



PHILOSOPHY OF SIVA TANDAVA

(H.H. Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj)

पादस्याविर्भवन्तीमवनतिमवने रक्षतः स्वैरपातैः
 संकोचेनैव दोष्णां मुहुरभिनयतः सर्वलोकातिगानाम् ।
 दृष्टिं लक्ष्येषु नोग्रज्वलनकणमुचं बध्नतो दाहभीते-
 रित्याधारानुरोधात् त्रिपुरविजयिनः पातु वो दुःखनृत्तम् ॥

The Tandava or celestial dance of Lord Siva is extremely thrilling and charming, exquisitely graceful in pose and rhythm and intensely piercing in effect.

Nritya or Tandava is an inseparable, sacred movement of the various limbs of the body in accordance with the inner divine Bhava. Nritya is a divine science. The Adigurus for this celestial Nritya were Lord Siva, Krishna and Mother Kaali. In Nritya, the six Bhavas, viz., Srishti, Samhara, Vidya, Avidya, Gati and Agati are demonstrated.

The dance of Lord Siva is for the welfare of the world. The object of His dance is to free the souls from the fetters of Maya, from the three bonds of Anava, Karma and Maya. He is not the destroyer but He is the regenerator. He is the Mangala Data and Ananda Data, bestower of auspiciousness and bliss. He is more easily pleased than Lord Hari. He grants boons quickly, for a little Tapas or a little recitation of His five letters.

'Aghada Bhum' is His song of dance. When Siva starts His dance Brahma, Vishnu, the Siva Ganas and Kaali with Her bowl of skull, join Him. Have you not seen the picture of Pradosha Nritya? It will give you an idea of the dance of Siva.

Kaali was very proud of Her ability in dancing. Siva started dancing to quell Her pride. He danced very beautifully, very artistically. Kaali had to put Her face down in shame.

Lord Siva wears a deer in the left upper hand. He has the trident in the right lower arm. He has fire, the Damaru and the Malu, a kind of weapon. He wears five serpents as ornaments. He wears a garland of skulls. He is pressing with His feet the demon Muyalaka, a dwarf holding a cobra. He faces south. Panchakshari itself is His body. Lord Siva says: "Control the five senses which are hissing like serpents. The mind is jumping like a deer. Control the mind. Burn it in the fire of meditation. Strike it down with the Trisula of discrimination. You can attain Me." This is the philosophical significance of the picture of Lord Siva.

You can witness the dance of Siva in the rising waves of the ocean, in the oscillation of the mind, in the movements of the senses and the Pranas, in the rotation of the planets and constellations, in cosmic Pralaya, in epidemics of infectious diseases, in huge inundations and volcanic eruptions, in earth-

quakes, landslips, lightning and thunder, in huge conflagrations and cyclonic storms.

As soon as the Guna Samya Avastha, wherein the three Gunas exist in a state of equilibrium, is disturbed by the will of the Lord, the Gunas manifest and quintuplication of elements takes place. There is vibration of Omkara or Sabda Brahman. There is manifestation of primal energy. This is the dance of Siva. The whole cosmic play or activity or Lila is the dance of Siva. All movements within the cosmos are His dance. He gazes on Prakriti and energises Her. Mind, Prana and matter begin to dance. When He begins to dance, the Sakti Tattva manifests. From Sakti, Nada proceeds and from Nada, Bindu originates. Then the universe of names and forms is projected. The undifferentiated matter, energy and sound become differentiated.

The burning grounds are the abodes of Siva. Rudra is the destructive aspect of the Lord. Lord Siva dances in the crematorium with Kaali, in His ten-armed form. The Siva Ganas also join with Him in the dance.

Nataraja of Chidambaram is the expert dancer. He has four hands. He wears the Ganga and the crescent moon on His matted locks. He holds the Damaru in His right hand. He shows Abhaya Mudra to His devotees with His raised left hand. The significance is: "O devotees! Do not be afraid. I shall protect you all." One left hand holds the fire. The other right hand points down on the Asura Muyalaka who is holding a cobra. He has raised the left foot in a beautiful manner.

The sound of the drum invites the individual souls to His feet. It represents Omkara.

All the Sanskrit alphabets have come out of the play of the Damaru. Creation arises from the Damaru. The hand which shows Abhaya Mudra gives protection. Destruction proceeds from fire. The raised foot indicates Maya or illusion. The hand which points down shows that His feet are the sole refuge of the individual souls. Tiruakshi represents Omkara or Pranava.

Chidambaram is a sacred place of pilgrimage in South India. All the Tamil saints have sung hymns in praise of Nataraja. There is Akasa Linga here which indicates that Lord Siva is formless and attributeless. The popular saying goes: "He who dies in Banares with Ramanam in his lips and heart, attains salvation. He who remembers Arunachalam or Tiruvannamalai attains Mukti. He who gets Darsana of Nataraja attains final emancipation." Real Chidambaram is within the heart. Nataraja dances in the hearts of devotees who have burnt egoism, lust, hatred, pride and jealousy.

He dances quite gently. If He dances vehemently the whole earth will sink down at once. He dances with His eyes closed, because the sparks from His eyes will consume the entire universe. The five activities of the Lord, Panchakriyas, viz., Srishti (creation), Sthiti (preservation), Samhara (destruction), Tirobhava (illusion) and Anugraha (grace), are the dances of Siva.

May you all comprehend the true significance of the dance of Siva. May you all dance in ecstasy in tune with Lord Siva and merge in Him and enjoy the Sivananda, the final beatitude of life!

He who is always engaged in doing good to all, whose intellect is not clouded by selfish desire, who is an embodiment of unselfish love, who is mild by nature, who has perfect mastery over his senses, and who is endowed with immaculate conduct, is a saint.

—Swami Sivananda

DIVINE LIFE

(Sri Swami Chidananda)

[Continued from the previous issue]

Mahatma Gandhi embodied in himself such a Divine Life of ever seeking to reach and realise the Reality. You well know the Father of the Nation, the architect of Indian independence, the saintly man who developed the great theory, or the great technique of non-violence,—overcoming hatred through love. He was the 20th century version of the great and benign Buddha of 2,500 years ago. Mahatma Gandhi was a living embodiment of Divine Life and I wish to speak a few words upon how he exemplified this Divine Life in his own person and that, I think, would indeed be a very fitting tribute to him.

In India he is still regarded not merely as a politician, but as a worshipful sage who has once again revived the ancient message of the great Indian sages of bygone ages—the message of Dharma. Dharma is a life based upon a living faith in God—in the Divine—a life of Truth, and thus he is the modern representative of these great sages who gave us our cultural idealism, and in his name I wish to place before you a little thumbnail sketch as it were, of the great Gandhian pattern of life.

He said at a certain stage of his life: “Those who think me to be a politician and those who think that my business is politics have really not understood me at all. They have totally missed the real being in me. I am a seeker or nothing at all. The truth about my life is my seeking, is my quest for God. Politics is only an incidental part of my life.”

His life was ever seeking after the great Reality and this seeking started right in his little boyhood. He was a deeply devoted son of very religious and pious parents and he got the habit of repeating *Rama Nama* even when he was a little boy going to secondary school, and his seeking developed and took the form of service of the living God in the poor masses of millions in India and, as India was at that time going through a political phase, his service took the form of political agitation on behalf of the welfare of his people but to him it was all a part and parcel of his worship of God in and through man, in and through the suffering people of India, in and through his poor and suffering brethren, and thus it was a Sadhana to him.

His life was absolutely based upon the ideal of truth, purity and compassion and his was the path of service. In his life, we see the ideals of self-discipline, of personal overcoming through ceaseless inward striving, of moderation, and a sublime simplicity, the parallel of which the world has seldom seen except perhaps in the life of Christ. Many have called him the modern Christ. Many have called him the modern St. Francis or the modern Buddha. He has been a source of great inspiration to the whole of the modern world and the world will hear much more about him in the decades to come in this century.

