



LESSON OF 'RAMAYANA'

(H.H. Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj)

If anything justifies life, it is the law of righteousness. Righteousness is not merely something of a moral code; it is the basic principle which upholds the purpose of life, fulfills one's responsibility as a unit of society, affirms the dignity of the human being and man's dedication to the ideals of truth and justice, uplifting him from all that is vulgar and mean, evil and inequitable.

The lesson of the Ramayana is a perfect Ideal for all. Simple yet glorious, common-place yet rarely followed, fundamentally human yet spiritually transmutative, it is an ideal which has decisively influenced the design of the fabric of Hindu society and has ever been an inspiring example for emulation to everyone that owes allegiance to it.

COLOURFUL PANORAMA

In a colourful panorama of hope and despair, sacred idealism and mundane trickery, self-sacrifice and desolation, onslaught of wickedness and tragedy, magnanimous dedication to virtue and self-effacing devotion, steadfastness and fortitude, triumph over evil and glory of victory, but immediately, alas, to be embittered by the harsh and suspicious outlook of a vain world, and, finally, the agonizing decision of an ideal king to sacrifice the foremost object of his love and personal happiness for the sake of public opinion and meeting a cruelly rigid standard set for the propriety of the throne by his beloved subjects to whom his allegiance was first and

foremost,—all these unfold in the Ramayana with superb grandeur.

No one but a god could have lived up to this ideal of human perfection. Nowhere but in highly civilized society could such a poignant drama have been enacted, symbolizing at its best the war between good and evil, right and wrong, self-abnegation and covetousness, righteousness and selfish consideration.

DEDICATED RIGHTEOUSNESS

In a remote age (possibly around 1200 to 1000 B.C.), when despotism and lust for power was the rule of the day that a great, ageing king elected to die of a broken-heart in order to uphold a promise, necessitating him to banish his most beloved son and depriving him of the right of succession, rather than try to justify its negation or withdraw from it for personal preference or sentiment. That a promise once given, however ambiguous its scope or wide its range of application, whether given in a weak moment or out of mature deliberation, has got to be fulfilled, irrespective of its consequences and cost, is pathetically exemplified in the case of Dasharatha, and gloriously so in the case of Sri Rama whose magnificent sense of values, upholding of the law of righteousness, notwithstanding self-sacrifice, has ever been the ideal of humanity.

SYMBOLIC PERSONALITIES

Almost every one of the personalities in the Ramayana has a lesson to teach. Sita, symbolises the ideal wife and Lakshmana the ideal brother, and so also Bharata who rises above his mother's worldly sense of values, does not succumb to the lure of throne and power, tries his level best to bring back Rama, and, failing which, elects to run the caretaker government as an agent of Rama's 'Paduka' (sandals). Sita foregoes the comforts of the palace so that she may share the fate of her husband as a dutiful wife, however harsh the hardship. Likewise, Lakshmana also renounces his princely life so that he may be able to serve his brother in the wilderness of banishment. And there is, Hanuman, the symbol of ideal discipleship (*Dasya Bhakti*), with perfect devotion and self-effacing service to the master.

Ravana, a non-Aryan king carries away the beautiful Aryan princess, Sita. But, unlike the case of Paris and Helena, we have a striking example of social ethics here. A fact generally overlooked with regard to Ravana is that, in spite of his despotism and lust, he preserves the honour of Sita, treats her with respect, and, though he causes her to be cajoled and threatened, he does not lose his head, but obeys the law for the captives. Sita, on her part, exemplifies the finest ideal of womanhood. To her chastity is dearer than life itself. To her no one or nothing indeed exists except the memory of her husband. The lure of fabulous riches has no place in her pure mind.

PERFECT MAN

Then we have the example of the perfect human being, 'Maryada Purushottama,' in Sri Rama. In devotion to truth and righteousness he is unparalleled. His sense of

duty is superb—as a prince, as a husband, as a brother, as a man, as a king, as a master. He reacts in a human way to the loss of Sita. His idealism, strength of will and self-sacrifice, his dour determination, fortitude and leadership, are magnificent; and, yet, the spring of love and affection did not dry up in his heart. He did not seek solace in the philosophy of the evanescence of the world; he did not turn a renunciate; he did not become immune to his very human despondence. His duty to Sita was as expected of him as a husband. It was to search for her, locate her and rescue her, if necessary by raising an army and waging war, which he did. It was the duty of a Kshatriya, for the vindication of his honour.

RIGHT PERSPECTIVE

Thus, we find throughout the Ramayana myriads of examples which fit inside every pattern of life. Some of them are explicitly simple and would find a place in every book of moral law, and some others yet are somewhat open to question, as for example, the killing of Vali which has got to be interpreted, either in a spiritual way, that, when a devotee seeks refuge in the Lord and asks for His help, the Lord cannot help refraining from it, and also that it was preordained that Vali should attain liberation thus, or, otherwise, in a temporal way, that is, by justifying the action as a matter of expedience. Whatever the interpretations, one should never forget that the Ramayana is a human epic, and is replete with glorious morals for emulation such as those that are universally acceptable and applicable, and one should accept them in humility, with common-sense and sober evaluation. It is only those that are perfunctory about moral codes and spiritual aspiration

who try to wrangle about such side facets and lose the sight of the wood in the tree.

RULE OF LAW

The rule of law, which all democratic governments cherish, was the ideal of Ramarajya. It was a sober ideal, and, though in some respects highly puritanical, it did not lose sight of realism. It took cognizance of expediency and yet advocated some of the finest principles of government and individual and social ethics. In foreign relations, its concept was remarkably modern. At first persuasion was tried, and then there was the Vibhishana episode. Lanka was over-run, but it did not become an outlying province of the kingdom of Ayodhya. After the purpose of the war was served, people were given back their freedom under the rulership of a king of their own. It was a magnanimous gesture, and highly moralistic in its ideal, which only highly democratic governments of today will be able to effect, and even then, not in so short a period.

IDEAL GOVERNMENT

The welfare of the subjects was the foremost consideration of the ruler. Nothing else mattered, not even the personal interests of the king. The foremost duty of the king was to see that the people were happy and content, that there was justice and the rule of law, that human consecrations were not barred by social distinctions, and that, above all, public opinion was allowed to exercise its full influence. Even in that remote period it was realized that the best government was that which governed the least.

It is intriguing to note that Sri Rama should have gone to such extreme length as to renounce and banish to a hermitage his pregnant wife, the queen of the land, the first

lady of the kingdom, for the sake of what might be termed today a symbolic public opinion. But this, all the more, indicates how the ruler had to conform to a rigid standard of life and personal conduct, not only as thought to be proper according to his own discretion, but as expected of him by his subjects. His personal life and even happiness were, indeed, secondary to the inflexible rules governing his imperial life. It is extraordinary and even astounding that a very ancient Indian kingdom had cherished and practiced such a meticulous sense of propriety and its rulers had willingly subjected themselves to its adherence.

HEED THE LESSONS

Sri Rama's devotion to the ideal of monogamy, his refusal to remarry after Sita had to be banished, especially so in an age when polygamy among the upper class was more a rule than exception is, indeed, magnificent. There are numerous such lessons in the Ramayana. We have even the beautifully demure and selfless example of Urmila, the wife of Lakshmana, whom Valmiki did not take much notice of. Could a modern wife allow her husband to go into banishment voluntarily for fourteen long years soon after the marriage, disregarding her own personal interest and desire, just for the sake of his sentimental attachment to his brother? Every page of this great book has a lesson for humanity, and if man today cares to heed even a few of them, and if he has the will and courage and strength to translate them into practice, life on earth would be much better, happier, peaceful, more meaningful, more justified.

May the blessings of Sri Rama be upon all.

BHAKTI BHAVA

(Sri Swami Chidananda)

[A Talk given in the Samadhi Mandir, contained in "Verses Addressed to the Mind"]

Worshipful homage unto Thee, O Thou Supreme Being, who art the infinite repository of innumerable and countless divine attributes: goodness, auspiciousness, blessedness, beauty, peace, joy, fullness. Thou art the divine cornucopia of unending supply and limitless capacity. Forever, you are bestowing all that your devotees ask of you, all that those who are in distress or in need ask of you, all that all humanity is asking of you. They obtain what they ask, if they ask with sincerity and earnestness. To Thee we pay worshipful homage on this day. May Thy Divine Grace be upon all.

Loving adorations to revered and beloved Holy Master, Gurudev Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj, who also has been a divine source of unending bestowal upon all the devotees who lived and served him in this Ashram. Sometimes, it was almost uncanny; they did not even have to express their request. Even when they felt a need in their heart, to their amazement, it was readily supplied by Gurudev. "Go. Give this to so-and-so," he would say and send something. And when it came, the recipient would ask, "Oh? Oh? Why has this come?" "Did you not ask Gurudev for it?" "No! I never expressed my desire to anyone. No one knows except myself!"

Like the 'Vaanchhita Kalpataru' (the wish-fulfilling tree), saintly personalities are able to give you whatever you desire, without

your even expressing it orally. That is why they have become world figures etched in the memory of man. It is the divine manifestation in them, the divine *vibhuti*, which makes them behave thus, like God.

Today, we will consider verses 69, 70 and 71, of *Manache Shlok* by Samartha Ramdas. For the past three or four verses, there has been a common refrain either at the end or in the beginning of each verse: "O Man! Go along thinking of Lord Rama at early dawn. O Man! Go along thinking of Lord Rama at early dawn." In the morning as soon as you have woken up, don't allow any other thoughts to appear in your mind. Discipline the mind in this way; accustom it to this practice of always thinking of the Supreme Being at early dawn. "*Prahbate mani Rama chintita java.*"

*Bestower of happiness, remover of fears,
Chant His Name with deep feeling.
Discriminate! Discard all negative emotion.
At early dawn, go along thinking of Rama. (69)*

O Man! Go along thinking of Rama at dawn. He is the bestower of happiness and bliss (*sukhananda kaari*). Sri Rama is the one who will take away all fear and bestow upon you fearlessness. Therefore, His Name should be chanted with feelings of devotion, with *bhakti bhava*. And, at the same time when you are doing all these wonderful positive things, see that the mind does not give

any place to negative qualities like envy and jealousy. Be free from such negative emotions. Be filled with feelings of devotion, *bhakti bhava*, and go along thinking of Him in the early dawn. Then He will become to you the giver of happiness and bliss and the remover of all fear.

*Recite, "Ram, Ram" content with what you have, Calamities affect not those who chant His Name. Laziness give up and egoism!
At early dawn, go along thinking of Rama. (70)*

O Man! Always keep on uttering the Name of Rama, but without any desire. Because if you chant with desire, he will give you only what you desire. Finished! You will get only that. If you chant without desire, you will get everything, the whole cornucopia, the jackpot! You will be showered with unending joy and everything that is desirable. Thus, totally desireless, you must go on uttering the Name of Rama. The result will be that your entire life will be free from vexing difficulties and problems. Everything will go on smoothly, problems will become solved by themselves, difficulties will vanish even before you tackle them. Thus, O Man! Give up egoism and laziness and apply yourself diligently to uttering the Name of the Lord. Starting each day, bring the mind to the thought of God.

*His Name will nullify the greatest defects.
With His Name attain the supreme state!
Chanting His Name creates a fund of merit.
At early dawn, go along thinking of Rama. (71)*

O Man! Go along thinking of that Rama whose Name will nullify even the greatest de-

fect you may have. It may be a big burden upon your heart. You may have been struggling with it, to no avail. If you go along thinking of Him in the early dawn, even the greatest and most uncharitable defect will simply vanish. It will go away like mist before the rising sun. So think of that Rama, by whose Name the supreme state is attained in the end.

If you thus always go along thinking of Him and taking his Name at early dawn, you will get '*punya koti*'. '*Punya*' means the opposite of sin. In the Christian context they say 'sin and merit'. Here they say '*paapa* and '*punya*'. '*Paapa*' is sin and '*punya*' is the direct positive opposite of it, all that is desirable, all that takes you upward, Godward. Therefore, O Man! Go along thinking of Rama at early dawn. These are the daily admonitions that Samartha Ramdas has given to us this day in these three verses.

We have been able to remember this wisdom through the grace of the Supreme and the loving blessings of Holy Master, Swami Sivananda. And I have been thrice blessed to be the medium of conveying it from this seat. And in thanking the Supreme Divine Being and Holy Master, I should also thank you for thus allowing me to do this seva. Therefore, I close by thanking you for your divine presence, for your attentive hearing and for your graciously receiving that which has been shared from this seat. Hari OM Tat Sat. God bless us all.

The key to success in Sadhana is regularity. The importance of regularity in Sadhana cannot be over emphasised. Regularity in Abhyasa is a secret of progress on the Yoga-path.

—Swami Chidananda

TRUE RELIGION

(Sri Swami Krishnananda)

[Spoken in 1991 to the organiser of a religious conference for world peace]

Namaskar!sometimes occupies the mind of even so-called religious people. Even religious people work hard for material expansion of their institutions, and they want a lot of money, and name, fame comes in. This name, fame, greed are great obstacles, and they are part and parcel of human nature—like the very skin of man. Name, fame, greed are the very skin of the person, and to peel the skin is very difficult. It requires a perfection of spirit in one's own self. He should not merely be a teacher or a preacher of religion, he must be a religious person himself. You know very well—I need not tell you—what is to be a religious person. It is the planting of the consciousness of God in one's own heart.

For that, we have to bring before the minds of people what actually they mean by 'God'. What is it—a theoretical concept? Or is it a "may be or may not be" question? And is it a necessity, or has it any significance in our life? Ask religious people, all religious people: What is the significance of the presence of God in human life? Let answers come. Is it a question of tomorrow, or after death? Do we reach God after death, and not in this life?

Most of the religions, or I should say all the religions, have a peculiar notion of the otherworldly character of God. It is a defect in human thinking. There is no otherworldly isolation of existence, because existence is a complete, organismic structure wherein we

cannot distinguish between past, present and future; and if we accept God is eternal, He is not tomorrow. He is just now, and not somewhere in heaven. God is not in heaven, and He is not tomorrow. Now, if we can give up or free ourselves from this wrong notion of tomorrow and somewhere...

