our own existence, that suspicion may have to be grounded on another fact—namely, that there should be somebody who entertains this suspicion or manifests this doubt. A doubter has to be there behind the doubt.

No one ever believes that one’s own self is non-existent. No one ever says, “I am not.” Never do we feel at any time that we are not existing. We may have a doubt regarding the existence of other things, but we cannot have a doubt regarding the existence of our own self. Even supposing we go to the extent of doubting our own self, there should be something behind this procedure of doubting, which itself cannot be doubted—else there would be only a bundle of doubts with no one to doubt. Here is a stand which Acharya Sankara considered as final and reliable—namely, that something is, and that can be defined as what we usually call the Self.

What do we actually mean by the Self? It is that which knows but itself cannot be known by any sort of perceptual process. It cannot be known because if it is to be an object that is to be known, there should be somebody else to know it; that which knows it would become the Self, and that itself would stand in the position of a non-Self, or anatman. That is to say, the Self is that which knows, and which itself cannot be known.

If the Self cannot be known, how does one come to the conclusion that it exists at all? It is known in a manner quite different from the way in which we know things in the world. We require the facilities of perception, inference, etc., to know that things exist outside; but our existence, our awareness that we are existing, does not require sense organs—namely, the perceptual process. We also do not have to infer the fact of our being from premises other than that which is directly on hand. Our knowledge of our being here is something doubtless and most reliable. This fact is not known through the sense organs. Even if we close our eyes and close all the sensations, plug the holes of the avenues of available knowledge, we will know that we are existing. This is an intuitive grasp of our being, a fundamental awareness which is free from the encumbrances of sensory perception. The Self is,—and nothing more can be said about it.

Well, let us accept this primary fact of the nature of the Self—namely, that it is Existence. In Sanskrit we call Existence as sat or satta. This Existence is aware that it is existing. It is not an existence minus the consciousness of existence. It is bodha, or knowledge at the same time. In a very famous passage in Acharya Sankara’s commentary on the Brahma Sutras, he tells us that Existence is Consciousness, Consciousness is Existence. It is an existence which is not bereft of awareness, nor is it awareness bereft of existence. It is not an
unconscious existence; it is also not a conscious non-existence. It is Consciousness-Existence. We call it sat-chit. This is, and no one can doubt this. Even doubting one's own self is not permitted, because that adventure of the possibility of doubting one's own self would require a doubter who cannot be doubted. Here is the firm rock on which we can stand, unshaken, in our further investigations into the nature of all experience, whatever it be. This is the primary fact of existence, the fundamental characteristic of what is called the Self.

The other aspect of it is: Where is this Self located? The unthinking mind generally would like to point to its own physical appearance and make a statement: “The Self is within me.” This is an untutored, unthought-of statement, though it looks like it is very valid. If the Self is not inside you, where else can it be? It cannot be sitting on the tree. It is certainly inside you. But, is it only inside you?

It is mentioned that the Self is the knower of all things. There is a temple in front of me, and I know that there is a temple. This Self which is me is the knower of the fact of there being such a thing called a temple being in front of itself. How does the Self that is inside know the temple which is outside? Does the Self jump out of the Self and go and touch the walls of the temple? Generally people say, “I am inside,” “My Self is within me”; if that is the case, if it is only inside, it will know only what is happening inside the body. It cannot know even its own skin outside; and what is outside the skin, it can never know. But I know that I am in the temple. I am seeing people sitting in front of me who are not inside my body. How does this become explicable on the assumption that the Self is within me?

This question can be answered by a slight extension of the argument that may arise from the acceptance of the fact that there is a Self at all. Is this Self within me only, or within you also? It is within you also. So it is not within one person; it is within all persons. It is not merely within persons, it also has to be in everything because everything in this world seems to be manifesting a selfhood of its own Self. Everything exists. Even an atom exists, a particle of sand exists, an insect exists, an ant exists. The smallest thing exists, and the largest thing exists. Inasmuch as existence has been characterised as the basic nature of the Self, and inasmuch as this existence seems to be the common feature that is at the background of everything, this Self is perhaps not within this or that, but within everything. This is the second conclusion that we draw in regard to the nature of the Self. The first thing is that it is; the second thing is that it is not only in one place. If it is within all things, it follows that it is everywhere.

Now, this knowing Self, if it is to be everywhere, what will it know as its object? That thing which we call the object also has a selfhood in its own self; it also exists. Is not the object existing? It does exist. All objects, all things, everybody exists, and if existence is the nature of the Self, the object also is characterised, in some way or the other, by the Selfhood we speak of. Then, what will the Self know when we say the Self is aware?
Throughout the world it is truism that as human beings we are seeking happiness. Of course, each culture, each individual, has a different definition of what will make them happy. For many it is simply sense satisfaction. For others it is intellectual satisfaction. Others simply want to feel good.