The source of Mahatma Gandhi’s great spiritual force was not the great following he had, for he lived a life dedicated to poverty

and he owned nothing which he called his own. The source of his spiritual force was his constant unbroken contact with God. How?—through daily prayer and the Divine Name. Not a single day passed without his setting aside all activity and turning away from all secular activity at the hour of twilight. When the sun had set, Gandhiji was found always in the middle of his little prayer group, perhaps under a spreading banyan tree, in some peaceful spot, in the corner of some compound or on a little wooden platform or stage, totally oblivious of the rest of the world and totally merged in a wonderful peace and sweetness of inward communion with God.

His prayer meetings were extraordinary. His vision of universalism in his approach to God is something of an object lesson to each one of us. His prayer contained portions of the Koran recited in Arabic, portions of the Zendavesta of the Parsis recited in their own Persian tongue, portions of Japanese prayer recited in the Japanese language, the Sanskrit hymns of the Vedas, portions from the New Testament and the Lord's prayer. Thus, practically every religion came to be a part of his invariable daily evening prayer.

There was a period of silence and all sank into meditation. There was a group chant of the Divine Name and then, coming out of his silence, meditation and communion, Mahatma Gandhi used to give a short message of five or ten minutes to the people, and always it was filled, vibrant with spirituality and a living quality which came out of this ever-fresh contact that he maintained with the Supreme Being through such daily prayer.

He was essentially a man of prayer. He had his roots in faith and in daily prayer. Thus, he has said: "Prayer is the real bread of my

life. But for prayer, I would not find it possible even to live."

The secret of all his great achievements, his strength and support for the strenuous life which he was leading was the Divine Name. The Divine Name was his constant strength and support. He was never parted from the Divine Name—the Name of Rama. To him, born as a Hindu, it was Rama, but essentially it was the Divine Name which was always on his lips and which was ever an undercurrent of his life, which few suspected, and fewer knew, and only a few who knew understood its true significance.

All his activity was activity centred in God by absolute detachment to the world and deep inward attachment to the Lord through love, worshipfulness, prayer and the spiritual link—the constantly repeated Divine Name. God was the ultimate value for Mahatma Gandhi in all his life. Not even political attainment, but God and God alone was the ultimate value in his life. He was the centre, He was the goal, He was the object of his quest and all his life thus nobly lived, all this Divine Life of Mahatma Gandhi's was but a constant seeking, through activity, amidst activity, through service of his people, for the Divine Spirit that he knew and felt to indwell all people.

Spiritualise your activities, therefore. To live a Divine Life, offer all your actions, even reading, playing tennis, to the Lord. Feel that the whole world is indwelt by Him. Feel that all your children are manifestations of the Lord. Serve humanity with such inward spiritual feeling; then all your daily activities will be transformed into spiritual exercises. They will be transformed into Yoga. Every day, side by side along with your daily duties, you have to keep up this inward contact, this link with the Divine Source through prayer, worship

and silent meditation for some time. This is your foremost duty. This should not be neglected on any account. Get up a little earlier in the morning and practise contemplation. Practise a few Yoga poses—do not neglect the body—and a few breathing exercises. Study sacred books also. Inward silence and meditation are most important. Early morning time is equally most important. Silent meditation in the early morning, even for a few minutes and in the evening, at dusk, is very important. Be alert—do not neglect this. Have a background of thought—thought of the Lord, thought of your Divine ideal. Everyone has some background of thought or other, but it is usually just worldly or sordid and material. The barrister or advocate has a background of thought filled with clients, courts, sections of the law, etc. The background of thought of a doctor is about his dispensary, injections, patients, medicines and fees. The background of thought of a grandmother is about her grandchildren and sons. The background of thought of a liver of Divine Life should be the glorious ideal of Divine attainment, should be of God, should be of a life of goodness, should be of the ideal, of the Divine Name. Cultivate Divine qualities and eradicate negative ones. Change your mental attitude towards the world, towards everything. Waste not even a single moment of your precious time. Think and talk of the

ideal, of good life, of God, of Divine Life—Life for God. Spread the message of Divine Life to one and all you meet in the course of your daily activities. When you meet a friend, do not talk about shopping, rather ask what type of meditation is being done or the latest spiritual literature being studied—let this be your conversation. Let everything about you be noble and Divine. Let everything about you be lofty. Give up idle gossiping. Abandon novel reading. They will not give you mental peace. They disturb your mental equilibrium. They will fill your mind with unnecessary painful worldly thoughts. Fill your mind, instead, with lofty Divine thoughts. Let your inward being glow with Divine radiance. Let purity permeate it. Remember always that this world is one of pain and old age and death and that your foremost duty is to realise God, to realise the Self, where alone you can find direct Peace, eternal Joy, eternal Light.

Gird up your loins and apply yourself to the living of the Divine Life. Be a practical seeker. You will attain Immortality; you will enjoy supreme Peace and eternal Joy. There is no doubt about it.

May God bless you all with health, long life, peace, prosperity, success in all your undertakings, a brilliant career, all fullness, supreme divine blessedness and supreme felicity. *(Concluded)*

Many years ago, to make us understand with what keenness, with what great sense of urgency one should engage in practical spiritual life, Gurudev wrote: “When your house is on fire, how courageously, how daringly, without caring for anything, you will plunge into the house and rescue that which is precious.” And here what you have to rescue is your own *nija svarupa* (true nature) from the clutches of desire and *maya*.
—Swami Chidananda

THE SEARCH FOR TRUTH

(Sri Swami Krishnananda)

[Continued from the previous issue]

VIII

When we wake up, what happens? The space, time and objects of dream get absorbed into our own minds. A so-called objective world of dream gets assimilated into the mind which is now awake, which contains within itself all the factors that went to constitute the dream experiencer as well as the dream objects. This analogy will give us an idea of what is going to take place in meditation. If we are consciously to wake up from dream, i.e., if we are aware of the very process of getting up from dream into the world of waking experience, if we are going to be aware of the involvement as well as the disentanglement, that would be the series of processes through which we have to pass in yoga meditation.

Instead of getting suddenly stirred up into waking by some phenomenon of which we have no knowledge, as it happens usually, if we are to be aware of every step and every stage of the working of the psyche by which it wakes up from dream, that would be a sort of analogy which can explain the process of meditation. And the comparison is this much: when we wake up, the objects of dream get absorbed into our minds and that is why they do not cause us pleasure and pain and they do not bother us afterwards. Because, they do not exist at all. They are 'we'. The objects of dream, and the space and time of dream have become what we are.

The object has become the subject. Hence, there is no pleasure, no pain in connection with the things that we saw in dream. Now, this so-called 'we', which has absorbed into itself the whole of the dream phenomena, should be regarded as inclusive of both the subject and the object of dream; we had reduced ourselves into the dream-experiencer and separated a part of ourselves into the objects in the dream-space-time. And when we wake up, they get withdrawn. This process of withdrawal is like the process of yoga. In yoga, the process is a conscious and deliberate one. It is not an unconscious occurrence or a sudden kick that we receive from somewhere. We are enabling the mind to educate itself into the true situation of things. The world outside us is connected with us in the same way as the objects of dream are connected with the dream-experiencer. The buildings that we see outside, in which we are seated, are all connected with us, even as the dream-room or the dream-buildings are connected with the dream-experience. These analogies can explain themselves.

The connection in dream was inseparable because the things were not really outside. This reference will also explain why meditation should not be considered as an activity or a business that we perform. It is not a job that we are hunting after, so that we may get tired of it. Meditation should become a

source of satisfaction and relief from tension rather than a source of exhaustion and fatigue. The more we become ourselves, the more are we free from tension. A tension is an alienation of oneself into something other than oneself. There is an unnatural distinction drawn within the function of our own psyche, a pressure exerted upon it by conditions over which it has no control and which it somehow regards as outside itself.

The withdrawal that we speak of in yoga practice is not a painful activity. It is not to be considered an activity at all. It is the regaining of the health of consciousness from the diseased state in which it is in its individualised state. If we can consider dream as an unfortunate nightmare and not a healthy state of the mind, then this objective world-experience can also not be regarded as a spiritually healthy state. That is why the sage Patanjali regards all perceptions as unnecessary activities of the mind in respect of things with which it should not concern itself. They are *vrittis*, obstacles to be overcome. In the subjugation of the *vritti*, or *vrittis-nirodha*, in yoga, every notion of objects gets transformed into a higher subjectivity. Here we have to underline the word *higher subjectivity*. It is not the empirical subjectivity we know.