Look at the mind of man. "Where is God," you ask. Where is God? At this moment, where is God? Just now when we are speaking, where is God sitting? It is difficult for the mind to accommodate itself to this question. It will shatter the whole body. The very thought will shake the whole personality. You are asking this question: Where is God just now? The whole ego of man will tremble, because the ego cannot stand this question. It can answer any question, but the ego cannot answer this question because if it starts answering this question, it will cease to exist at that very moment.

It requires purification of the heart. All religious studies, any kind of religious way of living, is preceded by a moral and ethical purificatory process. It is not easy to be religious. Going to a temple, going to a church, fasting on Sundays, sleeping late in the night, rolling the beads—this is not religion. Religion is the consciousness of God, and to the extent one is conscious of the presence of God, to that extent one is religious. It has nothing to do with political activity, social welfare work, and so on. Though there is no objection

to it, it cannot be identified with religion. Religion is not one way of living, it is the *only* way of living, and it must inundate the whole personality of the person.

We must be bathed in religion, so that we are the embodiment of religious consciousness itself. We are not flesh and bone. We are not physical personalities. We are forms taken by aspiration for the Almighty. We may be regarded as representatives of God in this phenomenal world, so when we walk, we walk like ambassadors of God. The ambassador is the government represented. The entire force of the government is working through him; and if the force of God can work through us, we are incarnations, we are Krishna or Christ, we are Godmen. Such persons alone can work some benefit in this world.

Political leaders whose names are appearing in the newspapers, and who are only bookish, fundamentalist and tradition-bound—this kind of thing will not work before God. When we go to God, we do not go as Hindus and Christians; we do not go as men and women. In what sense do we go there? Let us accept that we are going to attain God. When we go there, how do we go—as Christians, as Muslims? “I am a Muslim.” Will we say that before God Almighty?

It is necessary to convince ourselves that we are just now in the presence of God—just now. In the presence of God, what will we do? Here is ethics and morality. What-

ever we do in the presence of God, that is goodness, that is ethics, that is morality. Let anyone for a few minutes close the eyes and contemplate: “I am in the presence of the Almighty, the Creator of the universe. He is seeing me.” Now, what will we do at that time? We will melt completely. We will become liquid, and we will cease to be. What we will be at that time, only the experience can say. We cannot describe it in words.

If there is such a person who can understand these significant factors in religious living, I think that person can work wonders in the world. Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa was a person like this. We cannot call him a religious man. He was a Godman. God was dancing in his heart, and so if he thought something, it reverberated through the whole world. So was Ramana Maharishi, and so were great saints and sages who lived in this world, whether of the East or the West.

Therefore, it is necessary to free ourselves from the need to be presented before the public eye, but have a desire to convince ourselves that we are in the vicinity, in the presence of God Almighty. This not a theory, this is not a scripture speaking. It is a hundred percent fact. That God is just here and looking at us, is not a theoretical doctrine. It is not an imagination. It is a highly perfect scientific fact, and no science can be more perfect than this feeling and conviction that we are being seen by millions of eyes. Every atom is the eye of God, and He sees us from all directions.

(To be continued)

Jivanmukti is the highest spiritual experience by the individual when the mortal body is still hanging on due to the remainder of a little of Sattvika-Ahamkara or Prarabdha.

—**Swami Krishnananda**

STRENGTH AND HUMILITY

(Sri Swami Chidananda)

The worship of Lord Hanuman is an ideal that requires our attention and adoration not once in a year, but always. The worship of Hanuman verily constitutes worship of the Divine Reality in the form of strength and powers dedicated to duty and to the Divine Being. The worship of Hanuman implies the worship of strength adorned with humility—the worship of strength and powers simultaneously combined with devotion and dutifulness.

The great Hanuman's life is nothing if it is not devotion and dedication, humility and the spirit of service. The worship of Hanuman indicates your acceptance of this ideal. The worship of Hanuman is a token of adoration to the principles of self-sacrifice and service, devotion and dedication, and absolute impersonal selflessness. The worship of Hanuman is the ideal for all beings who wish to transform their lives and themselves into beings of courage and strength, and at the same time be adorned by the spirit of service, devotion and total dedication to the feet of the one of whom they consider themselves to be the disciple, follower and devoted servant.

If you consider yourself as a devoted servant of God, devotee of God, follower of God, you have ever to keep before you the effulgent, radiant ideal of this unparalleled personality of the Ramayana. He had the strength that could lift mountains. He had the strength that could cross oceans. But despite this he remained what he really was: a dedicated, devoted, self-effacing servant of the

Divine, depicted always at the feet of the Divine, head bowed down and hands folded.

This is Hanuman's place, vow and personality, ever in the presence of God. It is due to his dedication, devotion, humility and utter selflessness that he has become the favourite among the devotees of God. It is due to these sublime qualities of self-effacement that Hanuman has become perpetual, an ideal in Indian culture. He is the deity of millions in India. And through the Ramayana, Valmiki has sought to make him immortal, ever present in the vision of all human beings.

May the grace of the Supreme inspire you to emulate this ideal and to sincerely work towards the fulfilment of such an ideal in your own personal life. The hazard and the danger of a subtle spiritual ego, a *sadhaka abhiman*, will be made impossible if this ideal is present in your heart as a guide to your spiritual living, to your *sadhana* and to whatever selfless service you are engaged in. To beautify, elevate and transform all these three aspects of your spiritual life, the worship of Hanuman presents special significance, holds special meaning and constitutes a universal ideal.

May God and *guru* enable us to live such a life, having before us this ideal to be striven for as we offer the external worship this morning at the little shrine on the bank of the Ganga!

DIFFICULTIES

(Sri Swami Atmaswarupananda)

A common factor in all human life is that we run into difficulties. What is a difficulty? A difficulty can be defined as something that we didn't bargain for. We find ourselves in a situation where we come across a roadblock, or roadblocks, that we hadn't anticipated, that seem to be an unnecessary burden.

If we undertake a project and anticipate challenges, then that's the way we accept them. We don't see them as difficulties, but as challenges, and we have an entirely different attitude to what is actually the same thing. Challenges strengthen us, take us into new avenues of learning, give us confidence for the future. Therefore, we have a special way of looking at difficulties—seeing them not as a burden, but as a challenge, something that we are meant to overcome.

However, we must be aware of that part of ourselves that doesn't want to turn difficulties into challenges, that simply wants to give up, to surrender to them. This can happen at any stage of our life. It can specially happen as we gradually get older. We're tired of hav-

ing to overcome difficulties. Something within us says that we have done enough, and we begin to drift along with life rather than overcoming it.

Pujya Swami Chidanandji used to say, "There is no place for negativity in the spiritual life. God is all positivity." Therefore, we must be very careful not to allow defeatism to enter into our life. It is always there, part of *tamas*, part of *avidya maya*, wanting us to give up, giving us excuses for not trying to overcome. Actually, the whole of the spiritual life is increasing degrees of awareness. Overcoming challenges can do more for us than most of our spiritual practices in making us alertly aware.

There are no books that spell all this out for us. We have to be aware of its subtleties ourselves. We have to be aware that we are going to face difficulties until the day we die. Are we going to just lie down and give up? Or are we, to the very best of our ability, going to put our trust in God and do the utmost we can?

He who is alike to friend and foe, who is balanced in pleasure and pain, heat and cold, honour and dishonour, censure and praise, who is without attachment and egoism, who is ever content and harmonious, who is compassionate, who does not hate any creature, is a devotee of God-Realisation.

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Be like a river. Dirt and filth of cravings and desires will be poured forth into you from either sides. But by the constant flow of the water of devotion you will remain pure.

—*Swami Sivananda*

LUST AND PASSION

(H.H. Sir Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj)

[Continued from the previous issue]

SELF-CONTROL

Self-control is control or restraint exercised over one's self.

Self-control is the power or habit of having one's inclinations and emotions, desires and appetites, senses and mind under control.

Control yourself first. Then you can control others.

Self-control clears the mind, strengthens judgment and elevates your character. It gives you freedom, peace, bliss and joy. It strengthens your will.

He who conquers himself is greater than the commander-in-chief who conquers a country.

Self-control is the master-key that opens the realm of eternal bliss and immortality.

There is no triumph more glorious than that of victory obtained over your own self.

Control your senses and mind. You will attain Self-realisation.

Obtain self-mastery. Conquer thyself. Till you have done this, you will only be a slave of the senses.

He who is subject to his passions is the worst slave on the surface of this earth. He who rules his passions, desires, cravings and senses is the real king of kings. He is the Supreme Ruler or President of Self-Govern-

ment. Crowns and sceptres are nothing for him. He is the best Government.

Every temptation that is resisted, every evil thought that is subdued, every desire or craving that is destroyed, every bitter word that is withheld, every wrong action that is checked, paves a long way to the attainment of everlasting peace and bliss.

He who can command and govern himself can govern and command others.

Self-control gives you power to withstand trial, to bear suffering and to face danger.

Self-control leads to the highest merit. Self-control is the eternal duty of man. Self-control surpasses all merit in charity and study of the Vedas.

Self-control increases your energy. Self-control is highly sacred. Through self-control you will be purified of all your sins, and gifted with energy and character. You will acquire the highest blessedness.

There is no other duty equal to self-control. Self-control is the highest virtue in the world. Through self-control you can enjoy the highest happiness both in this world and in the next. Gifted with self-control you will win great virtue.

The self-controlled man sleeps happily and awakes happily and moves in the world happily. He is always cheerful. Self-control is the best of all vows.

The man who is without self-control always suffers misery. He brings upon himself many calamities, all begotten by his own faults.

Forgiveness, patience, abstention from injury, impartiality, sincerity, control of the senses, cleverness, mildness, modesty, firmness, liberality, freedom from anger, contentment, sweetness of words, benevolence, freedom from malice—all these combined make up self-control.

It also consists of respect for the preceptor and mercy for all. The man of self-control avoids both adulation and slander. Depravity, infamy, falsehood, lust, coveteousness, pride, arrogance, fear, envy and disrespect are all shunned by the man of self-control. He never incurs obloquy. He is free from envy.

That eternal region in Brahman which originates from Vedic penances and which is concealed in a cave can only be acquired by self-control.

The self-controlled man is never fettered by the attachments originating from earthly connections and sentiments.

That is a forest where the man of self-control lives. That is ever a sacred place. Of what use is a forest to a man who has no self-control?

The man of self-control acquires great reward in the next world. He acquires esteem in this world and attains a high end hereafter. He acquires the state of Brahman. He attains liberation. **(To be continued)**

THE EASIEST APPROACH TO GOD

Bhakti is easier than any other way of approach to God. In Jnana and Yoga, there is the risk of a fall. In the path of devotion, there is no risk as the devotee receives full support and help from God.

Those who tread the path of Jnana and Yoga are liable to become proud of their powers and wisdom. Bhaktas are humble. Humility is the foundation of Bhakti Yoga.

Jnana Yoga is the Yoga of wisdom. It is the path of analysis and rejection. It is the path of endless negation. This is a very difficult path.

Raja Yoga also is difficult. It is like stilling the waves of the ocean. You will have to still all the thought-waves. Karma Yoga also is difficult. It is like climbing to the highest peak. You need tremendous will-power. Bhakti Yoga alone is easy. The Lord is stretching His hands to lift you up from the mire of Samsara. You will have to grasp His hand firmly. But, one thing is absolutely essential here. You should not have any other thought than that of God and God alone.

—**Swami Sivananda**

Sivananda's Gospel of Divine Life

FOUNDATION OF YOGA AND REALISATION

A MUSICIAN'S DELAY

Swami Ram was requested to sing some of his Bhajans. First his throat had to be cleared, then the harmonium had to be tuned—pulling a knob, pushing another, adjusting here and there. It all took more than ten minutes for him to get attuned to his instrument.

“Rama! Rama!” remarked the Master. “How much time these people waste, all in merely tuning! What is there? The Bhajan should be ready on the lips all the time, and the moment one is asked to sing one should pour forth the Lord's Name.”

In the case of the Master himself, whenever he had to address a gathering, he would roar Om even as he got up to talk.

THE MASTER'S HEART!

The Master was distributing *prasad*. The sweetmeats were rationed to two per head. Gradually he lost control. Soon the bucket was almost empty. And when he found that everyone was thoroughly satisfied, he said, “Look at the satisfaction that they now have! This is indeed the most important point. What is the use of giving one sweetmeat or two? When people come and sing the Lord's Name and *prasad* is distributed, they should go back fully satisfied. What a lopsided econ-

omy it would be to save expenditure in this respect!

“Ten years ago, when the Society was much poorer, everyone who came here went away fully satisfied. Even the Ashramites used to say, “We workers do not get so many conveniences, but Swamiji gives milk and fruit to a stranger who walks in and says he is sick; and when this man leaves, Swamiji gives him ten rupees also.”

“Now these people have started saying that the auditor was objecting. I have always said that the auditor has nothing to do with a Sannyasin's accounts. Where is there audit for us? Audit and budget may be necessary from one point of view, but from a Sannyasin's point of view nothing is necessary. I will go on spending. Let someone attach the buildings here. A Paramahansa Sannyasin should be ever prepared to tie his own loin-cloth around his head and walk away.

“Padmanabhanji showed me the accounts. In August we gave Rs. 2,500 worth of books free, against a sale of Rs. 1,800. I do not care. All are benefited by the books. Let knowledge go around. If we cannot run this Ashram we will go away. My room is reserved at Swarg Ashram. Or I will go somewhere else and start once again.”

Happy is the man who lives in the company of sages. Happy is the man who is desireless and is free from hatred and jealousy. Happy is the man who rests in his own inner Self through meditation.

—Swami Sivananda

Children's Page

KHANDA-DANT CHANAKYA

(Sri Swami Ramarajyam)

Chanakya was the prime minister in the court of King Chandragupta Maurya. This story is related to his childhood.

One day, gazing at him, his mother began to cry. Chanakya asked her, "Mother, why are you crying?" The mother said, "You are destined to be a king. This thought makes me cry."