The difficulty is that all of this exists in a world of the constantly changing three gunas and the pairs of opposites. So, by definition, what comes must go, and indeed, if we are objective about it, our capacity to enjoy great happiness of this type seems to go with an equal capacity to experience sorrow. Even in the spiritual life those that experience the greatest joy often experience the greatest anguish.

What then is the solution? There is that which is called bliss. Even this is not understood. Some even degrade it to the extent of saying I am blissed out. But that too is simply something else that comes under the pairs of opposites and will surely bring its opposite. Thus, Lord Krishna said to Arjuna, “Be gunatita.” It means, be beyond the pairs of opposites and the three gunas. Find that part of yourself that doesn’t change, that is the bliss that is gunatita.

But then, Ramana Maharshi warned us that whatever has a beginning will have an end. True bliss must have no beginning and no end. True bliss, therefore, must be present here and now. Why isn’t it realized, made real, in our day by day experience? Where is it? Perhaps it is what is here and now when we stop seeking it as one of the pairs of opposites.

What is present when we stop seeking to have one thing and to avoid the other? What is present when we stop liking one thing and disliking another? We are present. Our sense of existence, the I Am, That which has never changed since the day we were born, and ever will be till the day we die, unchanging. That is always present. Our mind may not be aware of it, so we have to call our attention to it.

However, even calling our attention to it, and seeing it, doesn’t get rid of the pairs of opposites or the three gunas. Of course sometimes we can get into states where only existence is there, but that too will have an end. However, if we meditate on our pure existence, so that we recognize its presence at all times, then we bring a balance into our life. There is the ability to live in the pairs of opposites and three gunas without being controlled by them, to be, as they say, in the world, but not of it. That is true happiness.
There is nowadays, everywhere, a cry for peace and abundance, for union and brotherhood, for cultural revival, social welfare and world-uplift. The world has experienced several crisis, tried many a method for peace, used the best resources of its intelligence, but has not yet succeeded in achieving its ends. The reason may be: either it is itself not clear about the nature of its aims and their implementation, or its instruments of action are not strong enough and capable of action, or its methods of procedure are not very wisely chosen. And, above all, there is that conspicuous absence of the pivot of all endeavours—God.

Our young men and women are led away by the veneer of a spurious civilisation and blinded by the glamour of material prosperity. They are unable to understand what actually is meant by God and religion. God is the never-dying and the never-diseased Being. That is the support of this ever-dying and ever-diseased shallow world! How can this constantly changing universe have ever any value except on the assumption of a permanent unchanging Substance? How do you account for this ceaseless aspiration in man for perfection, if that perfection does not exist? The transient nature of the world and all bodies and the unceasing inner aspiration for perfection and peace show that there must be that unending perfection which is Peace and Joy, and which must be underlying this perishable, objective world. This Eternal Conscious Perfection is God, and the method of reaching Him is through self-purification and spiritual perfection. Hatred for religion is nothing but pure puerility rooted in ignorance and lack of proper sense.

The true meaning of God and religion should be infused into the hearts of all who have got mistaken notions about them. People should abandon the idea of thinking that God is some big anthropomorphic being sitting on a throne in a far-off heaven above the clouds, and that religion is praying to Him for personal gains or for punishing the enemy or bowing to his images in temples. A universal joy-infusing power of absolute religion should take possession of the hearts of all in its real and essential meaning. There is no other purpose in life if it is not to attain this absolute Perfection, this absolute Peace and this absolute Joy of the Eternal Being, which all, directly or indirectly, seek, and which can be possible only when people understand that all conceptions of God are aspects of the One Supreme, Immortal, Infinite,
Eternal, Divine Presence, and that all forms of religion are the aspects of the Gateway to that One Truth. The proper knowledge of this fact shall correct all errors of life and show the method of bringing peace to the world, of making humanity perfect.

The solution for world-peace lies in complete spiritualisation of the outlook of mankind. The art of approaching this perfected condition does not lie merely in talking or acting through the body. It lies in self-purification, earnest aspiration, faith, sincerity, never-failing perseverance, broad tolerance, moral power, truth, renunciation of selfishness and subjugation of the inner passions. Without these requisites, all endeavours shall end in frustration and failure. Any effort for a sustaining peace other than this, however mighty it may be, is sure to be attended upon with failure. Peace derived through finite means can only be limited. The means must therefore be infinite.

Spiritual consciousness is eternal. It is the only permanent trait in man, however subconscious it may be. This dormant trait must be made to manifest in every human being through vigorous campaign in a mass scale. The initiative must come from the public bodies and from philanthropic-minded individuals with sufficient economic resources. This education must be all-inclusive and compulsory, meant for everyone. There is no other way.

Behold the Self in all. Here lies the solution. For, one now considers others as a part of himself. He who knows that the same life that throbs in the innermost recess of his heart indwells in others too, can dare not harm anybody. For, if he does harm anybody he harms but himself. He will not look down upon others with contempt or with hatred, for no one likes himself to be belittled or hated. This spirit of oneness must be cultivated and intensified in every human being. Let us not call ourselves even brothers, as this conception is not quite enough. The only ideal must be homogeneous oneness. In a fray one might injure his brother, but under no circumstances would one wish to hurt himself. When a person out on to a robbery feels that he is to rob his own hard-earned wealth; when one assigned to kill another person belonging to a rival community feels that he is but to kill himself; when a nation set out to aggrandise another nation feels that it is actually exploiting and slaughtering its own people; only then will the inner call to desist from these vile, savage and inhuman acts come. This sense of oneness must become part and parcel of one’s character.