The consciousness of waking is a subjectivity which is higher in dimension than the subjectivity of dream. That is why we are more free in waking than in dream. Otherwise, we would be sorry that we have woken up from sleep. We do not so feel, but are rather relieved that the nightmare has gone, the bugbear is no more, because the waking consciousness is a larger dimension of comprehension than the one in which we were as dream experiencers. So, to withdraw ourselves from objective consciousness into the subjectivity we are speaking of here does not

mean an introversion in the sense of the Freudian or the Jungian psychology and psychoanalysis. We hear of extroverts and introverts, a distinction drawn by Jung in his analytical psychology. We are not talking of this kind of introversion.

Many times, people consider yogis as introverts. It is a bad name like the one we give to the dog in order to hang it. The yogis are not introverts in the psychological sense. We may call them introverts in the same sense as we have become introverts now after waking up from dream. It is a metaphysical inwardisation of being. We introvert in this particular sense as the objects of the dream-world go into our subjectivity in waking. But, then, we do not say that we are in a morbid state when we are awake. The psychological introversion is a partial expression of the mind towards itself, bifurcating itself from extrovert activities. Jung advocates a blend of the extrovert and the introvert. Any kind of overemphasis on one side is supposed to bring a psycho-pathological condition. Yoga is far removed from it.

We have great psycho-analytic teachers like Patanjali, but their teaching is quite different. While it is true that meditation in its higher reaches is an attempt at self-withdrawal, it is not a withdrawal into this cocoon of our individual personality. Yoga is a healthy remedy that is prescribed for the illness in which the mind finds itself by alienating itself into the false notion of an outsidersness of objects, which is not really there. The *pratyahara* spoken of in the yoga system, the withdrawal of the senses from the objects, does not mean a cutting oneself off from the realities of things. If this wrong idea persists in the mind, one has to be unhappy in meditation. The mind will say, "When will this meditation be over? I shall get up and go for a

walk.” This, because we feel that going for a walk will be an entry into the reality of things from which we have withdrawn ourselves unnaturally in meditation.

The mind has a notion that, after all, the reality is outside. “I have forcefully severed myself from reality in the meditation hall, so I want to get up from this place as early as possible.” This is a sorry state of affairs. Meditation is not a withdrawal from reality, even as waking from dream is not a waking from reality into some unreality. One knows very well that waking is a greater reality than dream, and the subjectivity into which the objective consciousness withdraws itself in meditation is not the individual subject of a Mr. or a Mrs., a Tom, Dick, or Harry. Here what is considered is a larger subject which includes our present idea of a subject in ourselves and the objects outside, in the same way as the dream-subject and the dream-objects get both subsumed in the waking subject. Even when we listen to it and hear that this is going to be the true achievement in meditation, the

mind will jump into it as if it is going to enter into a river of nectar. “Oh! It is this! I am going to become a larger being in meditation than what I am today, just now! I will be more vitally connected with all things than I know now!” If the mind is convinced by an educational process, in the yoga sense of the term, it will not open its mouth afterwards.

You will forget your breakfast and lunch and dinner, you will be weeping, “When will I enter into this state?” rather than feel, “When will this meditation cease?” People have a wrong notion about meditation, about yoga, and about God Himself, an erroneous idea about themselves and their relationship with things. Before we enter into any serious attempt at meditation we have to clear our minds of all the cobwebs and the dirt and the rubbish of sentiments and prejudices which have been thrust into us by the social conditions into which we are born and remake ourselves for the purpose of the practice.

(To be continued)

AN IMPORTANT REQUEST FOR DEVOTEES

SHARE YOUR MEMORIES ABOUT SRI SWAMI CHIDANANDAJI MAHARAJ!

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

MANY FACETS OF IDENTITY

(Sri Swami Shivapremananda)

[Continued from the previous issue]

VARIOUS TYPES OF INTERACTION

The identity rhythm takes place on different levels of the mind. The first is in the unconscious through the pulsation of instincts. A flash of insight into the nature of things, called intuition, occurs on this level.

An instinctive anticipation due to repetitive experience when coming to pass is called intuition. When it does not, it is called apprehension.

Material identity functions through the mutuality of self-interest, and spiritual identity by sharing long lasting values, as integrity and compassion, duty and responsibility.

The second identity process, even if unaware, is with the universe, or in a limited scale with the world around. The elements in nature, earth, water, air, fire and ether have formed us. From earth we acquire earthiness or materialistic habits, from water thirst or zest for life, from air our desire to be a free soul, from fire we have learned to think and enlighten ourselves and others, and from ether we have the unconscious longing to be one with the universe.

Our moods also reflect the states of nature: peace of the dawn and dusk, gloom of the night, impetuosity of storm.

The third identity is in the learning process. Unconsciously we relate our experiences with that of the others, and sense ourselves in the characters moving through the pages of a novel or biography. It takes place in the memory field, or the subconscious. By thinking, rationalising, we develop a sense of being.

Two-thirds of the time when we are awake, the conscious aspect, *manas*, is the least active, except during doing something that needs concentration. Memories pulsate through most of the waking state. When thinking, the mind is mostly projected into the past, having to deal with memories. For short periods it is directed to the future, when day-dreaming.

Vast reaches of the mind are in the unconscious, very little of which is explored either in the past by the scriptures, or in recent times by the psychoanalysts since less than a hundred years.

Also on the conscious level, the *I* expresses itself metaphysically by the formation of ideals to guide one's life, learning from classical literature and scriptures, and personal experience. It evaluates desires, attachment, affection, recurrent resentment and moods, and tries to correct its position when wrong.

SEARCH FOR UNDERSTANDING

On the fourth level, identity is interventionist. Observing that natural laws favour the strong and the astute at the expense of the weak and the gullible, social philosophy fashions political safety nets to protect the weak and the disadvantaged. Natural evolution being a slow process, the spiritual part in ourselves, *atma* or soul, prompts intervention.

Serious philosophy, as opposed to being spaced out, searches for an understanding of

our relatedness to the world around. Social philosophy is a product of the search for justice and fairplay, humanity, and brother-and-sisterhood.

Metaphysical experience not only enriches life on the emotional level, as in the capacity to love and be loved, but enables the enactment of better laws with a moral responsibility to one another, safeguarding against corruption due to the inherent greed in human nature, specially among those in power.

Fifth, identity is adaptive. The loss of an emotional bond causes suffering of course. When self-pity is deep, emotional recovery takes a long time. The *I* adapts itself to the circumstances, seeking fulfilment on a lesser level. Physically, the loss of an eye is tragic at first. The other eye learns to adapt to the environment, taking over the function of the lost eye.

Sixth, identity is shaped by behaviour which is induced by self-interest, and improved by overriding metaphysical values of identifying our good with that of the others, learning how not to treat others as we ourselves would not want. This is well expressed by the saying of Rabbi Hillel, a contemporary of Jesus Christ: "If I am not for myself, who shall be? If I am only for myself, what am I? If not now, when?"

STATES OF CONSCIOUSNESS

Identity is formed and influenced in the four states of consciousness, although principally in the first, *jagrata* or waking. In it all the three levels of the mind, the conscious, subconscious and unconscious, interact. In the dreaming state, *swapna*, the subconscious pulsates by itself, making up fantastic stories with the help of recent and distant memories. The conscious mind, *manas*, has no access to it, although capable of planting suggestions on a limited scale, such as in trying to remember a name or a place.

In the state of dreamless sleep, *sushupti*, both the conscious and the subconscious are inactive, but the unconscious functions autonomously. The unconscious also functions by itself when the conscious and the subconscious are active. Yogic tradition says that there is another level of consciousness transcending the three. It is called *turiya*, in which the *I* is consciously close to its spiritual core, the soul. In other cultures also there is a presumption of a superconscious state.