Chanakya said, "You should be happy because I will become a king."

The mother said, "I am crying because of my impending misfortune. After becoming a king, you will not remember your old mother. Dear son, kings and *yogis do not bother themselves about relationships."

Chanakya asked her, "How do you know that I will be a king?"

The mother replied, "The shape of the frontal teeth of yours tells that you would be a king."

Chanakya was lost in thought for a little while. Thereafter he picked up a stone lying nearby and broke his frontal teeth. The mother, now repentant, cried helplessly with grief. Chanakya said, "I have broken these teeth, mother! Now I won't become a king. I do not want royal luxuries. I can give up everything but I cannot live without you."

From that day onwards Chanakya was called 'Khanddant.** He was prepared to forgo all royal comforts for the sake of his mother. He knew if he did not get royal comforts, nothing would be lost. If he forgot his mother, everything would be lost. Who would make up for that loss then?

Dear children, be watchful lest you should be suffering this loss. You should be prepared to give up everything for the sake of your mother.

* Literally—teachers or experts in Yoga. Here this word refers to all saints and sages who are unattached to the worldly relationships.

** One with broken teeth.

Yoga in Daily Life

BHAKTI YOGA

(H.H. Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj)

[Continued from the previous issue]

Anger and lust are the two inner enemies that stand in the way of developing Bhakti. From lust follow the ten vices that are mentioned in Manusamhita—love of hunting, gambling, sleeping by day, slandering, company with bad women, drinking, singing love-songs, vulgar music, dancing, aimlessly wandering about.

Anger begets eight kinds of vices. All evil qualities proceed from anger. If you can eradicate anger all bad qualities will die of themselves. The eight vices are: injustice, rashness, persecution, jealousy, taking possession of others' property, harsh words and cruelty.

How are Bhaktas to be known? Lord Krishna has given a description of them. You will find it in Bhagavatam. "They do not care for anything. Their hearts are fixed on Me. They are very humble. They have equal vision. They have no attachment towards anybody or anything. They are without 'mine-ness'. They have no egoism. They make no distinction between sorrow and happiness. They do not take anything from others. They can bear heat, cold and pain. They have love for all living beings. They have no enemy. They are serene. They possess exemplary character."

Here is a Sadhana for advanced students. This is highly useful for getting quick, solid progress in the spiritual path. Get up at 4 a.m. Start your Japa on any Asana you have

mastered. Do not take food or drink for 14 hours. Do not get up from the Asana. Control passing urine till sunset if you can manage. Finish the Japa at sunset. Take milk and fruits after sunset. Householders can practise this during holidays. Practise this once a fortnight or once a month or once weekly.

Here is another Sadhana for 10 days. You can do this during the Christmas holidays or Puja holidays or summer vacation. Shut yourself in an airy room. Do not talk to anybody. Do not see anybody. Do not hear anything. Get up at 4 a.m. Start Japa of the Mantra of your Ishta Devata or your Guru Mantra and finish it at sunset. Then take some milk and fruits or Kheer (milk and rice boiled with sugar). Take rest for one or two hours. But continue the Japa. Then again start the Japa seriously. Retire to bed at 11 in the night. You can combine meditation along with Japa. Make all arrangements for bath, food, etc., inside the room. Have two rooms if you can manage, one for bath and one for meditation. Repeat this four times a day. This practice can be kept up even for 40 days. You will have wonderful results and various experiences. You will enter into Samadhi. You will have Darshan of your Ishtam. I assure you.

Here is an Anushthana for 40 days. You will have to do Japa of Rama Mantra one Lakh and twenty five thousand times in the following manner for 40 days, at the rate of 3000 daily. During the last five days do 4000

daily. Get up at 4. a.m. Write down in a thin paper 'Rama, Rama' 300 times. Then cut it into small pieces. Each piece will contain one Rama Nama. Then roll it with a small ball of Atta (wheat flour paste). Writing will take two or three hours according to your strength and capacity. Then you will have to cut one by one. You will have to do the whole process by sitting on one Asana. If you find it difficult to sit on one Asana, you can have change of Asana. But you should not leave your seat. Some use a special ink made of saffron, musk, camphor, etc., and special writing pen made up of a sharp-pointed thin, Tulasi-stick. You can use ordinary ink and pen if you cannot get the above special ink and special pen. You will have to do the Anushthana on the banks of Ganga, Yamuna, Godavari, Kaveri or Narmada, at Rishikesh, Benares, Hardwar, or Prayag. You can do it at home, if you find it difficult to move to these places. Take milk and fruits and Phalahar during these days. Throw the balls in the Ganga or any river for fishes. You will develop wonderful patience. You will get Divine Grace.

Study the whole of the Ramayana 108 times with purity and concentration. This can be done within three years if you can devote three hours daily. You can go through the book three times in a month. You will acquire

Siddhis. You will have Darshan of Lord Rama.

Bhakti Yoga and Jnana Yoga are not incompatibles like acids and alkalis. One can combine Ananya Bhakti (one-pointed devotion) with Jnana Yoga. The fruit of Bhakti Yoga is Jnana. Highest love (Para Bhakti) and Jnana are one. Perfect knowledge is love. Perfect love is knowledge. Sri Sankara, the Advaita Kevala Jnani, was a great Bhakta of Lord Hari, Hara and Devi. Jnana Deva of Alandi, Poona, a great Yogi of late, was a Bhakta of Lord Krishna. Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa worshipped Kali and got Jnana through Swami Totapuri, his Advaita Guru. Lord Chaitanya was a fine Advaita Vedantic Scholar, and yet he danced in streets and market places, singing Hari's names. Appaya Dikshitar, a famous Jnani of Adaipalam, North Arcot District, Madras, the author of Siddhanta Lasha and various other Vedantic books was a devotee of Lord Siva. It behoves, therefore, that Bhakti can be combined with much advantage with Jnana.

May we hear with our ears and see with our eyes nothing but what is pure, so that with our senses unperturbed, remembering God, meditating on Him, singing His praise and repeating His name, we may attain life as that of the Gods. Om Santi. **(To be continued)**

Ignorance generates pain, sorrow and misery, and makes life difficult. Jealousy and selfishness break friendship. Hatred ravages peace of mind like a violent fever. Repetition of the Lord's Name is the best medicine to cure this fever.

* * *

The charms of a lovely person are treacherous. Do not be duped by the senses. Be on the alert always. Learn to discriminate. Physical beauty is illusory, false and decaying. The beauty of the Lord is undecaying. It does not fade.

—Swami Sivananda

THE PROBLEM OF EVIL

(Rajat Kumar Pradhan, Jeypore, Orissa)

Any objective phenomenon or subjective trait that is undesirable and painful is called an evil. A thought, an intention, a plan or design, an act or an occurrence is said to be evil if it is detrimental to the equilibrium and wellbeing of the individual and of the world at large. If, as the great philosopher Plato asserts, God is all goodness, then whence cometh evil? This conundrum puzzles the seeker at the very beginning of his Godward movement on the spiritual path. It has led many Western philosophers to postulate the existence of an exact opposite of God called Satan, which is held responsible for all the evil that we see in the world. It is granted an independent existence and a function parallel (or rather anti-parallel) to God and it surprisingly succeeds in consistently undoing to a large extent the goodness that ought to be seen on account of God's all-goodness or all-auspiciousness. However, If God is all-powerful, He ought to triumph over Satan always. But this is not to be seen anywhere in the world, which is full of evil—a melting pot of problems galore of all descriptions. In spite of God's goodness and graciousness, people here weep and wail under the unbearable weight of misery and suffering within God's own creation! This, in a nutshell, is "the problem of evil".

In the following few paragraphs a humble attempt is made on the basis of Most Worshipful Sadgurudev Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj's teachings to share with the fellow seekers and the readers of 'The Divine Life' a very interesting discovery concerning the

Vedantic solution to this knotty philosophical problem.

In His song 'Apadbandhav Narayana', Parampujya Gurudev adds two lines in English in the end—"Thy Name is a boat, Narayana! To cross this ocean, Sadasiva! Thy Name is a weapon, Narayana! To cut this EVIL MIND, Sadasiva!"

Here is a clue to the solution. The word evil is used as an adjective of the mind and, therefore, it has to be a characteristic of the mind only. In the 'Autobiography of Swami Sivananda', His Holiness declares under the heading 'Siva's Experience' in the introductory pages—"I behold God everywhere. There is no evil." This shows that great God-realised saints who have gone beyond the pairs of opposites (good and evil, pleasure and pain etc.) never perceive any evil anywhere, whereas we, normal humans of the perfectly ordinary category, keep perceiving evil everywhere and thus, keep complaining about it! The trouble lies with our finite individual consciousness which perceives only finite, spatio-temporally limited segments of the whole manifestation through a mind that itself is the home and hub of all evil. It is this 'evil mind' in the individual that harbours, perceives, permits, perpetrates and perpetuates all that we label as evil, never allowing us to see and to go beyond the pairs of opposites. Spiritual evolution from this limited individual consciousness to the unlimited Divine Consciousness consists in moving from an 'Evil mind' to the 'Good mind' and from then on to the 'God mind' or 'Divine mind', and this, according to Vedanta, calls for the overcoming of the three defects of the mind in

the form of *mala* or the impurities, *vikshepa* or the distractions, and finally, *avarana* or the covering.

Interestingly enough, the very word 'EVIL' itself can be made into three words by rearrangement of its letters namely, VILE, LIVE and VEIL which, when prefixed to the word 'mind' as qualifiers, precisely connote these defects of the mind as briefly outlined below.

a) The VILE mind: This is the condition of the mind which is filled with VILE thoughts or impurities of all sorts (*mala*). It is the safe haven for the *shad-ripus* or the six-fold enemies, namely, *kama* or passion, *krodha* or anger, *lobha* or greed, *moha* or infatuation, *mada* or ostentation and finally, *matsarya* or envy. Removal of these characteristic impurities of the mind consumes a lot of energy in the beginning of one's spiritual life and the aspirant is often led to utter despair and confusion on account of repeated failures at the hands of these enemies despite great efforts. Engaging in intense Karma yoga by sincerely discharging one's duties and offering them along with their fruits to the Lord, Service of the Guru, the practice of the opposite virtue of each vice, maintenance of strict vigilance without fail at all times about the direction the mind and taking and purposefully directing it towards the good, noble, pure and divine thoughts as well as actions are the practical ways of removal of this characteristic defect in the form of the VILE mind.

b) The LIVE mind: The inveterate tendency of the mind to continuously keep jumping from one object or thought to another is distraction or *vikshepa*. Wandering and tossing about are the characteristics of this LIVE mind. It is the source of all restlessness and is the enemy of concentration, meditation, peace and bliss. Practice of *Bhakti Yoga* and *Raja Yoga*, especially, *Japa* or the repetition of the Divine Name after initiation from a Guru

and *swadhyaya* or diligent study of the scriptures are hailed as the greatest aids in the overcoming of this dire malady. Even, too many good thoughts crowding the mind are an obstacle to the spiritual progress of the aspirant on the path to God-realisation. Regular practice of *japa* combined with *upasana* or worship renders the mind serene and one-pointed and helps one to get rid of this *rajasic* restlessness in the form of the LIVE mind which, owing to the tremendous difficulty faced by the aspirant in taming it, has often been compared to 'an inebriated mad monkey, stung by a scorpion and possessed by a ghost'!

c) The VEIL mind: The third aspect in which the mind keeps up the core feeling in each of us of being a separate, limited and finite individual is an *avarana* or the covering. This is the VEIL mind and it is the last and the most difficult aspect to be overcome by the seeker through the practice of Jnana Yoga, the Yoga of rising to God-awareness by continuously affirming the fact of the individual's fundamental oneness with the Absolute (*Aham Brahmasmi*). Through protracted *sadhana* of *Brahmabhyasa* (unceasing practice of the affirmation, 'I am Brahman') alone, this is achieved. Thus piercing through the VEIL of *avidya* or ignorance, one merges finally in the Eternal and the Infinite, the pure, non-dual Consciousness which is *Brahman*, the Supreme Absolute Being.

Having thus eradicated the three-fold EVIL from the mind, one verily goes beyond all dualities and rests in blissful union with the Absolute, the one source, substratum and support of all that is, and the ultimate Goal, ideal and fulfilment of all striving—such is the teaching of Most Worshipful Sadgurudev Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj. May His Divine Blessings in the form of Gurukripa be ever upon all of us! This is the fervent prayer. Om Tat Sat.

* * *

IN MEMORIAM

Sri Swami Satyananda Saraswati (1923 - 2009)



While the Ramakrishna Mission was well-known in the West by the middle of the 20th century for the spread of Vedanta Philosophy, close on its heels, it goes to the credit of many of the early disciples of our Worshipful Gurudev Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj to have made a mark for themselves as the pioneers of Yoga in the West when the name of Yoga was hardly known there. By the time they set out to propagate Yoga beyond the shores of Bharatavarsha by 1950 – 60s, Sri Gurudev's vast literature on the subject had already taken deep root in the West, for them only it was to continue the task further, personally, in the field of practice.

Sri Gurudev was ambidexterous *par excellence* in the comprehensive treatment of the subjects of Yoga as well as Vedanta as is evidenced in his literature, and his disciples naturally followed that line, though a few of them became outstanding as exponents of Yoga particularly. It may be safely said here

that the subject of Vedanta is also considered as Jnana Yoga in classical circles.

Revered Sri Swami Satyanandaji Maharaj hailed from the holy land of Uttarakhand having been born in Almora in 1923. In 1943, at the age of 20, he left his home and went in search of a Guru. The search ultimately led him to Sri Gurudev Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj sometime in 1945 or 1946. He was initiated into the holy Dasanami Order of Sannyasa on the 12th September 1947 by Sri Gurudev at the Sivananda Ashram Headquarters in Rishikesh.

Revered Sri Swami Chidanandaji Maharaj, the honourable successor to Sri Gurudev as the President of The Divine Life Society subsequent to his distinguished tenure as the General Secretary of the Institution, had great respect for his beloved Gurubhai Sri Swami Satyanandaji Maharaj and unbounded admiration for his remarkable work in the field of Yoga with particular reference to his insights and gleanings into the Tantra Yoga and Kundalini Yoga which of course are the offshoots of the age-old subject of Yoga.