Develop universal love. This will surely help you to live peacefully with all men and all creatures. Love and peace are inseparable. Where there is love, there is peace; and where there is peace, there is love.

Beholding the Self of all beings in one’s own self, the individual becomes fearless. Objects of the senses do not delude him; misery and suffering do not afflict him. He becomes an inseparable part of the whole creation and the absolute consciousness. He has neither enemy nor friend to call so in the worldly
sense; his microcosmic personality merges in the macrocosmic oneness. He perceives unity in diversity, harmony in disharmony and concord in conflict. He cannot bear to see the sufferings of the afflicted, and is, therefore, necessarily a humanitarian and a selfless servant of humanity. He dares not accumulate unlimited wealth, as his conscience would not allow that, as he knows that thereby he is keeping other manifestations of his own self in want and poverty. He dare not become a totalitarian and suppress the fundamental freedoms, for he knows that thereby he is choking his own voice, his own varied expressions and is outraging his own liberty, the very process of evolution. If peace is to be achieved, at least this should be the ideal of every individual, every society and every nation. The course of action should be through individuals, because it is they who have the power and who form the community, society and nation.

Idealism should not be allowed to overwhelm practical courses of action or self effort. Practise you must. For, without practice mere idealism and harping over a glorious heritage will only weaken one’s self-effort (Purushartha), and will-power shall take leave of him. Therefore, the ideal of oneness must be translated into action in day-to-day life.

May unity be our centre, ideal and goal! May we all attempt to secure an immortal life of supreme joy in the unity of consciousness! May that Brahman, the omnipotent, omnipresent and omniscient God, guide us and enlighten the path of unity, and remove the obstacles in the path of our realisation of the oneness. May the blessings of the Almighty Lord be upon us all! May we all earnestly endeavour to bring about unity amongst mankind!

**MANTRA: ITS FORCE AND ITS FUNCTIONS**

As a result of repetition, through the force of Samskaras, the Mantra gathers creative momentum. A Mantra is a mass of radiant energy or Tejas. It transforms the mental substance by producing a particular thought movement. The rhythmical vibrations produced by its utterance regulate the unsteady vibrations of the five sheaths or the Pancha-koshas. It checks the natural tendencies of the mind to run after sensuous objects. It helps the Sadhana Sakti and reinforces it when it becomes imperfect and meets with obstacles. Sadhana-Sakti is strengthened by Mantra-Sakti and when the sleeping consciousness in a Mantra or the Mantra Chaitanya is awakened, the Mantra awakens in the Sadhaka superhuman powers or Siddhis.

—Swami Sivananda
Groundnut-prices were soaring high. Merchants began to store groundnuts in their godowns to sell them at high prices at an opportune time.

A merchant, Ramlal, borrowed a huge amount of money, purchased groundnuts and stuffed his godown with them. Sohanlal, his son, did not want his father to take this big commercial risk but kept quiet as a mark of deference to him.

Man proposes, God disposes. Ramlal died a few weeks after taking out the loan. It never rains but pours. His godown caught fire. The stored groundnuts were reduced to ashes. Sohanlal, who was the heir to Ramlal’s property, found himself on the verge of bankruptcy. Creditors began to press him to return back the loaned money. He was helpless though he sincerely wished to repay the loan.

A rich merchant, Seth Pannalal, was one of the creditors who had loaned money to Ramlal. He came to meet Sohanlal. With eyes moistened with tears, Sohanlal beseeched him to wait for some time and to let him search out a means of paying back the money to him,

Seth Pannalal said, “Can you show me the document in which is entered the amount of money loaned by me?”

Sohanlal did so. Seth Pannalal glanced at the document cursorily and said, “The loaned money was given to your father. Isn’t It?”

“Yes,” said Sohanlal humbly.

“It was he who had promised to pay back the loan to me. Am I right?”

Sohanlal nodded.

“He is not alive now. The agreement, signed by him, has expired with his death,” said Seth Pannalal.

Then he tore the document into two and quickly went away.

Sohanlal kept looking aghast at him until he was out of his sight.

Dear children, money is not everything. Much more valuable than money is humanity. Forgetfulness of rights and performance of duties are two of the many characteristics of humanity. Seth Pannalal had the right to get back the loaned money from Sohanlal. He forgot this right. To empathise with Sohanlal’s helplessness was his duty which he performed unhesitatingly. No one becomes a human being by merely having a human body. Only he deserves to be called a human being who is endowed with humanity.