Instinct is genetically-determined behaviour. Learning is a behaviour modified by experience. Instinct is an unconscious reaction to the impulse to survive, for example, projecting as hunger. It arises in the unconscious, processes itself in the subconscious by determining how to satisfy it according to its preferences, and access to what is available.

The instinct to be happy is primordial, beginning with the pleasure-principle to be satisfied through the senses, and avoiding unpleasant experiences. This must have originated in the early stages of the *homo sapiens*, some two hundred thousand years ago.

However, the desire to be happy through emotional fulfilment rather than sensual satisfaction may have evolved much later, as evidenced in the scriptures, not much earlier than three thousand years. It shows in the literal meaning of the word 'religion' coined possibly in the medieval times, *religare* or to retie. It means to retie our consciousness with its forgotten spiritual source.

Lack of satisfaction with the limited, or the materially-tangible, makes us seek within a pre-conscious experience of the illimitable. The fact that the mind cannot desire something of which there is no prior experience, even if preconceived genetically, shows the validity of the human being's longing for spiritual roots. It is verifiable through universal reference.

(To be continued)

CHANGING OUR ANGLE OF VISION

(Sri Swami Atmaswarupananda)

Many seekers feel that the most important thing in their spiritual life is to have an understanding of the ultimate truth. Others feel that it is more important to have an emotional connection with God. Still others like to experience God in their meditation or to enquire into who they are.

However, ultimately, no matter what path we prefer, or what combination of paths, Gurudev and Pujya Swami Chidanandaji want us to understand that finally spiritual life is in being and doing: Be good. Do good. In other words, it is what we become; it is how we are transformed. Our spiritual life is not meant to be so much a subjective experience as it is how we act in this world objectively. Has it made us into a different human being, a human being that reflects what we have learned and felt—rather than one who is just looking for further personal experiences?

We need to recognize that our spiritual practices are not primarily designed to give us experiences. They are designed to transform us, and this is how they should be judged and how we should judge ourselves. Thus we recognize the importance of such things as New Year resolutions and being determined to express ever higher aspects of divinity in our own life. This means that we must introspect. We must see what we are doing and how we think. Then we come to the most delicate part of all.

Do we see ourselves from the old point of view: “I am the body. I am doing something good or I am doing something bad”? Or do we see ourselves from the point of view of the truth: “That alone is. It is trying to evolve in manifestation into ever higher and better ways of being and doing”? If we are acting in a negative way, it cannot be according to the will of That. Therefore, we should change.

Still more important: We are That and our actions are That. Therefore, whatever change is required is a universal process, not a personal one. If we consider this process to be personal, then one moment we will be proud of ourselves, the next moment down in the dumps thinking that we are hopeless; whereas, if we see it as a universal process, we will be steady. We will see exactly what needs to be done and do the needful.

Spiritual practices that make God real to us have a very important part to play in our spiritual life. They connect us with God and remind us that everything is universal. But they are not an end in themselves. Being and doing is the end. Therefore, we must ever keep that in mind, but we must also ensure that we be and do from the angle of vision that we have learned from our spiritual practices—that all is One alone.

The true nature of God and His creation cannot be intellectually comprehended, for logic is a proud child of the dualist prejudice.

—Swami Krishnananda

Yoga for Health

BHASTRIKA

(Sri Swami Chidananda)

Bhastrika means bellows. Rapid succession of forcible exhalations is a characteristic feature of the Pranayama.

TECHNIQUE

Sit in any of the postures. Rapid and deep expulsion and intake of breath through the nostrils should follow one another in quick succession. With each expulsion and inhalation of breath, contraction and expansion of abdomen should be there. Start with six, eight or ten expulsions of breath for one round, according to your capacity. The final expulsion in each round should be followed by deep inhalation and retention of breath as long as you feel comfortable. Rest a while after one round of Bhastrika. Care should be taken that

unnecessary pressure is not given on the lungs. Beginners may start with two or three rounds, each round consisting of six to ten expulsions, one expulsion per second. Gradually increase the number of the exhalations and inhalations to 20-30 per round, keeping the number of rounds to 2 or 3.

BENEFITS

Bhastrika relieves inflammation of the throat, increases the gastric fire, destroys accumulation of phlegm, removes the diseases of the nose and chest and eradicates asthma, constipation, excess of wind and bile. It gives warmth to the body. The practitioner will keep good health.

ANNOUNCEMENT

DIVINE LIFE SOCIETY, CHANDIGARH

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

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

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

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

—The Divine Life Society

BRAHMACHARYA AND URDHVARETA YOGI

(H.H. Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj)

[Continued from the previous issue]

Anger and muscular energy can also be transmuted into Ojas. A man who has great deal of Ojas in his brain can turn out immense mental work. He is very intelligent. He has a magnetic aura in his face and lustrous eyes. He can influence the people by uttering a few words. A short speech can produce tremendous impression on the minds of hearers. His speech is thrilling. He has an awe-inspiring personality. Sankara, an Akhanda Brahmacharin, worked wonders through his powers of Ojas. He did Dik-Vijaya and held controversies and heated debates in different parts of the country with the learned scholars through his powers of Ojas. A Yogi always directs his attention in the accumulation of this divine energy by unbroken chastity.

Preserve the vital fluid very, very carefully, my dear readers! Become an Urdhvareta Yogi through purity of thought, word and deed.

The body of a man who is truly an Urdhvaretas has the scent of lotus. A man who is not Brahmachari in whom gross semen is formed, may, on the other hand, smell like a buck goat. The semen dries up in those who practise Pranayama seriously. The semen-energy ascends up to the brain. It is stored up as Ojas Sakti (spiritual energy) and comes back as Amrita or nectar.

More energy is wasted during copulation. The whole nervous system is shaken or agitated during the act. But it is not so when

emission occurs during the dreaming state. Further, the actual essence does not come out during wet dreams. It is only the watery prostatic juice with a little semen, that is discharged during nocturnal pollutions. When nocturnal emission takes place, the mind which was working in the inner astral body suddenly enters the physical body in an agitated condition. That is the reason why emission takes place suddenly.

The energy that is wasted during one sexual intercourse is tantamount to the physical energy that is spent in physical labour for ten days or mental energy that is utilised in mental work for three days. Mark how precious is the vital fluid semen!

Glory to those Yogis who have attained Urdhvareta or full sex sublimation and who are resting in their own Svarupa. May we all practise perfect celibacy through the practice of Sama (control of mind), Dama (control of senses), Viveka (discrimination), Vichara (enquiry), Vairagya (dispassion), Pranayama (breath-control), Japa (repetition of the Lord's Name), Dhyana (meditation) and reach the goal of life. May the Indweller of our hearts grant us spiritual strength to control the Indriyas (senses) and mind! May we all become full Urdhvareta Yogis like Sri Sankara and Sri Jnana Dev of yore! May their blessings be upon us all!

THERMOMETER IN BRAHMACHARYA

A man has a thousand and one desires. But the central, strong desire is sexual desire. All hang on this central basic desire. Desire for money, desire for son, desire for property, desire for houses, desire for cattle, etc., come later on. Because the whole creation of this universe is to be kept up, God has made the sexual desire very, very powerful. Otherwise many Jivanmuktas would have cropped up quite easily, just as graduates from universities. It is easy to get University qualifications. It demands a little money, memory, intelligence and a little strain. But it is an uphill climb to obliterate the sexual impulse. He who has completely eradicated lust and is established in mental Brahmacharya is Brahman or God Himself.

There is always a complaint amongst men that they do not get good success in Brahmacharya despite their earnest efforts and sincere practices. They get unnecessar-

ily alarmed and discouraged. It is a sad mistake. There is a barometric reading and thermometric registration in the spiritual realm also. It is very subtle. The spiritual barometer registers or indicates advancement in mental purity even to the minutest degree. You want a Suddha Buddhi (pure intellect) to comprehend the degree of purity. Intense Sadhana, burning Vairagya and Mumukshutva (burning desire for liberation) bring in the highest degree of mental purity quickly.