By virtue of his unflinching devotion to his Guru and unwavering application of selfless service to Sri Gurudev and his Institution, Sri Swami Satyanandaji Maharaj's spiritual bent of mind which he was equipped with from early infant life was rekindled paving the way for the acquisition of knowledge of all forms of Yoga – Karma Yoga, Bhakti Yoga, Jnana Yoga, Raja Yoga, Hatha Yoga, etc.—as imparted by Sri Gurudev which eventually enabled him to shape himself as a

great exponent of the Science of Yoga in his later life.

Like many disciples of Sri Gurudev, Revered Sri Swami Satyanandaji Maharaj travelled extensively throughout the world carrying the torch of the wisdom of the sages and seers of yore and acquired world-renown as a great expounder of Yoga. He had Sri Gurudev's blessings in abundance due to his sincere Guru Seva and devotion. He has rendered his service practically in all sections of the Ashram, his forte being the editing, printing and publishing of Gurudev's works besides being the Head of the Hindi section of the Ashram for a considerable period of time. He had a charming style in his writings and was a great orator of note.

In 1956, after spending twelve years in Guru Seva at Sivananda Ashram, Swami Satyanandaji Maharaj set out as an itinerant monk covering many places in the Asian sub-continent before he founded the International Yoga Fellowship Movement in 1962 with its vehicle as the Bihar School of Yoga in Munger to carry on its aims and objects. Soon

the Institution grew by leaps and bounds and became a mighty global Mission.

At the peak of his accomplishment, Sri Swamiji renounced all that he had created and withdrew totally from the Yoga movement. In 1988 he departed from Munger and finally arrived in Rikhia near the Baidyanath Dham in Bihar on 23rd September 1989 where he stayed till the end of his life as a recluse in total seclusion. Sri Swamiji had initiated many into the holy order of Sannyasa and had many followers in all continents. He was a great philanthropist having made generous gifts to thousands of the poor and the needy around his Ashram besides providing assistance to them in the field of education and medical facilities marking his love for mankind. In 2007, Sri Swamiji announced the formation of Rikhiapeeth in the place of his total seclusion. Sri Swamiji Maharaj entered into Mahasamadhi on the 5th December 2009 as thousands were fortunate to be there to watch the bidding of his final farewell.

Hari Om Tat Sat! Jai Sri Gurudev!

IN MEMORIAM

Smt. Mrudulaben Trivedi

We express our deep sorrow on the passing away of Smt. Mrudulaben Trivedi at Ahmedabad on the 7th February 2010. She had come to the Ashram along with her husband, Sri Gunavantra N. Trivedi after their marriage in 1962 and had Sri Gurudev's blessings.

From 1992 onwards both she and her husband were staying as inmates in the Holy Ashram, as per instructions of Sri Swami Chidanandaji Maharaj, and both of them plunged into a life of dedicated sadhana and seva. She did immense seva of providing special diet for the patients in the Sivananda Charitable Hospital, the Sivananda Home and the inmates of the Ashram and was also a great help to the team of workers who came for the Eye-Camps from Gujarat every year. After the passing away of her husband in August, 2007, due to her ill-health, she was taken back to Ahmedabad by her daughter where she breathed her last peacefully.

We pray to the Lord and Sri Gurudev to bless the departed soul with Param Shanti and Sadgati.

NEWS AND REPORTS

NEWS FROM THE HEADQUARTERS

SEVA THROUGH SIVANANDA HOME

By the profound Blessings of Gurudev Sri Swami Sivanandaji 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 and care.

A few new patients got admitted this month in the Home, while others could be discharged after having fully recovered on medical treatment. In this way, a certain dynamic is kept up, patients come and go, amidst others who stay on for a long-term treatment in cases like tuberculosis, leprosy or chronic diseases like heart problems, epilepsy, diabetes, arthritis, asthma, mental inaccuracy, etc.

Who could imagine that the 16 year old girl, who got admitted about one year ago, at ten o'clock at night in a state of mental shock, would ever return home again! But it indeed happened. By the Grace of Sri Gurudev, she recovered bit by bit and expressed the desire to go back to her home town, in spite of cer-

tain deep troubles she had undergone before leaving the house and what had caused so much turmoil in her mind. It was a real joy to observe her coming out of her shell, giving up her anxiety and composing herself.

The wish for reunion was stronger than the remembrance of her pain; the determination overruled her fear, and the hope and prayer to be accepted again did give her wings. Inquiries were done and accordingly arrangements were made, and it was confirmed that she reached her destination safe and sound. Where there is His Will, there is a way.

Jai Hari. Jai Bhole Nath.

"We know also that we can do all things with the Grace of God, which He never refuses to them who ask it earnestly. Knock, persevere in knocking and I answer for it that He will open to you in His due time, and grant you all at once what He has deferred during many years. All that He does is for our own good." (From: The Practice of the Presence of God, Brother Lawrence).

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

CULTURAL TOUR OF H.H. SRI SWAMI NIRLIPTANANDAJI MAHARAJ

During January, 2010, H.H. Sri Swami Nirliptanandaji Maharaj, Vice-President of The Divine Life Society Headquarters, continued with his Cultural Tour started in December, 2009.

Swamiji proceeded to Baliguali Chidananda Hermitage Shanti Ashram near Puri, on 31st December, after attending the All-Orissa State Level D.L.S. Conference at Polasara. This Ashram is a part of D.L.S. Headquarters. Swamiji stayed there upto 7th January, 2010, and looked into the various aspects of running of the Ashram.

On 1st January at Puri Swamiji attended the "Harihat" organised at Sri Purushottam Vatika of Sri Kishanlal Bharatia, in the noble memory of Late Sri Giridharilal Kedia of Cuttack who passed away recently. There was mass recital of different Holy Scriptures and chanting of the Divine Name by many Vaishnavas and other saints. This was also attended by Parama Pujya Babaji Chaitanya Charan Dasji of Bhagavat Ashram, Puri.

There was the annual function of "Rajabhishek" (coronation ceremony) of Gajapati, the King of Puri, in the Royal Palace at Puri. Swamiji attended this function upon invitation from Gajapati Maharaja Sri Dibya Singha Debji. This was on 2nd January. Some other saints and important persons had also participated in it.

The annual function of "Mahodadhi Arati" started under the direction of Jagadguru Shankaracharya of Gobardhan Peeth, Puri, H.H. Sri Swami Nischalanandaji Maharaj was held on 3rd January. On being invited, Swamiji took part in the anniversary function on the sea-coast where the Shankaracharya, Gajapati Maharaja of Puri and many other saints were present. Swamiji also gave his blessings and spoke on the occasion.

From 7th to 16th January Swamiji was at Bhubaneswar. Being the President of Sivananda Centenary Boys' High School, Khandagiri, he had full-length discussions on

the affairs and various aspects of the school. This is a residential School, having classes from 6th to 10th, with about 300 boys studying in the school. On different days, separately, Swamiji addressed all the students of the school together, the bright boys of class X who are going for the Board Examination in March, the other boys of class X, the Teachers, the House Masters, and the Non-teaching staff of the School, and had close interaction with all of them. On 13th January Swamiji attended the Managing Committee Meeting of the School. All this extended a great help in running of the School.

On January 12th, Swamiji visited Chidananda Sevashram at Nalapari in Kendrapara district. Many devotees had assembled. Swamiji gave a discourse at the Satsanga held on the occasion.

The State-level Vyasakavi Fakir Mohan Smriti Samsad, Bhubaneswar, was celebrating the 167th Birth Anniversary of Vyasakavi Fakir Mohan at Jayadev Bhavan on 14th January. Swamiji was invited to attend and preside over the function. Gajapati Maharaja Sri Dibya Singha Debji attended it as the Chief Guest. Swamiji presided over the function. On this auspicious occasion the 12th Issue of the Cultural Heritage of Orissa, which was solely devoted to Lord Jagannath, was released. The Smriti Samsad, under the guidance of its Working President Sri Gopinath Mohanty, IAS (Retd.), has been bringing out serially one Issue of the Cultural Heritage of Orissa devoted to each one district of the State, over the past few years. So far 11 such Issues had been published, of which the last two were on Puri District. Now the third Issue on Puri, devoted to Lord Jagannath, was brought out. This is a very admirable work deserving deep appreciation. Swamiji Maharaj also spoke in the function.

Swamiji again visited Baliguali Ashram and stayed there from 18th to 25th January.

On 19th January, upon invitation, Swamiji visited Harihara Gurukula Ashram under Prajnana Mission at Balighai and addressed

the participants of the Annual Intensive International Kriya Yoga Seminar. Swamiji spoke on "Some Important Aspects of Yoga". The International Seminar was held under the auspices of the Prajnana Mission, from 14th to 20th January.

Thereafter Swamiji proceeded to West Bengal. The Divine Life Society, West Bengal, had organised its Annual State level Sadhana Shibir from 27th to 31st January. Swamiji attended the Sadhana Shibir from beginning till the last day. It was inaugurated by Swamiji on 27th in the evening. On all other days he addressed the Sadhaks every day in the early morning prayer and meditation session. Besides, Swamiji also gave discourses each day in the forenoon session, and also in the afternoon session, except on 31st, as the Sadhana Shibir concluded on that day after the forenoon session. Swamiji also participated in the evening Satsanga every day. His talks covered the

various aspects of Sadhana. The Sadhana Shibir was also attended by Revered Sri Swami Sivananda Gurusevanandaji, Sri Swami Sivachidanandaji, Sri Swami Sevanandaji, Sri Swami Vijnananandaji, Sri Swami Devabhaktanandaji, Sri Swami Chitswarupanandaji, etc. The Asana and Pranayama class was conducted by Sri Arvind Parekh and Smt. Parekh.

On 2nd February Swamiji attended the Satsanga held in the residence of Sri R.N. Das and Smt. Mamata Das in Salt Lake area, with a good gathering of devotees. Swamiji gave a discourse at the Satsanga. Swamiji also visited the house of Sri Priyabrat Mukhejee and Smt. Prabha Mukherjee on 4th February and took part in the Satsanga arranged on the occasion.

Swami Sivananda Memorial Institute had its Trust Board Meeting at East Punjabi Bag on 8th February. Swamiji as its Chairman attended the Meeting.

CULTURAL TOUR OF H.H. SRI SWAMI PADMANABHANANDAJI MAHARAJ

Brahmaleen Sri Swami Gnanananda Saraswati Maharaj was one among the early disciples of Worshipful Gurudev Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj who did yeoman's service to Gurudev and His mission in Kerala. Sri Swami Muktiswaroopananda of Kanyakumari, a disciple of Brahmaleen Sri Swami Gnanananda Saraswati, and devotees of H.H. Sri Swami Gnananandaji Maharaj, organised his Birth Centenary Celebration on 21st January 2010 at Vivekananda Kendra Kanyakumari, Sri Swami Padmanabhanandaji Maharaj on invitation from the Centenary Celebration Committee participated in the programmes and delivered a talk on the glorious life of Sri Swami Gnananandaji Maharaj.

Sri Swamiji then proceeded to Pattamadai and attended the meeting of the Board of Trustees of the Sri Swami Sivananda Memorial Trust held at Sri Swami Sivananda Charitable Hospital, Pattamadai on 22nd January 2010.

The 36th All Andhra Divine Life Society Conference was held from 24th to 26th January

2010 at Pullampetta Village in Kadappa District of Andhra Pradesh. Sri M.T. Alwar, Hindupur, Sri Samudrala Lakshmanaiyah, Sri B. Arundevi, Sri Chatalawada Venkateshaiah, Guntur, H.H. Sri Swami Vidyaprakasananda of Sukabrahmashramam, Sri Kalahasti, other eminent speakers and scholarly saints attended the Conference and enlightened the audience with messages from the Upanishads, the Gita and of Saints. Sri Swami Padmanabhanandaji Maharaj presided over the Conference and delivered lectures on 'Sadhana in daily life' as envisioned by worshipful Gurudev Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj. The Conference was attended by more than 3000 local people. The organising committee took pains to see to the comfort of all those who attended the Conference. The programmes were covered by the electronic media carrying the message of Gurudev very well to a large number of people.

The Director of Indira Gandhi National Forest Academy, Dehradun, invited Sri

Swamiji to deliver an interactive lecture on February 2010. The lecture was attended by "Ethics in Professional Life" for the Indian the Course participants as well as the faculty Forest Service Probationers 2008-2010 members. The Director requested Sri Batch. Accordingly Sri Swamiji visited the Swamiji to visit the Academy every year and Academy and delivered a lecture on 16th to interact with the Course participants.

**SANNYASA DIKSHA AT SIVANANDA ASHARAM,
The Divine Life Society Headquarters.**

On the holy Sivaratri Day, Friday, the February 12, 2010, H.H. Sri Swami Vimalanandaji Maharaj, President, The Divine Life Society, ordained Sannyasa Diksha, in the Spiritual presence of Worshipful Gurudev Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj and Worshipful H.H. Sri Swami Chidanandaji Maharaj at Gurudev's Kutir on the holy bank of Mother Ganga, at Sivananda Ashram, Shivanandanagar.

The following are those initiated in to the holy Sannyasa order of Dasanami Parampara.