Ask yourself, dear children, “Am I a human being?”
HOW I FOUND MY GURU

(Sri C.B. Nair)

It was in 1958, on a Vijayadhasami day that I first wrote to my Gurudev. When I wrote to Him, I did it out of curiosity only. For a long time I had been searching for a spiritual Guru. I just wanted to know whether Swami Sivananda could help me. After receiving his first letter, everything happened like a miracle. The exchange of letters became regular, my religious studies advanced, and without my knowledge the golden link that connected this humble Chela with Gurudev strengthened.

Swami, as I usually call Him, has become more than anything to me. He is my hope, He is my protector, my confidant and a fountain of knowledge from which I can draw at will. His letters couched in the most compassionate terms cool my brain; they make me humble, obedient, active and successful. All my success in life I attribute to His guidance.

Ordinary people don’t believe in miracles. I also never experienced miracles until my Gurudev entered my life. The fast recovery of my wife’s health is a concrete example. My wife never showed any faith in Swami, but the way her life turned gave her confidence in the omnipotence of my Guru. I had been, many times, in a hopeless condition from which there appeared to be no way out. But that divine power emanating from Rishikesh always led me out of all labyrinths.

He was an ocean of knowledge, an embodiment of virtues, an incarnation of compassion and a living example of greatness. May his spirit guide us all in the path of liberation from bondage!

COSMIC POWER HOUSE

THE individual souls are like the electric bulbs, The bulbs get their light from the power house; The Jivas get their power from Brahman, The Infinite Cosmic Power House. The bulb imagines “I am independent.” It vainly boasts of its effulgence and power. It has no idea of its source. When the current fails, It puts its head in shame, It repents and weeps. Even so, the Jiva brags out of his egoism, “I know everything, I can do anything.”

“That is my bungalow, she is my wife, There is no God.”

He has no idea of Brahman, the source. He eats, drinks, dresses and sleeps, He leads a miserable Asuric life, He repents and weeps in old age. O fool! O dunce! Know the source, Through purity, devotion, Tapas and meditation, And enjoy supreme peace and eternal bliss.

Swami Sivananda
NEWS AND REPORTS

NEWS FROM THE HEADQUARTERS

SEVA THROUGH SIVANANDA HOME

By the profound Blessings of Sri Gurudev and the imminent 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.

Praying for the well-being of this elderly mother, who has been admitted in Sivananda Home since more than nine years. When she was brought from the roadside that time, she could not recount anything and her mental condition was severe disorientated, confused and agitated. On the top of her scalp was an infected wound, infested with many maggots. The dressing had to be done by holding her with three persons, so strong and anxious she got, and it was difficult to keep the bandage in place, even for a couple of hours. Anemic she was too, but her wound recovered slowly. After investigation, she was found to suffer from tuberculosis too, from syphilis and from diabetes. Throughout the years she recovered amazingly well, and she has gained her own place in Sivananda Home, where she is known to one and all, and remembers even a few names of the other inmates. Since a couple of weeks though, she is not well, and with intravenous drip going on, she is actually finding it difficult to understand what it is and why it needs to be put. Her food intake at the moment is minimal, she started to get dehydrated and became weaker. Praying for her well-being, physically and mentally and that she may feel at ease and comforted. Om Sri Ram Jai Ram Jai Jai Ram.

Another lady patient who found shelter at His feet this month only, was much younger, about thirty years of age. She was struggling at the side of the road, barely able to put one foot in front of the other. Together with her 10 year old daughter, she had left the house in agony, the house where she had undergone much suffering and she could not bear it any longer, being also physically sick. Having stayed on the streets only and sleeping at the side of the road, had certainly also taken its toll. Upon investigation, she was found to suffer from a fractured rib, anemia, enteric fever, kidney malfunctioning and an extremely slowly working thyroid. After a course of bed rest at a stretch, and ongoing medication, she is slowly recuperating, by the Grace of the Almighty One. Om Sri Ram Jai Ram Jai Jai Ram.

“Let us behold Thee in all these names and forms. Let us serve Thee in all these names and forms. Let us ever remember Thee. Let us ever sing Thy glories. Let Thy Name be ever on our lips. Let us abide in Thee for ever and ever.”

(Swami Sivananda).
The sacred day of the advent of Lord Sri Rama on this earth plane was celebrated with great devotion and spiritual gaiety at Headquarters Ashram on 19th April 2013.

As a prelude to the celebration, the chanting of Divine Taraka Mantra “Sri Ram Jai Ram Jai Jai Ram” was done daily for two hours from 15th to 17th April by the Sadhakas and devotees of the Ashram in the holy premises of Sri Vishwanath temple. On 18th April, the Akhand chanting of sacred Mantra was conducted from 7 a.m. to 5.30 p.m. overflowing the hearts of one and all with the divine nectar of Ramanama.