Even if any one repeats Gayatri or Om for half an hour daily, the spiritual thermometer registers at once a minute degree of Brahmacharya or purity. You are unable to note it on account of your impure Buddhi. Do Sadhana for one or two years regularly and then compare your present state of mind with that of the previous year. You will surely find a vast change. You will experience or feel more calmness, more purity and more force and strength. There is no doubt of this. A great deal of exertion is needed. *(Concluded)*

Applicable in India only

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

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

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

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

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

Sivananda's Gospel of Divine Life

VEDAS—THE WISDOM-SOURCE

LOVE FOR ALL

As it was raining, the evening Satsanga programme was extended and the Ganga Arati delayed. So the Master called upon the daughters of Srimati Liliane to deliver short lectures.

A local resident of Rishikesh got a bit offended because his children also were not given an opportunity of speaking at the Satsanga. He was fond of criticising the Ashram activities, too.

But the Master's patience and love know no limits. He does not even adopt an attitude of indifference towards those who carp and cavil at him or at the institution. To them also he extends his love.

The next day the first items on the programme were lectures by the children of the local resident. And the Master presented Rs. 10 to them as a token of his love and appreciation.

MAINTAIN SPIRITUAL DIARY

Sarala Deviji was a very earnest aspirant and a pure-hearted Bhakta.

"Swamiji, kindly tell me some method of controlling this mind. It seems that we will never be able to control it." Her husband just looked on.

"Do Japa. Be regular in your Sadhana. Do Kirtan also. Through practice alone will you be able to control the mind. You should maintain a spiritual diary. Now you are not doing this."

"I do maintain the diary, Swamiji."

The Master's face brightened.

"But I am ashamed of sending it to you as my Sadhana is very irregular."

"Whatever little you practise and however irregularly, you should send me the diary. Then only will there be the inducement to

be regular in daily Sadhana and to evolve rapidly."

REAL SPIRITUAL PRACTICE

"Swamiji, I require your blessings. I am thinking of leaving for Benares today," said Sri Ramachandra Iyer, who had a slight misunderstanding with some other workers in the Ashram and had decided to leave.

"Beloved Ram, sit down. Do not jump to conclusions. Think twice before you act. Now tell me, for what purpose have you come here?"

"I have come to do Sadhana and realise God, Swamiji." "Do you know what Sadhana is?"

"I have read in your books, Swamiji, that Sadhana is self-control, Japa, Kirtan and service."

"Have you thought over the matter for a moment? Is this action of yours in leaving the Ashram and going to Benares in consonance with your own resolve of doing Sadhana and realising God?"

Silence.

"Sadhana is, as you yourself have rightly said, self-control. Self-control means the maintenance of mental equilibrium under all conditions and circumstances. A minor remark from someone has upset you greatly; you are not able to bear a little harsh word."

"But, Swamiji, such things disturb my peace of mind. I wish to have peace."

"Will you get that peace in Benares only? If you do not get peace of mind here, you will not get it anywhere else. Peace is within you. Think again. Stay here for another three days more. Then come and tell me if you still feel like going to Benares." *Silence.*

Children's Page

WHAT IS YOUR RELATIONSHIP TO GOD

(Sri Swami Ramarajyam)

This is the story of the wife of a saint, named Neelnakkar, who was a devotee of Lord Siva. Once she was performing the worship of Lord Siva in a temple with her husband. All of a sudden, a spider fell on the Sivalinga and began to crawl along it. The woman saw the spider. She knew that it was poisonous and if it touched any part of the body, a rash would appear on it (the affected part). She realised that the Lord must be suffering pain. She felt restless like a worried mother eager to protect her child from the poison of such a spider. She blew hard on the Sivalinga immediately. The spider crawled away. She also spat on that spot in the Sivalinga where the spider had fallen. (Mothers generally adopt this method to neutralise the spider's poison). Neelnakkar's wife felt relaxed but Neelnakkar lost his temper. He shouted, "What have you done? You spat on the Sivalinga! You have defiled it."

The wife was non-plussed. It had not occurred to her that the Sivalinga might be thus defiled. She began to tremble with fear. The husband said, "I desert you." And, he left for his home. The sad wife kept sitting in the temple.

At night Lord Siva appeared in the dream of Neelnakkar and said to him—"What have you done! You deserted your wife! Look, my body is full of rashes due to that spider. Only that spot is unaffected by them where your wife had spat. You could not dis-

cover a mother's heart in your wife. She is my mother—really my mother. She did her best to save me from rashes."

Neelnakkar woke up all of a sudden and ran to his wife to apologise to her.

This story is related to a woman of whom very few people know, but Lord Siva regarded her as His mother. Sivalinga was not a mere piece of stone to her. It was, to her, Lord Siva Himself. That was the reason why she became restless when she saw the spider on the Sivalinga and was extremely eager to protect the Lord from the poison of the spider. She forgot about what was holy and what was unholy. Whatever she did, she did like a loving mother, a caring mother, eager to protect her son against the spider's poison.

Dear children, you should also, like Neelnakkar's wife, be related to the Lord. The Lord will approve of whatever relationship you like between you and Him. If you take Him to be a friend, He would be your friend; if you take Him to be a brother, He would be your brother; if you take Him to be your father, He would be a father to you. Note that it would be possible only when you are sincerely and truthfully related to the Lord and are devoted to Him. Ever remembering your relationship with Him, you should express your inner feelings and tell Him your problems and also seek His guidance to march ahead in life.

The only truth is the here and now God and the fact that He abides in you and you abide in Him. Live in this truth! Glory be to each and every one of you! Glory be to God who has thus graced you!

—Swami Chidananda

NEWS AND REPORTS

NEWS FROM THE HEADQUARTERS

SEVA THROUGH SIVANANDA HOME

The Divine Life Society Headquarters continues rendering its humble service through Sivananda Home, situated in Tapovan near Laxman Jhula. A Home with medical facilities for sick destitute people, for the ones ostracized from their home and hearth, left alone under the broad open sky, without orientation, without direction and without any provision. But though our wanderings may be aimless and fruitless, the arrow on the bow of His LOVE is always ready to be shot. Is it ever possible to be out of the Holy Sight and Heart of the Almighty Source?

Even in this cold winter season, every day seems to bring a miracle with it—a miracle of love and compassion, a sign of His Presence, a touch of his Hand, a Promise of not being forgotten. So easily, the days come and go and things seem to be as they are and life goes on, as it were. But suddenly we are woken up, by coming into contact with a fellow man or woman, who struggles every single minute of the day, whose fingers are not there anymore, whose eyesight has been taken away by a progressive disease, which could not be treated in time. In reference to an elderly patient (admitted this month) who is suffering from leprosy in an advanced stage and therefore both his hands, feet and eyes are handicapped; the patient of course is undergoing medical treatment, but though improving, certain handicaps are irreversible.

More than half of the inward patients of the Home are seniors, above seventy, with handicaps and other different age-related mental and physical challenges. To be able to accept life as it comes, to be content in whatever condition and situation one is placed, is a great gift and a boon in itself. Very often we struggle and resist, wanting something else, wanting to be somewhere else, with somebody else, at another time, another place and so on. To see the patience of many a patient, to behold the faith and devotion of a silent sufferer, to observe the smile on the face of him, whose health is failing and whose time is but short, makes one step back and become still. Om Shanti Shanti Shantih.