<u>Purvashram Name</u>	<u>Sannyasa Name</u>
1. Br. Atmanishtha Chaitanya	Swami Atmanishthananda Saraswati
2. Br. Brahmatma Chaitanya	Swami Brahmatmananda Saraswati
3. Br. Amrit Chaitanya	Swami Amritananda Saraswati
4. Br. Guruprem Chaitanya	Swami Gurupremananda Saraswati
5. Br. Ramanishtha Chaitanya	Swami Ramanishthananda Saraswati
6. Br. Saswat Chaitanya	Swami Saswatananda Saraswati
7. Br. Damodar Chaitanya	Swami Damodarananda Saraswati
8. Br. Ramaprem Chaitanya	Swami Ramapremananda Saraswati
9. Sri Prasad Rao Patnaik	Swami Pranavatmananda Saraswati
10. Sri H. Sivaramakrishna	Swami Sivaraghavananda Saraswati
11. Sri Malay Kumar Sahoo	Swami Aksharananda Saraswati
12. Sri Bijay Kumar Sahu	Swami Vimuktananda Saraswati
13. Sri Saibal K. Ghosh	Swami Saradananda Saraswati
14. Sri Milind S. Kulkarni	Swami Bhumananda Saraswati
15. Sri Bidyadhara Sahoo	Swami Sridharananda Saraswati
16. Sri K. Ezhil Arasu	Swami Sadasivananda Saraswati
17. Sri Swami Sadananda	Swami Sadananda Saraswati
18. Starr Oxenberg	Swami Divyabhavananda Saraswati
19. Susri Pushpa Khaturia	Swami Chitnisthananda Saraswati

REPORTS FROM THE DLS BRANCHES

INLAND BRANCHES

Ambala (Haryana): The Branch continued its daily Satsanga with Meditation, recitation of Hymns and Japa. Monthly Video Show was on 10th January. Special Satsanga was arranged on 18th January when two Sannyasis from Headquarters visited the place. Daily Yogasana class for women and Seva through two Homoeopathic clinics continued.

Badhiausta (Orissa): Daily activities of the Branch were kept up. Weekly Satsanga on Sundays and Mobile Satsangas in neighbouring villages continued. Organised Medical assistance to poor patients and Narayan Seva were also provided.

Barbil, Matkambeda (Orissa): The Branch conducted the weekly Satsanga on every Thursday, four residential Satsangas in the neighbourhood of the Branch, and celebrated Gita Jayanti on 30-11-09. Sivananda Charitable Homoeo Dispensary of the Branch gave free treatment to 405 patients.

Baripada (Orissa): The Branch conducted mobile Satsanga on 1st January in the residence of a devotee and observed 3rd January as Sadhana Day to celebrate the Annual Day of the Branch. Narayana Seva for 100 patients at Leprosy Colony, 120 at Dumb & Deaf School and 52 inmates of Vriddhashram was organised. Medicines were distributed to 65 leprosy patients of Baripada Leprosy Colony.

Bargarh (Orissa): The Branch, in addition to its daily routine activities like Puja, evening Swadhyaya and Yoga-meditation, conducted Guru Paduka Puja on Thursdays and Gita Path & discussions on Sundays. New Year day & Makar Sankranti day (1st and 14th January) were cele-

brated as Sadhana Days. Grand special celebration on 20th January marked the 2nd Foundation day of the Branch. Sri Swami Gurusevanandaji Maharaj graced the function and released the special issue of 'Mahat Vani' (Oriya) magazine of the Branch.

Bellary (Karnataka): In addition to daily worship, the Branch had Satsanga and Guru Paduka Puja on every Sunday. A special Paduka Puja was performed on 7th January to observe the Punyatithi Anniversary of Sri Swami Devanandaji Maharaj.

Bhilai Nagar (M.P.): The Branch arranged a special Satsanga on 16th December at Sri Jagannath Temple, Sector-4, Bhilai Township with visiting Sannyasis of DLS Headquarters & other institutions. Monthly Satsanga was held on 27th December, and Matri Satsanga on all Tuesdays & Fridays and on two Ekadasi days.

Bhongir (A.P.): The Branch held a special Satsanga on 7th January to celebrate the Punyatithi Anniversary of Sri Swami Devanandaji Maharaj at Sri Kanyaka Parameswary Temple with Bhajan, Kirtan, Vishnu Sahasranama Parayan etc.

Chatrapur (Orissa): Besides daily Satsanga, the Branch conducted four weekly Satsangas and two special satsangas, Guru Paduka Pujas on Sivananda Day and Chidananda Day, and Sundara Kanda Parayan on 16th December.

Faridpur, (U.P.): Daily and weekly Satsangas continued. The Branch distributed 400 Blankets and 100 Sweaters to poor people living on the roadside, and on Poornima day 250 children of poor families were fed and given sweaters and stationeries.

Gumargunda (Chhattisgarh): Regular activities: Daily three times Arati at Viswanath and Samadhi Mandir, early morning Prayer and Meditation, Night Satsanga for two hours, every Thursday Guru Paduka Puja, Saturday Hanuman Chalisa and Sundarkand, Monday Sri Siva Chalisa and Friday Sri Durga Chalisa Parayana. **Special Functions:** The Branch celebrated 17th Punyatithi Aradhana of Brahmaleen Sri Swami Sadapremanandaji Maharaj on 22nd December with events like Yoga Sadhana Sibir, Akhanda Kirtan of "Om Namah Sivaya", Guru Paduka Puja, Havan, Sraddhanjali by Mahatmas and Bhandara. Swami Vaikunthanandaji Maharaj gave Mantra Deeksha to a few devotees through Sri Swami Chidanandaji Maharaj's recorded voice. Sannyasis from DLS Headquarters and other institutions together with one thousand devotees participated in the function. In January, on 14th, 15th and 30th, Akhanda Kirtan of "Om Namah Sivaya" for three hours each with Puja, Havan and Sankirtan were performed.

Jagdapur (Chhattisgarh): The Branch regularly conducted daily morning and evening Prayers, meditation and Yogasan classes, collective chanting of "Om Namah Sivaya" followed by Siva Chalisa and night Satsanga for one hour. Guru Paduka Puja on Thursdays, Vishnu Sahasra Nama Parayana on Sundays and Hanuman Chalisa on Saturdays went on regularly. A special celebration to mark the 17th Punyatithi Aradhana of Sri Swami Sadapremanandaji Maharaj took place on 23rd and 24th December, attended by more than 250 devotees. Sannyasis from DLS Headquarters and other institutions also participated in the function and offered their homage to the sacred memory of Gumar Gunda Babaji (locally known in this name) through the special Satsanga arranged on the occasion. On 31st December, 2 hours Akhanda chanting of "Om Namah Sivaya" was specially arranged.

Jeypore (Orissa): Regular activities of twice-a-day Puja, Weekly Satsanga on Sundays and Mobile Satsanga on Thursdays were continued. In November, 1st, 8th, 22nd and 30th were special days with different functions and observations. In December, Sivananda Day on 8th, and 11th & 13th were days of celebrations with special Satsana, Bhajan, Kirtan and Puja. On 24th, a special Satsanga was organised when a group of Sannyasis from DLS Headquarters along with office bearers of Nandininagar (Chhattisgarh) Branch visited the place.

Khatiguda (Orissa): The Branch observed 6th December as Sadhana Day with 12 hours Akhanda Maha Mantra chanting and Narayan Seva; observed Ekadasi on 12th and 28th December with Sri Vishnu Sahasrana Parayanam. Mobile Satsanga was held on 25th December at the house of a devotee.

Khurda Road, Jatni (Orissa): Besides the routine programme, the Branch celebrated the sacred Birth Anniversaries of Gurudev HH Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj and HH Sri Swami Chidanandaji Maharaj on 8th September and 24th September, 2009, respectively. Special evening Satsangas from 8th to 16th September and a Bhagavata Saptaha from 17th to 23rd September were organised. On 02nd October, Gandhi Jayanti day, distributed food packets and plastic buckets were distributed to 40 leper patients. The Branch organised distribution of specially made shoes to patients with the help of East Coast Railway Womens' Organisation and Leprosy Eradication Department.

It conducted Bhagavad Gita Jayanti on 30th November. 20th December was observed as a special Sadhana Day in the company of representatives from Prajapati Brahma Kumari Iswariya Viswavidyalaya. 30 leprosy patients were also fed on that day.

Khurja (U.P.): The Branch conducted daily Yogasana classes besides Dhyana Yoga, Swadhyaya, Prayer and Sankirtan on Sundays. Financial help of Rs. 200/- per month to a poor lady and daily free Homoeo treatment to patients were arranged.

Layidam (A.P.): Sacred Sri Sita Rama Maha Yajna was organized at the Branch in Sivananda Dharma Kshetram from 18th to 28th December under the guidance of Sri Veduk Raghun Sankara Sastri of Srikakulam. Radhotsavam and Theppotsavam were celebrated on 27th December, witnessed by around ten thousand devotees. Along with the Maha Yajna, special Homas like Putrakameshti, Grahshanti, Ayushya Homa etc. were conducted by devotees every day. Spiritual discourses were also arranged during this period. Throughout these 11 days Akhanda Hare Rama-Hare Krishna sankirtan, parayan of Hanuman Chalisa, Ramayana and Vishnu Sahasranama were going on at different places of Pushkarini.

Malviya Nagar, Jaipur (Rajasthan): In the month of December, the Branch continued its regular programme, on Sunday- morning Kirtan and Havan, Tuesday- Narayan Seva, Friday-Bhajan Kirtan by Matri Mandal, and Daily- Yoga Sadhana both times, Swadhyaya on health, and Homeo seva. On 19th, the Branch honoured 'Viswa Mangal Gow Gram Kalash Yatra' in a special programme, and on 20th Sri Swami Yoga Vedantanandaji Maharaj of DLS Headquarters gave a special Satsanga to 600 participants.

Special programme: A three-days State DLS Conference was organised from 12th to 14th December. A total of 486 delegates participated in the three days' Conference from different Branches in and out of Chhattisgarh State. Sri Swami Nirliptanandaji Maharaj and other Sannyasis represented DLS Headquarters. The

Conference commenced with a Shobha Yatra on the previous day, 11th December. The main theme of the Conference was dissemination of spiritual knowledge as propagated by Sadgurudev Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj. Series of lectures were organised in different Towns & Cities, Schools & Colleges. Sannyasis from DLS headquarters and others visited many localities, Schools & Colleges, delivered talks and conveyed the message of Gurudev and His mission. In the Conference proposals for opening many new Branches came up with genuine enthusiasm. On 13th Sri Swami Nirliptanandaji Maharaj released a Souvenir.

Manjhiguda (Chhattisgarh): In addition to daily puja of Ma Durga, with Bhajan, Kirtan and chanting of Hymns, the Branch celebrated Punyatithi Anniversary of Swami Sadapremchandaji Maharaj on 21st and 22nd December. Akhanda Nama Sankirtan, Guru Paduka Puja and Satsang with Sannyasis of DLS Headquarters were part of celebration. Swami Vaikunthanandaji Maharaj gave Mantra Deeksha to 16 devotees through recorded voice of Sri Swami Chidanandaji Maharaj.

Nandini Nagar (Chhattisgarh): Daily regular activities of the Branch like Brahma Muhurta Satsanga and Evening Satsanga continued in the month of December. In addition to that, on 3rd, Akhanda Maha Mantra Kirtan from 6am to 6pm, Weekly Mobile Satsanga on every Thursday, Matri Satsanga on Saturdays and Ekadasi days with Vishnu Sahasranama Parayan and Geeta Path were arranged.

Nehrunagar, Bhilai (M.P.): The Branch continued the daily activities of Yoga-Pranayama-Dhyana classes and Bhakti Sadhana on Ekadasi days. On 15th December special Satsanga was arranged with visiting Swamijis from DLS Headquarters. In association with Gyan Darshan Yoga

Ashram the Branch conducted a Bhagavata Saptaha from 24th to 31st December.

Raipur (Chhattisgarh): The Branch conducted regular Satsanga on every Sunday from 4:00pm to 6:00pm and special Pujas and Vishnu Sahasranama Parayana on Ekadasi days. Special Bhishma Ekadasi Puja was performed on 26th January.

Rourkela (Orissa): Sadhana Day programme was organised by the Branch on 20th December, in the house of a devotee, from 8:00am to 3:00pm commencing with Guru Paduka Puja, chanting of Bhagavad Gita, Hanuman Chalisa, Sanischara Stotra, Bhajan, Kirtan etc. Two Sannyasis spoke on the teachings of Guru Maharaj and this was followed by Narayana Seva.

Sunabeda (Orissa): The Branch organised Satsanga on every Thursday and Sunday from 7:00pm to 8:30pm. Swadhyaya of Gurudev's teachings, Bhajan, Kirtan and Puja were the main events. The Ladies wing conducted their Satsanga on every Wednesday and Saturday. The main Branch celebrated completion of its 40th year of glorious service on 25th December observing it as a Sadhana Day. The Sunabeda Ladies Branch also joined in Guru Paduka Puja, Swadhyaya of Sreemad Bhagavad Gita, Bhajan, Kirtan etc., of the celebration.

South Balanda (Orissa): Regular programmes of the Branch continued in the month of January with twice-a-day Puja, Weekly Satsanga on every Friday and special Satsanga on Sivananda and Chidananda Days. Makar Sankranti, on the 14th, opened up with Guru Paduka Puja and three hours Akhanda Maha Mrityunjaya Mantra Japa Yajna for world peace & universal brotherhood.

On 20th, three hours Akhanda Maha Mantra chanting was conducted from 6pm to 9pm. The day 31st January unfolded with a new development programme— "Chidananda Bal-Vikash" aimed at bringing the youngsters in to the spiritual stream of Divine Life.

Vadodara (Gujarat): The Branch continued its regular activities in the month of December and performed special Guru Paduka Pujas (on 08th & 24th), Bhajan Satsanga (on 3rd, 10th, 17th, 24th and 31st), Medical eye camp, Homeopathy & Ayurvedic dispensaries, acupressure treatment and distribution of medicines to needy patients at Shree Sayaji General Hospital. In the first week, Yogasan-Pranayama Sibir was conducted both in the morning and evening under the guidance of Sri Swami Dharmanishthanandaji Maharaj. As a part of Hirak Mahotsav, the Branch arranged special Satsangas on 2nd, 5th, 26th and 31st as well.

Varanasi (U.P.): The Branch organized three Mobile Satsanga at different residences on 6th & 20th December and 17th January, besides Satsanga at 'Vridha Ashram' on 13th December and 3rd & 24th January.