The programme of the auspicious Sri Ramanavami day commenced at 5 a.m. with prayers and meditation. It was followed by Prabhat-pheri. A special Yajna was performed for world peace. From 9 a.m. to 12 noon, a grand worship was offered to Lord Sri Rama with chanting of Vedic mantras in the sanctum-sanctorum of beautifully decorated Sri Vishwanath temple.
wherein all present got the blessed opportunity of doing Abhisheka and Archana of the Lord. Melodious and soul elevating Bhajans and Kirtans were offered at the lotus feet of the Lord. Thereafter, the Avatar Sarga describing the Lord’s advent was read from Sri Valmiki Ramayana and Sri Ramcharitmanasa. The programme concluded with a grand Arati and distribution of sacred Prasad at Annapurna Dining Hall.

During the night Satsanga, H.H. Sri Swami Padmanabhanandaji Maharaj in his Sri Ramanavami message highlighting the ideal life of Lord Sri Rama said, ‘Ramo Vigravan Dharmah’—Lord Sri Rama is the embodiment of Dharma (righteousness). Sri Swamiji inspired one and all to lead a life of righteousness emulating the glorious ideal of Lord Sri Rama. Books and DVDs were also released to mark this sacred occasion. The Satsanga concluded with Arati and distribution of Prasad.

May the blessings of Lord Sri Rama and Sadgurudev be upon us all.

THE TRANSCENDENT DIVINITY THAT IS RAMA

To a devotee, Rama is not simply a good and great person, but God Himself. Rama is the son of Dasaratha, the King of Ayodhya, as well as the divine, omnipresent God, Self, Atman or Brahman. The destruction of the ten-headed Ravana by Rama is the annihilation of the mind with the ten senses. Worship of Rama is the worship of the Virat Purusha Himself. Read the prayers offered by Mandodari and Brahma in the Yuddha-Khanda of the Valmiki Ramayana. They refer to Rama as the one Creator of the universe, the God of all, the Ruler of all.
SRI GURU PURNIMA, SADHANA WEEK AND THE SACRED PUNYATITHI ARADHANA OF GURUDEV SRI SWAMI SIVANANDAJI MAHARAJ

The Holy Sri Guru Purnima will be observed at the Headquarters Ashram on the 22nd of July, 2013, and the 50th Anniversary of the Punyatithi Aradhana of Gurudev Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj will be celebrated on the 31st of July 2013.

In between the above two sacred functions, there will be a Spiritual Conference, known as Sadhana Week, for seven days from 23rd to 29th July continuously, with programmes every day.

Devotees who intend to participate in the above programmes, are requested to write to us, giving full details of the number of persons arriving so that the information may reach us not later than the 30th of June, 2013.

Persons with any kind of physical handicap, or serious health problem, may consider to avoid the strain of this concentrated programme and visit the Ashram at some other time. Further, this being Shravan month there will be large floating pilgrim population in the whole of Uttarakhand, disrupting traffic.

The period will be in the monsoon season when there is likelihood of heavy rains in this area. As such, devotees who are coming for the celebrations may kindly bring with them necessary requirements befitting the season, such as an umbrella, a torch and the like.

Due to difficulty in accommodating large number of persons, the Ashram has to request for rooms from neighbouring Ashrams. Guests may kindly bear with these difficulties and adjust themselves, lovingly. Devotees are requested kindly to come one or two days earlier only and also not to extend their period of stay in the Ashram beyond one or two days after the function is over.

May Sri Gurudev’s Blessings be upon all!

Shivanandanagar
25th April, 2013

—THE DIVINE LIFE SOCIETY
A FOUR DAY STUDENTS’ CULTURAL AND PERSONALITY DEVELOPMENT CAMP AT SIVANANDA ASHRAM, BHAVNAGAR, GUJARAT

The Divine Life Society Bhavnagar Branch jointly with Gurjar Divya Jivan Sangh Samiti organised A Four Day Students’ Cultural and Personality Development Camp at Shivananda Ashram premises, Bhavnagar from 20th to 23rd April 2013. About 65 students from secondary and higher secondary schools of Bhavanagar, Vadodara, Surendranagar, and Virnagar enthusiastically participated in the Camp.

Dr. Rakshaben Dave, a scholar narrated the inspiring stories of Dhruva and Prahlada from Srimad Bhagavata conveying the subtle messages from their lives. Br Samatma Chaitanyaji brought out the essence of Srimad Bhagavad Gita in a lucid language. Prof. Narendra Shukla talked about the life and work of Sadgurudev Sri Swami Sivanandaji and Worshipful Sri Swami Chidanandaji. Dr. Jayant Dave delineated the character of Lord Rama as personification of Dharma and Virtues.

The programme was inaugurated by lighting of the lamp followed by the inaugural address by Dr. Nalin Pandit, a noted educationist. A cyclonic storm with heavy rains struck the venue when Mr. Dhiren Vaishnav, an eminent citizen was talking about human values. Notwithstanding the unseasonal rains for all these days, the programme continued unabated due to high spirits of organisers, speakers and participants.
on Ramanavmi Day and talked about Swami Sivananda—a unique synthesizer on the other day. Dr. Bharat Mistry, a noted surgeon explained the art of dialogue—Samvad. Sri Unmesh Mehta, Chartered Accountant dwelt on the values in youth. Swami Tyagvairagyanandaji gave simple and useful message to students regarding their duties with special reference to Srimad Bhagavad Gita.