“Are you not harvesting even this very moment the life of every man and woman that ever walked this Earth? What is your speech, but the harvest of their speech? What are your thoughts, then, the gleaning of their thoughts? Your very clothes and dwellings, your food, your implements, your laws, your traditions and conventions of those who had been and gone before? Aye, when old age is upon a man, then is the time, my companions, to lend him ears and eyes, and give him hands and feet, and brace his failing strength with love so as to make him feel that he is not a whit less dear to Life in his waning years than he was in his waxing babyhood and youth.” (Mirdad)

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

**CULTURAL TOUR OF H.H. SRI SWAMI VIMALANANDAJI MAHARAJ,
PRESIDENT, THE DIVINE LIFE SOCIETY**

Swami Sivananda Cultural Association, Amar Colony, New Delhi and Sri H.D. Sharmaji, cordially invited H.H. Sri Swami Vimalanandaji Maharaj, President, The Divine Life Society, to visit the Delhi Branch on his way to Chidananda Hermitage Shanti Ashram, Baliguali, Puri and to give Satsanga to the devotees in Delhi. Accordingly Sri Swamiji reached Delhi on 13th December, 2008. On 14th December, 2008 Sri H.D. Sharmaji along with other office-bearers gave a traditional reception to Swamiji Maharaj with Purna Kumbha and garlands. Sri Sharmaji introduced Swamiji to the devotees assembled there citing the glorious service Swamiji has rendered to two Great Masters, Worshipful Gurudev Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj and Worshipful H.H. Sri Swami Chidanandaji Maharaj. Swamiji gave Satsanga with Bhajans, Kirtans and a brief talk. After the Satsanga the devotees met Swamiji personally for blessings. Revered Sri Swami Sevanandaji Maharaj, Sri Swami Vaikunthanandaji Maharaj and Sri Swami Dharmanistanandaji Maharaj, all from Headquarters Ashram accompanied Sri Swamiji Maharaj and gave Satsanga to the devotees of Delhi.

Under the loving invitation from the organizers of the 3rd State Level Sadhana Ganga programme at Chidananda Hermitage Shanti Ashram, Baliguali, Puri, H.H. Sri Swami Vimalandaji Maharaj, President, Divine Life Society, Headquarters along with Sri Swami Nirliptanandaji Maharaj, Vice-President, Sri Swami Sevanandaji, Sri Swami Vaikunthanandaji and Sri Swami Dharmanistanandaji left for Chidananda Hermitage Shanti Ashram, Baliguali, Puri, Orissa. Swamiji Maharaj arrived at Bhubaneswar Airport on 15th December 2008 at 9.15 p.m. Hundreds of devotees along with the Managing Committee Members of the State level Sadhana Ganga Programme Sri Bipra Charan Patra, Sri Jaya Chandra Nayak, Sri Kailash Chandra Sahu and Managing Committee Members of Sivananda Centenary Boys' High School, Khandagiri, Bhubaneswar, Members of the DLS Branches of Bhubaneswar, Puri, Cuttack and Jajpur Road, received and welcomed Swamiji and

others with a rousing reception with garlands and bouquets.

Swamiji Maharaj reached Chidananda Hermitage Shanti Ashram, Baliguali at about 11.45 p.m. A warm welcome was accorded to the party in the presence of hundreds of devotees with very big and beautiful garlands. The party was taken with a grand procession from Puri-Konark Marine Drive Road to the Main Gate of Chidananda Hermitage Shanti Ashram with Mahamantra Kirtan by the devotees. The atmosphere was charged by the Jayadhwani of Gurudev and the Divine Name of the Lord. Vedic Scholars received Swamiji Maharaj with Vedic chanting and Arati. Thereafter, Pujya Swamiji entered Chidananda Divya Nama Mandir and offered Pranams to Nama Bhagavan. Amidst Vedic chanting, Pujya Swamiji Maharaj was led to Vishranti Kutir of Pujya Swami Chidanandaji Maharaj which was well decorated by light, flowers and garlands.

On 16th December 2008 Swamiji left for Jatni (Khurda Road) to attend the Golden Jubilee Celebration of Divine Life Society Khurda Road Branch, where Swamiji and others were greeted by hundreds of devotees. On arrival, Swamiji immediately conducted soul-stirring Kirtan in the Satsanga hall of the Branch. Swamiji hoisted the flag of the Divine Life Society, and unveiled the newly constructed Sivananda Pillar to commemorate the Golden Jubilee. Thereafter, Swamiji Maharaj along with Sri Swami Nirliptanandaji Maharaj distributed blankets to hundreds of "Narayana" of "Divyajeevan Arogya Kendra," (Leprosy Care Centre which was started by Worshipful Swami Chidanandaji Maharaj in the year 1976), Jatni.

Sri Swamiji Maharaj inspired the devotees assembled in his inimitable usual humble way and advised to practise Karma Yoga for purification of the heart. Swamiji said "Karma Yoga and constant Nama Smarana lead Sadhaks to God-realisation." All Ex-Presidents, Secretaries and veteran Sevaks of the Jatni Branch were honoured for their selfless services.

On invitation of the Managing Committee of the School, Pujya Swamiji and the party reached

Sivananda Centenary Boys' High School, Khandagiri, Bhubaneswar at 2.30 p.m. This is the Silver Jubilee Year of this value-based educational institution established in the year 1984 in the Name of Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj. Sri Swami Sivachidanandaji Maharaj, Sri Bhagirathi Mohapatra along with the Managing Committee Members, Headmaster, Teachers, Students and Sevaks received Sri Swamiji and party on their arrival. The Scout students led Sri Swamiji to Gurukutir to the beat of Drums and Bugle.

In the evening Puja Swamiji met the students, the teachers and the inmates in the Prayer Hall for a Satsanga. Swamiji inspired the students by telling a beautiful story about how one can succeed in one's endeavour by continuous efforts and persevering. He advised them to cultivate the principles of truth, non-violence, purity and to follow Gandhiji's way of simple living and high thinking to become ideal citizens of the Nation.

On the 17th December, at 9.00 a.m. Swamiji Maharaj hoisted the Divine Life flag at Chidananda Hermitage Shanti Ashram and requested the devotees to hold aloft the Flag of Divine Life by leading a life of Satya, Ahimsa, Brahmacharya and selfless service. The inaugural function commenced with Vedic Chanting, garlanding Lord Jagannath and Gurudev. Swamiji Maharaj inaugurated the function by lighting the lamp. During the inaugural address, Puja Swamiji Maharaj expressed that "Gurudev Swami Sivananda Maharaj and Puja Sri Swami Chidanandaji Maharaj are working through everyone and we are only instruments in their hands."

Swamiji also said in his inaugural address "There are many temples at Puri but devotees visit Jagannath temple in lakhs, for God is awakened here as a living deity. Similarly God is fully awakened in Swami Chidanandaji Maharaj. So you are all here."

Thereafter every day Puja Swamiji Maharaj delivered talks in the evening Satsanga for all the five days on his Sadhana-related personal spiritual experiences with Gurudev Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj for 10 years and with Worshipful Sri Swami Chidanandaji Maharaj for more than 40 years.

The general theme of various talks was "Tava Kathamritam". The narration of the various

experiences which puja Swamiji had with Worshipful Gurudev Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj and Worshipful H.H. Sri Swami Chidanandaji Maharaj was literally "Tava Kathamritam" for the disciples and devotees (Gopis) of Utkal Pradesh. All the talks of Swamiji were translated into simple Oriya by H.H. Sri Swami Nirliptanandaji Maharaj, daily during his concluding address.

On 18th December at 11.55 a.m. Sri Swamiji Maharaj did Bhumi Puja for "Chidananda Dhyana Mandir" in front of Vishranti Kutir of Chidananda Tapovan Shanti Ashram. Swamiji also gave Mantra Diksha to devotees.

Swamiji visited the temple of Lord Jagannath, Puri to have the Darshan of the Lord at the early hours of the 18th December and again on the night of the 21st December along with Sri Swami Nirliptanandaji Maharaj.

All the five days the devotees were thrilled to hear the talks of Swamiji Maharaj, who spoke about his experiences, lessons he received from the holy Masters in his usual humble and simple style. Pin-drop silence was reigning all along although 3500 devotees were sitting and imbibing the talk.

Swamiji Maharaj thanked Swami Jitamohanandaji, the in-charge of the Baliguali Ashram, the organizers of the Sadhana-Ganga, the devotees who participated in the programme for making the Annual Sadhana-Ganga a grand Success.