OVERSEAS BRANCH

Hong Kong (China) : In December, the Branch conducted Satsanga on the second Saturday with one hour collective chanting of Maha Mrityunjaya Mantra and a talk on the teaching of Gurudev. On every other Saturday, one hour group chanting of Maha Mantra was arranged. Regular classes of Yogasana, Pranayama and Meditation were continued. 215 new participants attended 14 new classes. The Branch provided Yoga Teachers for Yoga classes for elders organized by Hong Kong Family Welfare Centre.

The Self is Absolute Consciousness, Brahman or the Bhuma. —Swami Krishnananda



SIVARATRI MAHIMA

(H.H. Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj)

Silent adorations to Lord Siva, consort of Parvati, the destructive aspect of Brahman, who is known by the names Sambhu, Sankara, Mahadeva, Sadashiva, Viswanatha, Hara, Tripurari, Gangadhara, Soolapani, Nilakantha, Dakshinamurti, Chandrashekhara, Nilalohita, who is the bestower of auspiciousness, immortality and divine knowledge on His devotees, and who does Tandava Nritya or the Dance of Death at the end of Time or the Cosmic Pralaya, and who is the real Regenerator but not the Destroyer,

Maha Sivaratri means the great night consecrated to Lord Siva. Maha Sivaratri falls on Trayodasi or the thirteenth day of the dark fortnight of Kumbha month. In the Shanti Parva of the Mahabharata, Bhishma refers to the observance of Maha Sivaratri by King Chitrabhanu when he was giving the discourse on Dharma, resting on his bed of arrows.

Once upon a time King Chitrabhanu of the Ikshvaku dynasty, who was ruling over the whole of Jambudwipa, and his wife were observing a fast on the day of Maha Sivaratri. The Sage Ashtavakra came on a visit to the court of the King. The Sage asked: "O King! Why are you observing a fast today?" King Chitrabhanu had the gift of remembering the incidents of his previous birth, and he said to Sage Ashtavakra:

"I was a hunter by name Suswar in my previous birth. I eked out my livelihood by killing and selling birds and animals. One day, I

was roaming in a forest in search of animals. I was overtaken by the darkness of night. I was not able to return home and so I climbed up a Bilwa tree for shelter. I shot a deer that day but I had no time to take it home. As I was tormented by hunger and thirst, I kept awake throughout the night. I shed profuse tears when I thought of my poor wife and children who were starving and anxiously awaiting my return. I engaged myself in plucking and dropping down the Bilwa leaves. There was a Siva Linga at the foot of the Bilwa tree. The tears and the leaves fell upon the Siva Linga.

"The day dawned. I returned home and sold the deer. I got food for myself and for my family. I was about to break my fast. A stranger came to me and begged for food. I served him with food first and then I took my food. At the hour of death I saw two messengers of Lord Siva. They were sent down for the sake of conducting my soul to the abode of Siva. I learnt there for the first time of the great merit I had earned by the observance of the fast on the day of Maha Sivaratri, though I did it unconsciously and by accident, I lived in the abode of Siva and enjoyed divine bliss for long ages. I am now reborn on this earth as Chitrabhanu."

The Name of Lord Siva chanted in any way, correctly or incorrectly, knowingly or unknowingly, carefully or carelessly is sure to give the desired result. The glory of the Name of Lord Siva cannot be established through reasoning and intellect. It can certainly be experienced or realised only through devotion, faith and constant repetition of the Name and

singing His hymns with *bhava*. Every Name is filled with countless potencies or *shaktis*. The power of the Name is ineffable. Its glory is indescribable. The efficiency and inherent *shakti* of the Name of Lord Siva are unfathomable.

The mind is purified by constant repetition of Siva Stotra and Names of Lord Siva. The Stotras are filled with good and pure thoughts. Repetition of the hymns to Siva strengthens the good *samskaras*. "As a man thinks, that he becomes." This is the psychological law. The mind of a man who trains himself in thinking good, holy thoughts, develops a tendency to think good thoughts. His character is molded and transformed by continued good thought. When the mind thinks of the image of the Lord during His hymns, the mental substance actually assumes the form of the image of the Lord. The impression of the object is left in the mind. This is called *samskara*. When the act is repeated very often, the *samskaras* gain strength by repetition, and a tendency or habit is formed in the mind. He who entertains thoughts of a Divinity becomes transformed actually into the Divinity himself by constant thinking. His *bhava* or disposition is purified and divinised. When one sings the hymns of Lord Siva, one is in tune with the Lord. The individual mind melts in the cosmic mind. He who sings the hymns becomes one with Lord Siva.

Just as fire has the natural property of burning inflammable things, so also the Name of Lord Siva has the power of burning the sins, *samskaras* and *vasanas* and be-

stowing eternal bliss and everlasting peace on those who repeat the Name of the Lord. Just as burning quality is natural and inherent in fire, so also the power of destroying sins with their very root and branch and bringing the aspirant into blissful union with the Lord through *bhava samadhi* is natural and inherent in the Name of God.

O friends! Take refuge in the Name of Siva. Sing His hymns. *Nami* and *nama* are inseparable. Sing Lord Siva's hymns incessantly. Remember the Name of the Lord with every incoming and outgoing breath. In this Iron Age *nama smaran* or singing the hymns is the easiest, quickest, safest and surest way to reach God and attain Immortality and perennial joy. Glory to Lord Siva! Glory to His Name!!!

Ravana propitiated Lord Siva by his hymns. Pushpadanta pleased Lord Siva by his celebrated Stotra—Siva Mahimna Stotra—which is even now sung by all devotees of Siva throughout India, and obtained all *aiswarya* or *siddhis* and *mukti*. The glory of the Stotras of Siva is indescribable, why not you all sing the hymns of Lord Siva and obtain His grace and salvation not in the unknown future, but right now in this very second. You can please Lord Siva as easily. Fast on this Sivaratri. If you cannot do this, take milk and fruits. Keep perfect vigil the whole night and sing His Stotras. Repeat Om Namah Sivaya. May the blessings of Lord Siva be upon you all!

Om Shanti! Shanti!! Shantih!!!

To realise God is your duty. God-realisation is your birthright. Develop strong yearning for God-realisation, have confidence in yourself. Be self-controlled. Be fiery in your determination. Stick to your resolves tenaciously. Cultivate a strong faith in God. Do total self-surrender and obtain His Grace.

—Swami Sivananda

THE SUBJECTIVE DIMENSION OF PRAYER

(Sri Swami Chidananda)

Radiant Atman! Beloved and blessed children of the Divine! We will soon be observing the sacred annual worship of Lord Siva, Mahasivaratri. It is customary to regard and to speak of Lord Siva in terms of being a destroyer. The three aspects of the Supreme Being are Brahma, the creator, Vishnu, the preserver and Siva, the destroyer. They say *srishti*, *sthiti* and *layakartas*. The “destroyer” is usually not used by me. I use the word “dissolver,” because they do not refer to Lord Siva in mythology as *nasakarta* or *vinasakarta* (destroyer) but as *layakarta* (dissolver). *Laya* means subsiding back into the original state. *srishti* is emerging into variegated names and forms, the One becoming the many. *sthiti* is preserving, continuing in time, and *laya* is merging back into the original unmanifest state, the nameless, formless unified state.

But, quite apart from this concept of Lord Siva as dissolver, it is very widely held, especially in North India, that He is the boon-giver. Even though He is the highest of all gods, *devadi-deva* (Lord of lords), *Mahadeva* (the great God), yet He is easily pleased. He is very simple and prepared to give anything, to give *anything*. And He is also a saviour. He saved Markandeya, His boy devotee, from death by appearing before him and daring lord Yama to touch His devotee. So here, He is not so much the destroyer as He is the protector and saviour. There are innumerable such instances of His saving grace.

And it does not take much to please Him. Pour some water over Him, give a Bilva

leaf and chant His Name once. That is enough. So one of the terms with which He is referred to is *asutosh*, very easily propitiated, easily pleased—*asutosh mahadev*.

But, the most endearing term by which He is popularly referred to by devotees, in North India especially, is the term “*bhola*.” Bhola means simple-minded, one who has no complication in his thinking, feeling and acting. He has no complications, no crookedness, no cleverness. He is simple-minded. They call Him Bhola Nath. They call Him Bhola Sambhu. Bhola means simple. He believes whatever He sees. He does not look beyond. Even if a person asks for a boon with a wrong intention, He does not look to the intention.

If a person has taken His Name, or performed *tapasya*, He does not look into either the intention or the consequences. To anyone who propitiates Him, takes His Name, prays to Him, does *tapasya* and pleases Him, He asks: “What do you want?” Ravana did intense *tapasya* and just to indicate to what extent Lord Siva is simple, easy to please and prepared to give everything, He gave His divine partner, Parvati.

It would indeed be a highly beneficial thing if everyone would undertake an *anushthana* commencing tomorrow and concluding on Mahasivaratri day. Regularly repeat eleven *maalas* of Om Namah Sivaya dedicated to the welfare of humanity. If you cannot repeat eleven at least repeat five, one *maala* for each letter of the *panchakshari*

mantra. Om Namah Sivaya. It is very simple, very easy. In five minutes you can do it. It will not be a *purashcharana*, but it will be an *anushtana*. A *japa anushtana* you can do, and dedicate it to the welfare of mankind and the peace of the world.

Now, let us consider this ancient tradition in India, especially religious India, that is, praying for others, praying for the world, praying for the welfare of mankind, for the welfare of all-creatures, praying for peace on earth, not only for mankind and all creatures but also for everything that exists, praying for peace, wishing peace, desiring peace and sending out thoughts of peace to everything that exists, to all existence. "Peace be unto all the five elements, earth, water, fire, air and ether." It is desiring peace for the grass, herbs, plants and trees. It is desiring peace for the celestials, for the angelic host, for the gods right up to the creator, Brahma—*visvedeva santih* (peace to all the Gods), *brahma santih* (peace to Brahma), *santih eva santih* (peace for peace itself), wishing peace for peace itself. Let there be peace to all the Vedas, Vedic mantras, to everything. This is the ancient tradition.

Lokah samastah sukhino bhavantu—May all beings in this universe be happy. *Sarvesham svasti-bhavatu*—May prosperity and welfare be unto all beings. *Sarvesham santir-bhavatu*—May peace be unto all beings. *Sarvesham purnam bhavatu*—May plenitude and fullness be unto all beings. *Sarvesham mangalam bhavatu*—May auspiciousness and blessedness be unto all beings. *Sarve bhavantu sukhinah*—May all be happy. *Sarve Santu niramayah*—May all be free from disease, pain and suffering. *Sarve bhadrani pasyant*—May all behold that which is auspicious, pleasant, nothing fearful nor unpleasant. *Bhadra* is auspicious,

blessed, mild, pleasant. *Ma kaschid dukhabag bhavet*—May not sorrow fall to the lot of anyone. Thus, this has been an ancient tradition—wishing well, wishing peace, happiness, prosperity, freedom from disease and pain, plenty, fullness, blessedness and auspiciousness to everyone.

The desirability of such prayer is not only because the world needs all these things. There is also the subjective dimension of prayer that has to be considered. The process has a very important effect upon the one who prays. By wishing for all that is positive, creative, constructive, good, conducive to welfare, auspicious and blessed to all that exists—all creatures, mankind, the whole world—it makes us aware that our ancients expected us to make life an active, dynamic process of constantly working to bring about those very conditions which we wish for, pray for, intend and want for others. For, unless our prayer is backed up by suitable action to bring about these conditions, it has no meaning.

If we wish peace for others and at the same time we are actively engaged in robbing others of their peace by disturbing them, agitating them, causing them distress, then we stand as a living lie. We stand in terrible contradiction to what we mouth through such prayers. We say one thing, but we act in another manner. We succeed in doing something that is contrary to that which we pray for. It thus becomes a very serious situation, a very undesirable state of affairs. Every day we say *ma kaschid dukhabag bhavet*—May not sorrow fall to the lot of any being. Therefore, we have to be perpetually conscious, aware and careful that neither by thought, word nor deed do we create sorrow for others, grief for others.

“Where there is sadness, let me bring joy.” That is the sublime, noble prayer of Saint Francis. When we pray “May not sorrow fall to the lot of anyone,” then we should work in the way indicated by the simple prayer of St. Francis. “O Lord, where there is sadness, let me bring joy. Make me an instrument of joy to the lives of others. Make me an instrument of removing the sadness of others.” Axiomatically it means that if we wish happiness for others, joy for others, then we have to do something positively to bring joy to others; we have to also, simultaneously, engage in doing acts that remove the sorrow of others, lessen the grief of others, make people less sad. This is implied in this line from the simple prayer of St. Francis.

Apart from this, that such prayer is an indication of what we should work, live and act for, of what our great ancients have placed before us as an ideal for our life and the living of it, it also has still another aspect. By constantly thinking in such a positive manner of the happiness, welfare and peace of others, it brings about a change in our nature. Gradually we become so disposed to act in such a way, to live in such a way, that we become a centre of goodwill towards others, a centre of compassion and kindness towards others, a centre of peace for others. The constant repetition of such prayer, the constant dwelling upon these thoughts, and the constant harbouring of these feelings in our heart have a transforming effect upon our own nature. It tends to gradually make us grow in this quality of goodwill towards all, of ill-will towards none, of compassion and kindness towards all, of prayerfully ever wanting to live in order to bring peace, solace, happiness and comfort to everyone.

This constant prayer has this effect, but only if we pray feelingfully, not mechanically.

If, as a matter of routine, we go on uttering this prayer mechanically with lip-service, then of course, we will be deprived of this purifying, elevating and transforming effect. We will not benefit from it; we will not gain anything by it. It is only when, every time we pray, we pray with earnestness, with sincerity, with feeling, in a meaningful manner, then alone it is a great life-transforming power, it is a great purifying and uplifting power.

That is its effect upon the one who prays. It has this unfailing effect of making us grow into those very qualities we pray for. This is the subjective dimension of prayer—how it benefits the one who prays. Constantly having these thoughts, these feelings of goodwill, of kindness, compassion, friendliness, makes us a well-wisher of humanity, a being filled with loving kindness, with good thoughts, goodwill and love, wishing and praying for the peace of all.