A lively group discussion was held by making 12 groups of 5 students namely Sivananda, Chidananda, Krishnananda, Madhavananda, Hridyananda, Vimlananda, Nirliptananda, Padmanabhananada, Advaitananda, Yajnavalkyananda, Tyagvairagyanandanda, Dharmanishthananda. The three interesting topics were – 1) What is missing in today’s education? 2) What is missing in today’s religion? 3) What is missing in today’s politics? The students interacted among the group members and one of them presented the collective views in a very spirited and constructive manner.

Ms Meera Sharma and Swami Tyagvairagyanandaji conducted morning Yogasana and Pranayama classes. A play on Sadgurudev Swami Sivanandaji and a classical dance were part of the cultural programme. A group game was organised to promote the Samuha Jivan Bhavana among the students. Ms. Reshma Vora presented inspiring and educative songs, taught the craft work and also served as the coordinator of the event. A useful kit, Swami Sivananda Chitrakatha and a few other inspiring books from Sivananda literature were presented as Jnana Prasad to all the participants. All the participants felt immensely benefited by being a part of this unique camp.

May the abundant blessings of Lord Almighty and Sadgurudev be upon all.

Love all God’s creation. Love even leaf, love the animals, love the birds, love the plants, love everything. This is the way to the knowledge of the mystery underlying them all.

—Swami Sivananda
IN MEMORIAM

With profound sorrow, we report that Sri Swami Dharmatmananda Saraswati, an old inmate of the Headquarters Ashram, left his mortal coil on 6th April 2013.

Sri G. Jayaraman, as he was known pre-monastically, was born on 19th March 1938. His father Sri Varhur S.V. Guruswami Sastrigal was a scholar in Sanskrit and a Professor of Vedanta in Sanskrit College, Trivandrum, Kerala. Sri Jayaraman joined the Headquarters Ashram on 18th April 1964 and was initiated into the Holy Order of Sannyasa by Worshipful Sri Swami Chidanandaji Maharaj on Makara Sankranti, 14th January 1987. Sri Swamiji offered his dedicated services in Sri Vishwanath Mandir, cash office and finally in President’s office with Worshipful Sri Swami Chidanandaji Maharaj. He attained the feet of Worshipful Gurudev on Ekadashi, 6th April 2013.

May his soul rest at the holy feet of the Lord and Worshipful Gurudev Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj.

—The Divine Life Society

IN MEMORIAM

With a deep sense of loss, we report that Sri Swami Ramananda Saraswati, a direct disciple of Sadgurudev Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj, passed away on 27th February 2013.

Sri Ramamurti, as he was known in his Pooravashram days, was born on 22nd October 1940 at Soluree, Andhra Pradesh. He joined the Headquarters Ashram in August 1962 and was initiated into sacred Sannyas order on Sivaratri day on 22nd February 1963. Sri Swamiji did Seva in Sri Vishwanath Mandir for many years. He attained the feet of Worshipful Gurudev on 27th February 2013.

May the Almighty Lord and Sadgurudev bless his soul with eternal peace.

—The Divine Life Society
REPORTS FROM THE D.L.S. BRANCHES

Anna Nagar (Chennai T.N.): Regular activities of Satsanga continued. The Branch has started a free Sanskrit coaching classes for Balabodh and Prarambha courses of Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan examinations which will be held during September 2013. The classes are conducted on Saturday and Sunday between 4 and 6 pm and open for Boys, Girls, Elders and Youngsters. The Branch holds a Six-month Training session in ‘Brahma Yoga’ everyday from 6.30 am to 7.30 am starting from Tamil New Year’s day. An examination for the above Yoga will be held in august 2013 and titles will be conferred to the successful candidates on the 13th Divine Life Society Conference due to be held on October 2013. On Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays Yoga classes excessively for Ladies and children will be held from 5 pm to 6 pm. The Branch conducted prayers, demonstration of ‘Chandranamaskara Asana’ of 12 postures and messages on Sage Elango and Gurudev Sivanandaji and the Significance of Chitra Pournima and concluded with moon light dinner.

Barbil (Odisha): The Branch conducted weekly Satsangas, residential Satsangas and Balvihar classes regularly. Sadhana day on 24th of the month was observed. Around 600 patients were benefitted by the free Homeo treatment in Sivananda Charitable Homeo dispensary. Agniuttchab was celebrated on 25th Feb 2013.

Bargarh (Odisha): Regular activities of Satsanga continued in the Branch. A monthly magazine ‘MAHATVANI’ is published by the Branch. ‘Sadhana Divas’ is observed monthly.

Baripada (Odisha): The Branch conducted Daily Paduka Puja, observed Sadhana Day, and mobile Satsangas on every Sundays. Saraswati Puja was conducted. Poor feeding and the treatment of needy and sick continued regularly.