On the 22nd December, 2008 Swamiji Maharaj along with Swami Sevanandaji, Swami Vaikunthanandaji, Swami Dharmanistanandji and Br.Malayji left for Jajpur to have the Darshan of Mother 'Viraja' which is a 'Puranic Pitha'. Puja Swamiji Maharaj and the party were welcomed at the temple and were honoured with Arati. Thereafter, puja Swamiji blessed the house of Sri Kailash Chandra Sahooji (Divine Home), at Jajpur Road and had Satsanga. Parama Puja Swami Chidanandaji Maharaj had visited and stayed at Sri Sahooji's house on several occasions.

Swamiji Maharaj along with the party also blessed the house of Sri Bipra Charan Patraji at Bhubaneswar and gave Satsanga and stayed there overnight and left for Delhi on 23rd December, 2008.

CULTURAL TOUR OF H.H. SRI SWAMI PADMANABHANANDAJI MAHARAJ

Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, with a view to inculcate value based education to the student community runs schools and colleges in various cities and towns in India. In all the Career Oriented Educational Institutions run by them study of the cultural heritage of India is included as a compulsory subject to inculcate certain fundamental moral values. Sardar Patel College of Communications and Management of the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Delhi, invited Sri Swami Padmanabhanandaji Maharaj to deliver a lecture on the "Structure and Content of Vedas" and their relevance to the culture of India, to the post graduate students of communication and management. Sri Swamiji accordingly visited the college and delivered an interactive lecture on 17th January 2009. The lecture was received well. The students also asked questions after the lecture. Prof. N. N. Pillai, Principal, thanked Swamiji and requested him to visit the college and to meet the students again whenever possible.

On 18th January 2009 Sri Swamiji along with Sri Swami Vaikuntananda participated in the Sahsrnama Yagna (Havan) conducted by Sri Swami Sivananda Cultural Association at Sivananda Satsang Bhavan, Amar Colony, New Delhi. Following the Yagna there was a brief Satsanga and Bhandara. In the Afternoon Sri Swamiji visited the Divine Life Society Branch, Gurgaon and attended the Satsanga.

On the invitation from Pujya Gnaneswari Mataji, Sri Swamiji visited "Shanti Ashram" Thottapalli, A.P. and participated in the 115th Birthday Celebrations of Sri Swami Omkar. Sri Swamiji also inaugurated the website of the Shanthy Ashram, www.santhyashram.org and delivered a lecture.

From Shanti Ashram, Thottapalli Sri Swamiji proceeded to Karawadi Village in Ongole District in Andhra Pradesh where the 35th All Andhra Divine Life Society Conference was held from 23rd to 25th January 2009. The Conference was very well organised in a small village Karawadi by Sri Saibabu, Smt. Gita, Sri N. Chengal Reddy and others. About 3,000 village folk participated in the three-day conference. The conference was unique in many aspects. The message of Worshipful Gurudev was taken to the grass-root Level. Sri Swamiji addressed the gathering on all the three days. Besides Sri Swamiji, eminent scholars: Smt. B. Aruna Devi, Secunderabad. Sri M.T. Alwar, Hindupur, Sri Sanmudrala Lakshmaniyah, Sri C. Venkata Sessaiah, Guntur, Dr. N. Dikshit, H.H. Sri Swami Vidya Swaroopananda of Sri Sukabrahma Ashram, Srikalahasti, Sri Swami Omananda, Sri Swami Prasannananda, addressed the gathering on various days on the life and teachings of Sri Worshipful Sri Swami Sivanandaji and Sri Swami Chidanandaji and the Divine Life Movement.

Sri Swamiji then proceeded to Bhoga Nandi Hills—a village situated about 60 k.m. away from Bangalore. The Bangalore Divine Life Society organised a Retreat Programme on 26th January 2009. Swamiji attended the retreat and delivered a talk on the life of Gurudev. Swamiji also visited the Divine Life Society Branch Bangalore on 27th and had Satsanga with devotees. On 28th Sri Swamiji visited Sri Geeta Ashram run by Sri Swami Omanandaji Maharaj where about 80 orphan children are staying. Sri Swami Omanandaji though the Geeta Ashram is helping the orphan children to study in various schools nearby. Swamiji addressed the children and had Satsanga with them.

REPORTS FROM THE D.L.S. BRANCHES

A summary of the Regular Activities of the Divine Life Society Branches reported to us is given below:

INDIAN BRANCHES

Ahiwara (Chhattisgarh): Daily evening Satsanga; special Puja and Mahamrityunjaya Mantra Japa on Ekadasis.

Ambala (Haryana): Daily Satsanga with additional features of Mantra Japa on Sundays, Mondays and Wednesdays, recitation of Sri Hanuman hymns on Tuesdays and Saturdays, Bhajans on Thursdays and Fridays; video Satsanga on the second Sunday every month; homoeopathy clinics.

Badakuanl (Orissa): Twice-a-day Puja, recitation of hymns and one thousand names of Sri Gopala in the morning and of Sri Vishnu-sahasranama Stotram, Bhajan-kirtan and Srimad Bhagavata Parayana in the evening; Paduka Puja in the morning and weekly Satsanga in the evening on Thursdays; Paduka Puja on Sivananda Day; special Kirtan at the Branch as well as in nearby villages; Kirtan on Ekadasis.

Balangir (Orissa): Satsanga on Saturdays; Paduka Puja at the residence of devotees on Sundays.

Barbil (Orissa): Weekly Satsanga on Thursdays; Sivananda Charitable Homoeopathy Dispensary—more than 400 patients are treated every month.

Bargarh (Orissa): Twice-a-day Puja; weekly Satsanga on Saturdays; daily Svadhyaya and Yoga class; monthly Sadhana day with Narayana Seva; Srimad Bhagavad

Gita class on Sundays; homoeopathy clinic; monthly magazine.

Bellary (Karnataka): Daily Puja; Satsanga and Paduka Puja on Sundays.

Berhampur (Orissa): Paduka Puja on Thursdays, Sivananda Day and Chidananda Day; weekly Satsanga on Sundays; Srimad Bhagavad Gita Parayana on Ekadasis; Sri Sundarakanda Parayana on Sankranti.

Bhanjanagar (Orissa): Sunday Satsanga with Svadhyaya of 'Ponder These Truths'; Ekadasi Satsanga with Sri Vishnu-sahasranama Stotram and other Stotra Parayana.

Bhavanipatna (Orissa): Bi-weekly Satsanga on Thursdays and Sundays; Paduka Puja on Sivananda Day and Sadhana day; monthly Sadhana day.

Bhilai (Chhattisgarh): Matri-satsanga on Tuesdays with recitation of Sri Hanuman hymns and on Fridays with that of Sri Lalita-sahasranama; Parayana of Srimad Bhagavad Gita and Sri Vishnu-sahasranama Stotram during the two Ekadasi Satsangas.

Bhubaneswar (Orissa): Satsanga on Thursdays; 12-hour Akhanda Mantra Japa on Chidananda Day.

Bikaner (Rajasthan): Twice-a-day Puja and special Puja on Pradosha day; daily 2-hour Satsanga with Svadhyaya of Gurudev's books; Matri-satsanga on the second Tuesday and last Saturday every month; Paduka Puja and spe-

cial Satsanga on Sivananda Day; Yajna and special Satsanga on Chidananda Day.

Bilaspur (Chhattisgarh): Weekly Satsanga.

Bhimakand (Orissa): Daily Paduka Puja; Satsanga on Sundays.

Chandigarh: Daily evening Satsanga with Svadhyaya of Sri Ramacharit-manas; Satsanga on Sunday mornings with Svadhyaya of Bhagavad Gita, 'Sadhana' and 'A Call to Liberation'; monthly mobile Satsanga; daily Yogasana class in the morning and evening; homoeopathy clinic; spiritual library; free food to 200 poor on Sundays; 12-hour Akhanda Japa of Mahamantra on Sivananda Day.

Chatrapur (Orissa): Daily evening Satsanga; weekly Satsanga on Thursdays; Paduka Puja on Sivananda Day and Chidananda Day; Sri Sundarakanda Parayana on Sankranti.

Chennai, Anna Nagar (Tamil Nadu): Daily Yogasana class and also special class for women and children thrice a week; free Sanskrit class for Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan's examinations.

Chikiti (Orissa): Paduka Puja in the morning and Satsanga in the evening on Thursdays.