Then indeed our life mission is being fulfilled, because we become a centre for radiating around us the quality which is of God, *daivi sampad*. Compassion, kindness, peace, light, joy all belong to God, and we make ourselves a channel for the manifestation of these God-qualities in this world of His. What greater blessedness can one have? What greater privilege than this can one have? And what greater satisfaction than this can one have in life than the satisfaction “I have not lived in vain; I have tried to make myself a true child of God, make myself a channel for manifesting the qualities of Him whom I address as father, mother, friend, relative, and Lord.” That indeed makes life worth living.

It is in this way that we must understand the incalculable value of prayer for the one who prays. Thus may prayer transform your life and make it Divine. God bless you all!

THE PASSAGE OF TIME FOR THE EXPERIENCE OF ETERNITY

(Sri Swami Krishnananda)

[Continued from the previous issue]

Anything can be known by some kind of observation or calculation. We can measure the distance of space. We can see space with our eyes in some manner; but we cannot see time. Time is not the movement of the watch or the timepiece or the clock; it is an inscrutable illusion cast upon us. If we know what an illusion is, it ceases to be illusion. We should be caught by the magic of the magician—only then it is entertaining. The magician cannot enjoy his performance; it is others who cannot understand what it is who enjoy it and are entertained by it. We seem to be somehow or other getting on in this world, with the satisfaction of being worthwhile or doing something worthwhile, because we do not know what time is doing to us. *Kalo jagat bhakshah*, is an old adage: Time is the consumer of all things. The greatest consumer is time. The work of time is eating, swallowing, digesting, destroying, transforming; this is the work of time. Birth and death are processes of time. As everything, every one of us, is involved in this process, we cannot know what is actually happening. We cannot know when we are born; we cannot know that we are growing after we have been born; we cannot know that death is near. Nothing is clear when it is a question of involvement in the time process. Yet, there is something above time which is working within us in the form of a joy that a New Year of betterment is before us.

Who told us that the New Year is something better than the previous year? We have not seen the New Year; the year has not yet come, yet every year we say, “The New Year is

a happy one. It has to be something better.” We never feel that the next year will be worse than the previous one. We always know it cannot be worse; it has to be better. Who told us that it should be better? We are the witnesses of it. The trans-temporal, That which is above time working in us, operating in everyone, tells us that the future has to be something better than the past. Why should the future be better than the past? Observational science cannot answer this question. There is no method of experimentation by which we can know that the future is better. Even the study of history is not enough for this purpose. It is only our heart that says that the future is better. “Tomorrow it shall be better. Everything will be all right. All shall be well. Peace shall reign in the world. The millennium shall come. God shall rule the world.” Does not a voice from within us speak in this manner? From where does this voice come? It is That within us which is not involved in time, which is not limited in space, though we are involved in time and confined to space. Spatially we are confined to one particular location; temporally we are limited to our age, our span of life. Yet we always feel that there is a grand thing before us, ahead of us.

“Wish you a Happy New Year!” we cry loudly. Who is actually making this wish? Is it my wish or your wish? It is the wish of the Timeless Eternal in us. The non-temporal Eternity tells us that all shall be well with us, and not to be despondent. Everyone, even the most miserable man in this world, feels that a good day will come to him: “Somehow I shall be free from

this misery, this sorrow, this suffering.” The language of Eternity is the literature of joy, happiness, blessedness, irrespective of the fact that we seem to be shrouded in the limitations of space and time. We live a dual life: a life of death, mortality, and the life of deathlessness immortality.

We know that we shall not live in this world for a long time, and yet we feel that we should do good things. If tomorrow is the last day for us, what benefit is there in doing good things today? That which tells us that in spite of the fact that tomorrow may be the last day, today we should be good—that which tell us this, is the Eternity that is speaking to us: “You shall not perish.” Though the temporal encasement in us shall perish tomorrow, the Eternity in us shall not perish. The deeds that we perform have an eternal characteristic also in them, apart from their perishable nature. Every work that we do perishes when the work is over—it has an end, it comes to a close—but it produces an effect which shall not come to an end.

In the same way as we have a temporal vesture, which is this body, simultaneously with an Eternity that is a spark of Divinity within us, there is this temporality in the actions that we perform. All work is perishable in its nature; that is true. Yet, in this perishable framework of our actions, there is an eternal future embedded, a seed sown. It shall be an asset for us in our future. What do we mean by the future? If we leave this body tomorrow, where is the future for us? If all that we have done in this world, all our meritorious works are to cease together with the cessation of this body, what good is this life? This question may arise many a time when we are in a mood of despondency, but we forget that we are not merely mortal bodies and our actions are not entirely perishable or temporal in their nature. Perishable is this body, perishable are our deeds, yet immortal is our soul and deathless is the effect produced by our actions. This is the reason why we feel that tomorrow

shall be a better day. Otherwise, what is the rational ground for our feeling that tomorrow shall be better and the New Year is blessed? God speaks within us in the language of the Eternal that is operating within us and tells us, “All shall be well with you.” *Suhrdam sarva-bhutanam jnatva mam santim rcchati*. The Lord says in the Bhagavadgita, “Know me as your friend. Knowing this, you shall have peace.” Our friend is our Eternal in us; it is our real asset. Whatever we do in this world, if it has even a modicum of the Eternity in it, it shall be a credit for us to be carried forward to our future life.

Thus there are several series of New Years to come. Many New Years have already gone and many more are yet to come. All the New Years that are yet to come in the future are steps on the onward march of the eternal element in us towards its flowering efflorescence in the form of utter perfection. To the extent we are Eternal, we are happy; we smile and we feel that things are fine in this world. We feel that things are okay, fine, to the extent the Eternity is operating in us; but when the other temporal element takes care of us and catches our throat, we feel all is misery and nothing is of any worth in this world.

The God element is stronger than the Earthly element. We have seen this little movie where the power that was material, which is represented by Kamsa, was overshadowed by the Eternal which was Sri Krishna, which was light, radiance—this Eternal Light before which, all the radiation of matter is darkness.

So this New Year that is before us, ahead of us, gazing at us, speaks to us in a language of blessing and gracious abundance. May we therefore collect our thoughts, bring our minds into a focus of attention and realise our true destiny—what we are really and what we are going to be in the future. May we not be caught up by the illusions of the time process.

We have come alone to this world. Is it true that we have come alone to this world, with

no friends to accompany us? We came with open hands, with nothing on our palms. *Ekah prajayate jantur eka eva praliyate, eko'nubhunkte sukrta eka eva tu duskrta; namutrahi sahayartham pita mata ca tisthatah, na putradarah na jnatih dharmas tisthati kevalah.* This is a ringing message of the Manu Smriti. Alone does the Soul come into this world. It does not bring luggage, treasures, or friends and relations. Alone shall it depart from this world. It will not carry any luggage and bedding. It cannot carry with it one broken needle. Alone shall we reap the fruits of our deeds. Nobody will share our sorrows; our cry will be in the wilderness. And if we have done any good deed, we alone shall reap the fruits of those good deeds.

Eko'nubhunkte sukrta eka eva tu duskrta; namutrahi sahayartham pita mata ca tisthatah. Our parents will not come with us. Our relations will desert us. What will come with us? We will come with ourselves. When I go, what shall I take with me? I shall take only myself. This is good news. It is happy news indeed to hear that when I go, I carry only myself; when I go, I take only myself. What is this 'myself'? This body? It has been left here. The seed that has been sown in the form of a perpetuation of values by the deeds performed and thoughts entertained and also feelings of the mind—these will come with us. When I say, "I come with myself," my thoughts, my feelings, my deeds in their potentiality will come. These are the historical notes struck by the drama of time; and onward does it march, carrying every one of us like passengers in a railway train, in a single direction. Each one comes alone, each one goes alone—of course it is true—but everyone shall meet at one point, as pilgrims meet in a choultry or an inn when they are on their way to their destination. So we are not fathers and mothers, brothers and sisters or friends and relations here; we are pil-

grims on the path. We chat together, talk together, entertain ourselves by telling stories on the way, but we do not belong to one another.

Neither you belong to me nor I belong to you, but everyone belongs to something else. Nobody owns any property here, because all property belongs to one thing, to which we also belong. Towards that we are heading. This is the time process; this is the movement of the whole universe. The entire body of the cosmos is lifted up high above itself to its own destiny, which is what may be called Universal Self-realisation. The world is moving toward a Self-realisation of itself. This Universal Self-realisation, where the universe becomes conscious of itself as 'I am I', is the destiny towards which time is moving—reaching which, time extinguishes itself as a flame is extinguished when that which feeds it is no more there. The karmas cease, and time also ceases; Eternity reigns supreme. It is towards this glorious consummation of the values of all life, towards this blessedness, that we are moving in the passage of time for the experience of Eternity.

So, blessed is the New Year, and may we take this occasion especially to invoke the invisible presence of Worshipful Gurudev Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj that the purpose for which we have come here to this Ashram, which is our Self-realisation, be fulfilled in our loving participation with the work of the whole cosmos in its Universal Self-realisation.

May this be our blessedness! May this be the blessedness of all humanity! May the world be in absolute peace! May be this our humble prayer at this moment of the coming of the New Year! God bless you all!

(Concluded)

The knowledge of everything through the knowledge of one thing means that everything is made up of that same thing.

—Swami Krishnananda

THE VITAL IMPORTANCE OF THE VEDIC WAY OF LIFE

(Sri Swami Atmaswarupananda)

The Vedic way of life says that our life should have four principal aims. Our first aim should be to live a life of *dharma*, which is often defined as righteousness. Righteousness really means that One alone is, and therefore the purpose of that One alone is in everything; there is nowhere Its purpose is not. We are meant to live in harmony with that purpose. Harmony comes from the same root word as heaven.

The second aim is to earn wealth. There was never any thought that we should live off someone else, that somehow spirituality was separate from the practical aspects of life. Indeed, spirituality is found in the practical aspects of life. Therefore, they also said that we should enjoy legitimate desires. And finally, the last and most important aim was to be liberated from the illusion that we are the body and mind, to be liberated from ourself, as Pujya Swami Chidanandaji used to express it.

These four aims were to be fulfilled in four stages of our life. Assuming we would live for a hundred years, they divided our lives into four 25 year periods. The first 25 years is the student stage, when we are meant to prepare ourselves physically, mentally and spiritually for the successful living of our life. The second 25 years is meant to be our productive years, the years of active married life and active working life, of raising a family, providing for them and also providing for elders. The third stage of life is meant to be a retired stage, a gradual letting go of all that has been accumulated both physically and emotionally. The final stage of life is to be a total retirement from normal secular life and a concentration on God, on liberation.

It is certainly not impossible for an ordinary human being to live a life of *dharma*, to fulfil the aims of earning wealth and enjoying legitimate pleasures and to seek liberation. It is not unnatural to go from the stage of the student life to a householder life. Finally, after 25 years of retired life, to retire to *sannyas* is quite natural. What is not easy, what is not natural and yet symbolizes

the whole of the spiritual life is to shift in middle age from *grihastha* to *vanaprastha*, from householder life to retired life.

What makes it so incredibly difficult is that we have spent nearly 50 years being trained, taking a lot of abuse, working hard to achieve success—success in raising our family, success in earning wealth, success in overcoming our limitations. Finally we have reached a point that we have been striving for all our life: We are being looked up to, instead of being looked down on. At this point, to walk away from it all is more than most people can even contemplate, let alone do. And yet, it is not only key from a practical spiritual point of view, it is key for the understanding of our spiritual life.

It is key from a practical point of view because after putting 25 years into the world, conquering the world, it takes at least 25 years to get it out of our system, to let it go. Therefore, it should not be postponed, if we don't want to run out of time. But it is also very important because it symbolizes what the whole of the spiritual life is all about, and that is letting go of all the things that we think are important. It is seeing life from, as Gurudev said, another angle of vision.

It is almost impossible to overestimate the difference between Arjuna's angle of vision and Lord Krishna's angle of vision. That is why it was such a struggle for Arjuna to change his mind. That is why Lord Krishna had to work so hard on him. God's point of view and our point of view are like the difference between night and day. God is not something we can understand from our angle of vision. We have to renounce our angle of vision in order to gain God's angle of vision.

Therefore, at some point in our life we have to accept this challenge, and it is actualized and symbolized by leaving behind *grihastha* life and embracing the life of *vanaprastha*—sooner rather than later. As Gurudev said: "Do not postpone!"

LUST AND PASSION

(H.H. Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj)

[Continued from the previous issue]

A clerk who gets a salary of Rs. 500 has six children at the age of 30. Every two years there is an addition. He never thinks, "How shall I maintain such a big family? How shall I educate my sons and daughters? How shall I arrange for the marriage of my daughter?" At the heat of sexual excitement, he repeats the same ignoble act again and again. He has not a bit of self-control. Lions visit their partners only once in a year. It is only man with his boasted intellect that breaks the rules of health and has become a criminal in this direction. He will have to pay a heavy penalty in the near future, for violating the laws of nature.

You have adopted various habits from the West in matters relating to dress and fashion. You have become a vile imitation. They, in the West, do not marry unless they are able to maintain a family decently. They have got more self-restraint. They first secure a decent station in life, earn money, save something and then only think of marriage. If they have not sufficient money, they remain bachelors throughout their lives. They do not want to bring forth beggars into this world just in the same manner as you do. He who has understood the magnitude of human suffering in this world will never bring forth even a single child from the womb of a woman.

When a man with a poor salary has to maintain a big family, he is forced to take bribes. He loses his sense and power of understanding and is prepared to do any kind of mean act to collect money. The idea of God is forgotten. He is swayed by passion. He be-

comes a slave to his wife. He bears with a shrug of his shoulder her taunts and scolding when he is unable to supply her demands. He has no knowledge of the theory of Karma, Samskaras and the working of the inner mental factory. The evil habits of taking bribes, cheating others and telling lies, are imbedded in the subconscious mind and is transferred to every physical body in its future births. Will a man who knows this immutable law of Samskaras ever do wrong deeds? A man by his wrong actions spoils his mind and becomes a thief or a cheat in the coming births also. He brings in his old thoughts and feelings which are by nature devilish. He should be very careful in his thoughts, feelings and actions. He should always watch his thoughts and actions and entertain divine thoughts, sublime feelings and do noble actions. Action and reaction are equal and opposite. One should understand and remember this law. Then he will not do any wrong action.