Bhishmagiri (Odisha): The Branch along with regular Satsanga activities conducted the special activities on ‘Baisakha Shukla Chaturthi’, Sri Hanuman Jayanti and also Odiya ‘Nava Barsa’ with many members and devotees participated.

Chatrapur (Odisha): Apart from the daily and weekly Satsangas with regular activities of Chanting, Parayanetc., the Branch conducted two special functions in the month of March 2013. ‘Mahasivaratri’ was observed on 10-03-2013 with ‘Ramcharita Manas’, Sundar Kanda’ Parayan and one Lakh Shiva Mantra Archana, followed by ‘Mahamrityunjaya Mantra’ recitation in the evening in the presence of many members and devotees. The Annual General Body meeting was held
on 31-03-2013. On the eve of ‘Mina’ Sankranti, Sri Ramcharita Manas, ‘Sundar Kanda’ Parayan was conducted on 14.03.2013.

**Gurudaspur (Punjab):** The Branch conducted Satsangas on every Saturday with recitation of Mahamrityunjaya Mantra, Shrimad Bhagavad Gita and also reading of the autobiography of Sadgurudev Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj. The Branch is arranging free Eye Camps for the last four years. In the month of Feb-March 2013 two Camps were arranged on 24th at village Purowal Raiyan and 31st at village Mour. All the patients were given lens free of cost. Recently, the Branch has taken a new project by helping the residents of leper colony at Dinanagar by providing them betadine, cotton and bandages worth Rs.1000/- every month.

**Khurda Road, Jatni (Odisha):** In addition to the daily evening Satsangas, the Branch organised special Satsangas in the houses of devotees in different occasions. To mark the antileprosy day on 30 Jan, 2013 the Branch distributed fruits, dry ration packets, vegetables, blankets, and Micro Cellular Rubber Chappals for 50 leprosy patients. Sri Swami Jnanaswarupanandaji Maharaj blessed the occasion. Sri Swami Omkarananda Tirthaji delivered a talk on Shrimad Bagavad Gita on 16th and 17th Feb, 2013.

**Jeypore (Odisha):** The Branch conducted regular Satsangas and Sivananda day was observed on 8th Feb, 2013. In 14th and 17th Feb, 2013 two mobile Satsangas were held in the residence of devotees.

**Koraput District Charitable Homeopathy Dispensary** treated about 945 different types of patients.

**Lanjipalli, Berhampur (Odisha):** The DLS Ladies Branch Municipal Colony has been conducting Satsangas regularly on 10-03-2013, Maha Sivaratri was celebrated in the holy presence of Sri Swami Ananda Swarupanandaji Maharaj who blessed the devotees with his talk on Narada Bhakti Sutras. Sadhana day on 24-03-2013 was held with the participation of many devotees and saints. Gauranga Mahaprabhu Jayanti was observed on 27-03-2013. Narayan Seva was done by distributing Satvik food and umbrella to 170 needy and poor people.

**Madhavapatnam, Kakinada (A.P.):** Regular activities and Satsangas continued with Free Medical Campaign by Dr. M.S.R. Sastry and Narayana Seva for the poor and needy. Mahasivaratri was observed on 10-03-2013 by conducting ‘EKA VARABHISHEKAM’ with the recitation of Namakam and Chamakam at Sivananda Kshetram.

**New Delhi:** In addition to weekly Satsangas, Gita Parayana, Vishnu-sahasranama, Gurupaduka Puja and Sundar Kanda Parayana was conducted on Sundays. A special Satsanga was arranged on 10-03-2013 on the occasion of Maha Sivaratri. A talk by H.H. Sri Swami Omkarananda Tirthaji Maharaj of Maharashtra, concluded with Prasad distribution on 24-03-2013, Sundar Kanda path was organised with music by Sri S.K. Anand and party. Devotees attended and were felt blessed.

**Nandini Nagar (Chhattisgarh):** Regular Satsangas continued. The Branch observed
Maha Sivaratri on 10-03-2013 with 12 hours Panchakshari Mantra Japa from 6 am to 6 pm, and Shiva Abhisheka was conducted from 8 pm to 12 pm at Swami Sivananda Bhajan Mandir.

Rourkela (Odisha): The Branch conducted 4 mobile Satsangs in the residence of devotees. On 17.03.2013 a Balvikas Camp was organised in the Ashram premises where 80 children aged between 7 to 15 years actively participated. Talks on the life of Gurudev were delivered by eminent devotees which was very impressive to the children.

Surendranagar (Gujarat): Regular Satsanga activities continued including a collective Matri-Satsanga by a group of Ladies namely GOPI-SATSANGA MANDAL of Bharad Village. Daily Paduka Puja and distribution of raw or dry ration to the poor and needy and fodder to Cow and feeding of birds, ants etc. continued as a part of Jivaseva.