Gandhinagar (Gujarat): Thrice a week Satsanga; daily Yogasana session for women in the evening and for all in the morning; Yogasana training class from 1st to 10th every month; Homoeopathy clinic; Swami Sivananda Library; Narayana Seva on Sivananda Day; Narayana Seva for school children on

Chidananda Day; financial aid to a leprosy colony and to poor patients.

Ghatpadamur, Jagdalpur (Chhattisgarh): Daily morning prayer, meditation, recitation in its Sivananda Ashram; daily half an hour Sankirtan; daily evening Satsanga; Paduka Puja on Thursdays; Sri Sundarakanda Parayana on Saturdays; Sri Vishnu-sahasranama Stotra Parayana on Sundays; daily Yogasana class.

Gumergunda (Chhattisgarh): 3-time Puja in Sri Viswanath Mandir and Samadhi Mandir in the local Sivananda Ashram; daily morning prayer-meditation; daily Yogasana class; 2-hour evening Satsanga; Paduka Puja on Thursdays; Sri Sundarakanda Parayana on Saturdays; recitation of Lord Siva hymns on Mondays; Sri Devi hymns on Fridays.

Jaipur, Malaviya Nagar (Rajasthan): Daily one hour meditation session; daily Svadhyaya in the study group; Havan and Satsanga on Sundays; Matri-satsanga on Fridays; daily Yogasana class; Narayana Seva on Tuesdays; homoeopathy clinic.

Jaipur, Raja Park (Rajasthan): Mahamrityunjaya Mantra collective Japa for one and half hours on Thursdays; Sri Sundarakanda Parayana on Saturdays; weekly Satsanga on Sundays; daily Satsanga on other days of the week; Matri-satsanga on Mondays; Swami Sivananda Homoeopathy Clinic treated 1102 patients in October 2008; daily free Yogasana class; Swami Sivananda Spiritual Library; doling out Rs.3750/- to 25 poor widows; daily distribution of food to about 300 poor; dis-

tributed 108 kg., dry rations in a leprosy colony; scholarships to 80 students.

Jajpur Road (Orissa): Daily Paduka Puja; weekly Satsanga on Thursdays; grand Paduka Puja and Narayana Seva on Sivananda Day.

Jeypore (Orissa): Twice-a-day Puja; weekly Satsanga on Sundays; mobile Satsanga at the residence of devotees on Thursdays; Havan, special Puja and Prasad on Sivananda Day.

Kantabanji (Orissa): Satsanga on Sundays with meditation and study of Bhagavad Gita

Khatiguda (Orissa): Satsanga on Thursdays; Ekadasi Satsanga with Sri Vishnu-sahasranama Stotra Parayana; monthly Sadhana day on the first Sunday every month.

Khurda Road-Jatni (Orissa): Monthly Sadhana day on 13th day of the dark fortnight being the Punyatithi of H.H. Sri Swami Chidanandaji Maharaj.

Khurja (U.P.): Sunday Satsanga with Svadhyaya; Sankirtan on Ekadasis by Matri-mandal in the afternoon and by men in the evening; daily Yogasana class for men in the morning and for women in the evening; monetary help to poor women.

Kothavalasa (A.P.): Satsanga on Mondays.

Nabha (Punjab): Weekly Satsanga with Svadhyaya on Sundays.

Nandini Nagar (Chhattisgarh): Daily Brahma-muhurta session of prayer, meditation, Stotra-path; weekly mobile Satsanga on Thurs-

days; Saturday Matri-satsanga with Sri Sundarakanda Parayana; Parayana of Srimad Bhagavad Gita and Sri Vishnu-sahasranama Stotram during the Matri-satsanga on two Ekadasis; 6-hour Akhanda Kirtan of Mahamantra on 3rd every month.

New Delhi, Vasant Vihar: Weekly Satsanga on Sundays with Sri Sundarakanda Parayana on the first Sunday, Sankirtan and meditation on the second, Svadhyaya of Gurudev's writings on the third and a spiritual discourse on the fourth Sunday.

Nimapara (Orissa): Daily one hour Sankirtan of Mahamantra; on Thursdays Paduka Puja in the morning and weekly Satsanga in the evening; monthly Sadhana day.

Panchkula (Haryana): Daily Satsanga with Svadhyaya of Taittiriya Upanishad; weekly mobile Satsanga with Svadhyaya of spiritual books.

Phulbani (Orissa): Daily Paduka Puja; weekly Satsanga on Sundays.

Raipur (Chhattisgarh): Weekly Satsanga on Sundays; one hour Sankirtan on Mondays; special Puja and Sri Vishnu-sahasranama Stotra Parayana on Ekadasis.

Rajkot (Gujarat): Bi-weekly Satsanga on Thursdays and Sundays; weekly Satsangas at two Satsanga Kendras; Homoeopathy Clinic; Eye Camps in rural areas; monetary and other help to poor patients and disabled persons.

Rangabeda (Orissa): Daily morning Paduka Puja; daily evening Satsanga; weekly Satsanga on Thursdays.

Salipur (Orissa): 2-time Puja; daily morning session of prayer, meditation, Kirtan, recitation: one-hour Kirtan, one hour Japa, Stotra Parayana; daily evening two-and-half hour session of study class and Satsanga; weekly Satsanga on Sundays; Sri Sundarakanda Parayana on the first Saturday; Srimad Bhagavad Gita Parayana on the first Sunday; Sadhana Day on third Sunday; Yogasana, meditation class on second Sunday; Sivananda Day with Paduka Puja and one hour chanting of 'Om Namo Bhagavate Sivanandaya' Mantra in the morning; special evening Satsanga; Swami Sivananda Charitable Hospital.

Secunderabad (A.P.): Daily Distribution of food to 150-200 poor at Sri Sivananda Ashram.

South Balanda (Orissa): Weekly Satsanga on Fridays, monthly mobile Satsanga at the adapted village Sivananda Sevagram; Paduka Puja in the morning and special Satsanga in the evening on Chidananda Day; monthly 3-hour Akhanda Kirtan of Mahamantra, Paduka Puja in the morning and 3-hour Akhanda Japa of Mahamrityunjaya Mantra in the evening on Sankranti.

Sunabeda (Orissa): Daily evening Satsanga with study of Gurudev's book 'Bhakti Yoga'; bi-weekly Satsanga with Paduka Puja and study of Bhagavad Gita on Thursdays and Sundays; daily Yogasana class in two separate batches for men and women; free medical service at the Ashram.

Sunabeda, Ladies Branch (Orissa): Daily Puja, Srimad Bhagavata Parayana and Japa in the morning; daily evening Satsanga with one-hour Sankirtan of Mahamantra, bi-weekly Satsanga on Wednesdays and Saturdays; Satsanga for children in the Sunday afternoons; Paduka Puja and Sri Vishnu-sahasranama Stotra Parayana on Ekadasis; Japa on Chidananda Day; Narayana Seva on Tuesdays.

Vadodara (Gujarat): Satsanga on Thursdays; Paduka Puja and Mantra Japa on Sivananda Day and Chidananda Day; social service through homoeopathy and Ayurveda dispensaries, special acupressure treatment and distribution of medicines to poor patients.

Varanasi (U.P.): Fortnightly Satsanga on the second and fourth Sundays.

Visakhapatnam (A.P.): Daily evening Bhajan, Sankirtan; weekly Satsanga with Svadhyaya of Gurudev's writings; Bhagavad Gita Parayana (6 Chapters) on Ekadasis; meditation on Purnima; free training of Yogasanas and meditation daily; free medical check-up on Mondays.

OVERSEAS BRANCHES

Hong Kong (China): Monthly Satsanga with Svadhyaya of Gurudev's 'The Voice of the Himalayas' on second Saturday (53 participants); Mahamantra chanting on other Saturdays (88 participants during the month); Yogasana classes (169 new trainees); Yoga Teachers' training course (35 participants).

Moksha is release from bondage. It is not a negative state of absence of sorrow and pain, but is absolute bliss and undisturbed peace. —Swami Sivananda