Sunabeda (Odisha): The Branch conducted weekly Satsanga on every Thursday and Sunday with Swadhyaya, Bhajan, Kirtan, Japa, Puja, Arati etc. Ladies Branch conducted Vishnu-sahasranama Parayana on every Ekadashi and Archana on every Sankranti. A special paduka puja and Archana on every Thursdays. On 15.02.2013, Saraswati puja was done and a special Satsanga was arranged at Semiliguda on the same day. Yogasana classes were conducted by Smt. Bijayalaxmi Ojha.

Salipur (Odisha): Daily and weekly Satsangs held regularly at the Branch with Gita Path, Hanuman Chalisha, Vishnu-sahasranama parayana, Bhajan, Kirtan etc., Sivananda day on 8th Feb, 2013 with Guru-paduka Puja was observed. Swami Sivananda Charitable Hospital continued its services on every Sunday on which 91 patients were treated and free medicines were given to them all. Yoga training continued in the school/college in which 33 staff members/students participated. Akhanda Mahamantra Japa was conducted on 24-02-2013 for 6 hours.

Vishakhapatnam (A.P.): The Branch conducts Mahamrityunjaya Havan on every Trayodashi and Gayatri Havan on Pournima evenings, Lakshmi and Ganapati havan on Sankashtahara Chaturthi, special Satsangs on Mondays, and Narayana Seva once in a month and daily Gita Path. On 10.03.2013, Mahashivaratri was observed with Ekadasha Rudrabhishekam by the devotees from 6 am to 9 am. A vocal concert by Mr. P.H. Uma from 6.30 pm to 7-30 pm and at 9-00 pm pravachan by Brahmashri Samavedam Shumukha Sharma, Sankirtan and Jagaran till next morning.

Varanashi (U.P.): The Branch held Satsanga at “Vriddha Ashram” on 17th and 31st March 2013, with Sarvadeva Vandana, Guru Stotram, Shantimantra, Gayatri Chalisa and Mantra, Aditya Hridayam were chanted. Swadhyaya, Bhajans, Mahamantra Japa, Devi Stuti, Mahamrityunjaya Mantra etc., were chanted and concluded with Arati and Prasad Sevan.

Sunabeda Ladies Branch (Odisha): The Branch conducted daily Satsangs regularly and weekly general Satsangs on Sunday evening and children’s Satsanga in the afternoons. Narayana Seva on Tuesday noon, Satsanga for Ladies on Wednesday and Saturday afternoons. Abhisheka and Sri
Vishnu-sahasranama Parayana on every Ekadasis. Mahamrityunjaya Mantra Japa for 12 hours on Chidananda Day i.e. on 24th of every month and Sri Sundar kanda Parayan on Sankranti evenings. On 10-03-2013, Mahasivaratri was observed with Puja and Abhisheka and Guru Paduka Puja followed by continuous Japa of Panchakshari Mantra.

OVERSEAS BRANCH

HONG KONG (CHINA): The Branch conducted 1 hour Mahamantra chanting on every Saturday evening on both Cheung Sha Wan and North Point Yoga Centres every month regularly, and chanting of Hanuman Chalisa also by the devotees. A talk by the Events Executive Leung Sai Hing and an audio recording on a talk “How to be a good Yoga Teacher*” given by H.H. Sri Swami Yogaswarupandaji Maharaj during His Holiness’s visit to Hong Kong in 2007 was played. Regular Yoga classes continued.

Special Activities: The Branch is organising a series of programmes for celebrating the Birth Centenary of H.H. Sri Swami Chidanandaji Maharaj on 24th September 2016. As the first programme the devotees took a vow with one heart and one mind for doing one million Japa Sadhana of their mantras exclusively initiated by Sri Guru Maharaj staring from 1st Jan 2013 to 24th September 2016 with 28 participants. A three hour Mahamrityunjaya Mantra chanting was conducted to celebrate the New Year 2013 and concluded with Arati and Prasad distribution. Other activity of the Branch includes providing yoga teachers who volunteered to serve in the elderly yoga classes organised by the Hong Kong Family welfare Society—Elderly centres.

WORKSHOP BY THE DIVINE LIFE SOCIETY ODISHA BRANCHES:

The Divine Life Society Branches in Odisha held a state level meet at Bhubaneshwar from 01-04-2013 to 03-04-2013. During the period of three days workshop apart from other discussions some important resolutions have been taken as below:

1. To practice Twenty Spiritual Instructions and Sapta Sadhana Tatwa in daily life and also to inspire other family members to develop individual Sadhana.

2. To render selfless service for the poor, needy, suffering and down trodden people with Sevabhava.

3. To organise youth camps, Children’s Satsanga in different parts of Odisha, to spread the Life and Teachings of Gurudev. To visit nearby schools and colleges and to arrange essay competitions and story writing, Gita chanting etc.,

4. To celebrate H.H. Sri Swami Chidanandaji Maharaj’s Birth Centenary from 2014 to 2016 in all Branches and in Odisha state level through different Seva projects, Sadhana Shibirs, youth camps and free distribution of DLS books in Oriya.

5. To organise children’s Satsanga at every DLS Branch for their spiritual upliftment.