Throughout the Gita the one ringing note that arrests the imagination and mind of the readers is that the man who has calmed his passionate nature is the most happy man in this world. It is also very, very easy to control passion which is your deadliest enemy if only you take this subject very seriously and apply yourself to spiritual Sadhana wholeheartedly with single-minded devotion and concentration.

Nothing is impossible under the sun. Dietetic adjustment is of paramount importance. Take Sattvic food such as milk, fruits, green dal, barley, etc. Give up pungent foods

such as curries, chutneys, chillies, etc. Take a simple diet. Do Vichara. Chant 'Om'. Meditate on Atman. Enquire 'Who am I?' Remember that there is no Vasana in Atman. Passion belongs to the mind only. Sleep separately. Get up at 4 a.m. Do the Japa of Maha Mantra or 'Om Namah Shivaya' or 'Om Namo Narayanaya' according to your taste, temperament and capacity. Do meditation on the Divine attributes such as Omnipotence, Omniscience, Omnipresence, etc. Study one chapter of the Gita daily. Make it a point not to tell lies even at the cost of death itself. Fast on Ekadasi days or whenever your passion troubles you. Give up novel-reading and cinema-going. Spend every minute profitably. Practise Pranayama also. Study my book 'Science of Pranayama'. Do not look at women with passionate intents. Look at your toes when you walk along the streets and meditate on the form of your deity. Repeat always your Guru Mantra even while walking, eating and working in the office. Try to see God in everything, keep the daily diary regularly and send it to your Guru for review at the end of every month. Write down your Guru Mantra daily in a clean note book for an hour and send the notebook to your Guru.

You will be able to control passion if only you strictly adhere to the above instructions, to the very letter. You can laugh at me if you do not succeed. Blessed is the man who has controlled his passion for he will soon have God-realisation. Glory unto such a soul!

Practise Sirshasana, Sarvangasana and Siddhasana simultaneously with Pranayama. These are all highly useful in the conquest of passion. Do not overload your stomach at night. Night meals should be very light. Half a seer of milk or some fruit will constitute a good regimen or menu at night. Have the motto: 'Plain living and high thinking' engraved in letters of gold in the forefront of your conscience.

Study select works of Sankaracharya such as Bhaja Govindam, Maniratna Mala or Prashnottari, Viveka Chudamani, etc. Read with care 'Vairagya Shataka' of Bhartrihari. They are all very elevating and inspiring. Practise always Atma Vichara. Have Satsanga. Attend Kathas, Sankirtan and philosophical discourses. Do not be too familiar with anybody. Familiarity breeds contempt. Do not multiply friends. Do not court friendship with women. Do not also be very familiar with them. Familiarity with women will eventually end in your destruction. Never forget this point. Friends are your real foes.

Avoid looking at the opposite sex with lustful intents. Entertain Atma Bhava or the Bhava of mother, sister or Devi. You may fail many times. Again and again try to realise this Bhava. Whenever the mind runs towards the opposite sex with lustful thoughts, have a definite clear-cut photo in the mind, of the flesh, bone, urine and faecal matter of which man and woman are composed. This will induce Vairagya in the mind. You will not commit again the sin of unchaste look at anybody. It takes some time, no doubt.

Inflict self-punishment if the mind runs towards the opposite sex with lustful idea. Give up night meals. Do twenty Maalas of Japa more. Hate lust but not women or men. Always wear a Koupeen (Langoti).

Gradually give up salt and tamarind. Salt excites passion and emotion. Salt excites and strengthens the Indriyas. Renunciation of salt brings in a cool condition of the mind and the nerves. It helps meditation. You will suffer a bit in the beginning. Later on you will enjoy a saltless diet. Practise at least for six months. In this way you will be able to realise your own Svarupa very quickly. All that is wanted of you is sincere and earnest effort. May Sri Krishna give you courage and strength to tread the path of spirituality and attain the goal of life! *(To be continued)*

Sivananda's Gospel of Divine Life

FOUNDATION OF YOGA AND REALISATION

THE UNSEEN COMPANION

An old South Indian couple were on a visit to Rishikesh. They had remained at the Ashram for a few days and were leaving for South India. After a trip to Lakshmanjhula, they came into the office and prostrated to the Master.

"How do you like these places? Did you enjoy your trip to Lakshmanjhula? Did you see all the shrines?"

"Yes, Swamiji, wherever we go in Rishikesh, we discover immense peace of mind. We have never enjoyed this peace before. This Ashram is full of peace and bliss. There is no place like it anywhere else in India. When we think of the happiness that we derive here, our minds yearn to settle down here itself."

"What about your family?"

"We have no one else, only we two," replied the lady. "He also has retired long ago. We lead a lonely life. There is no hindrance. We can easily come and settle down here. He has already transferred his pension papers to Dehra Dun. We shall go to South India only to wind up the family affairs and then come here once for all."

"H'm! There is no one else for you?"

"No, Swamiji, only we two."

"But you have forgotten the third member of your family—God. He is your constant companion. You can never be absolutely alone. God is always with you."

KINDS OF VANITY

In the course of a conversation one of the visitors referred to an old acquaintance of the Master and said, "He has now fifteen cars, Swamiji, and he is rolling in wealth."

Quick came the reply, "What good is all this? It only increases his vanity."

Turning to the aspirants present, the Master added, "The other form of vanity is 'I have performed six lakhs of Om Namah Shivaya Japa.' All these kinds of egoism and vanity should be ruthlessly eradicated."

COMPASSION IN ACTION

It had been said by the Sadhu contemporaries of the Master that during his Sadhana days at Swarga Ashram, even if he had shut himself up in a room, he could be easily brought to his heels at the least sign of suffering in the neighbourhood. To him, God was more profoundly manifest in the afflicted patient outside than anywhere within the four walls of his own room.

The Master was deeply engaged in a conversation at Ram Ashram with his European devotees.

Suddenly the wail of a mother was heard nearby. He immediately lost all interest in the conversation, hurried to the patient and at once kneeled at her side. The patient herself felt great relief and stopped crying. She explained her condition. The Master quickly diagnosed that it was labour pains.

"Get Sridharji quickly! Run!" One Ashramite was thus despatched.

“Fetch a horse-cart immediately!” he commanded to a second.

A third was sent to the kitchen!

After some initial treatment the lady was rushed to the Rishikesh hospital. The husband obviously had enough money with him, but the Master’s solicitude was always blind to these facts. Padmanabhanji came running with a ten-rupee note, which the Master, as though duty bound, handed to the husband. Within an hour of the Master hearing the weeping sound the lady was in hospital. She delivered a child a few minutes after admission!

A SURPRISE GIFT

Sri John D’Cruz was hesitating to ask for a copy of the book, ‘Diamond Jubilee Commemoration Volume.’ He had no money. A very diligent and earnest aspirant, yet God had placed him in poor circumstances.

The Master quickly perceived his immediate hunger to peruse this beautiful volume.

“Padmanabhanji. bring a copy of the ‘Diamond Jubilee Commemoration Volume’ for D’Cruzji.”

D’Cruz was beside himself with joy. He modestly asked the Master, “Is this volume for me, Swamiji? It is such a costly and precious book.”

“Of course it is for you, my dear D’Cruzji. The book is not worth anything to me in terms of money. You are more valuable to me than money. And if the book elevates you, I am much more satisfied than if you had paid me a hundred rupees in return for it.”

SOLICITUDE

An old lady was coming up to attend Satsang. As the meeting was being held on the roof of the building adjacent to the Ashram kitchen, a step had been improvised with a small table, to make it easier for people to ascend to the roof. The old lady was trying to look for a way to get upon the roof. The Master, perceiving this, immediately got up from his seat, and with great solicitude guided her to the place of Satsang.

Make the mind one-pointed by collecting all the dissipated rays of the mind. Withdraw the mind from all sense-objects again and again and try to fix the mind on your Lakshya or point of meditation or centre. Gradually you will have concentration of mind or one-pointedness. You must be patient and persevering. You must be very regular in your practice. Then only you will succeed. Regularity is of paramount importance.

—Swami Sivananda

Children's Page

THE SPRING OF PEACE

(*Sri Swami Ramarajyam*)

In the year 1857, when the Indians were all set to oust the British rulers from India, a Sadhu reached a military camp of the British by mistake. The Sadhu had taken the vow to observe silence and to speak only at the time of his death. On discovering the Sadhu there, the soldiers began to investigate him on the suspicion of his being a spy sent by the Indian fighters for freedom. The Sadhu gave no reply because of his vow of silence. His silence made them even more suspicious. When even after a long interrogation, the Sadhu did not speak, a strong suspicion fell on him. A soldier's bayonet pierced his chest. A stream of blood gushed out.

Thinking that his death was imminent, he broke his vow of silence and said "Tatvamasi". In spite of being in great pain, he looked smilingly at the soldier, whose bayonet lay pierced in his chest. He folded his hands and said to him, "O God! It is you who has come in the guise of this soldier. I recognise you. Why are you hiding behind this false identity? I salute you again and again."

Having said this, the Sadhu breathed his last. The soldiers did not know the meaning of "Tatvamasi" or of anything else he had said, but what surprised them most was his smile despite severe pain.

Dear children, perhaps you might also be wondering about what the Sadhu had said. 'Tatvamasi' means—'You are That (God).' The Sadhu saw God even in that soldier who did not hesitate to take his life and he saluted him before dying. His smile was the expression of the joy of seeing God before him.

We learn a lot from that Sadhu. We must remember God in every situation—good or bad. We should face all the situations gladly taking them as the will of God. We should also realise that God appears in various forms to create such situations. If we could think like that, a spring of peace would start flowing inside us. Our hearts and minds would be bathed in this spring. Its cool effect would always keep us cheerful.

The inner secret of the true law of prosperity is to affirm your plenitude, to affirm your abundance and live in that ever-present condition of lacking nothing, of having God and, therefore, of having everything. This is the only way. —**Swami Chidananda**

Yoga in Daily Life

BHAKTI YOGA

(H.H. Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj)

[Continued from the previous issue]

MANTRA FOR JAPA

Select any one of the following Mantras. Repeat it with concentration from 10 to 50 Malas from 4 to 6 a.m. and 6 to 8 p.m. regularly, everyday.

Mantras	Deities
<i>Om Gam Ganapataye Namah</i>	—Ganapati
<i>Om Namah Sivaya</i>	—Lord Siva
<i>Om Namo Narayanaya</i>	—Lord Narayana
<i>Om Namo Bhagavate Vasudevaya</i>	—Lord Krishna
<i>Om Klin Krishnaya Govindaya Gopijana Vallabhaya Svaha</i>	—Lord Krishna
<i>Om Sri Rama, Jaya Rama, Jaya Jaya Ram</i>	—Lord Rama
<i>Om Ram Ramaya Namah</i>	—Lord Rama
<i>Hare Rama Hare Rama Rama Rama Hare Hare Hare Krishna Hare Krishna Krishna Krishna Hare Hare</i>	—Mahamantra

Yugal Mantra

1. Sita Ram
2. Radheshyam
3. Sri Sita Ramachandrabhyo Namah

Saranagati Mantra

1. Sri Rama Saranam Mama
2. Sri Sita Rama Saranam Mama
3. Sri Ramachandra Saranam Prapadye
4. Sri Krishna Saranam Mama

BHAKTI YOGA SADHANA

God is the Inner Ruler of your heart and mind. He is the silent witness of your

thoughts. You cannot hide anything from Him. Become guileless and straightforward.

A devotee of Hari is always meek and humble. Name of God "Hari" is always on his lips. He sheds profuse tears when he is alone. He is very pious. He is friendly towards all. He has equal-vision. He does good always. He never hurts the feelings of others. He has a spotless character. He never covets the property of others. He sees Hari in all beings.

Bhakti can move mountains. Nothing is impossible to it. It was the devotion of Mira that converted a snake into a flower garland, poison into nectar and a bed of nails into a bed of roses. It was the devotion of Prahlada that turned fire into ice.

A devotee should become an embodiment of goodness. He must be ever ready to do good to living beings. That devotee who is intent upon the welfare of all beings obtains the peace of the Eternal. He who rejoices in the welfare of all, gets the Darshan of the Lord. He develops Advaitic consciousness eventually.

Service of Bhagavatas, repetition of God's name, Satsanga, singing His name, study of the Bhagavata or the Ramayana, living in Brindavan, Pandharpur, Chitrakuta or Ayodhya, are the six means for developing Bhakti.

(To be continued)

NEWS AND REPORTS

NEWS FROM THE HEADQUARTERS

SEVA THROUGH SIVANANDA HOME

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

The fiery cold of this January month has taken the lives of many people who have their homes on the side of the road, in a forlorn corner, under a plastic sheet or hidden under a few dusty blankets. To be houseless, hearthless and homeless is not a small assignment in this season of the year. When the body cools down, the extremities become numb, one is not able to get up any longer, and the mind stops functioning. This happened with one of the patients who was brought in for admission this month, completely under cooled, anemic and in a state of mental shock. He must have been about eighty years old, according to his looks, and a couple of hours after admission he breathed his last. May his soul find rest and eternal peace. Om Shanti Shanti Shantih.

Another patient who found shelter at the Holy Feet of Sri Gurudev was a young lady, suffering from juvenile Reumathroid Arthritis. During more than ten years of her disease she had developed fixed contractions of both

her legs and arms. At present she is doing quite well, undergoing medical treatment, daily massage and physiotherapy and in her free time she started Mantra writing and has even joined the other female patients in knitting scarves.

The first words which came from his shivering lips when he was made to lie down in the emergency section of the home were: "The Lord has saved me." Forty five years old, round and about, frozen up to the bones, undernourished and completely paralysed below the neck was his condition upon arrival. After consultation of a Neurosurgeon, he was diagnosed with a fracture located at the cervical spine and conservative treatment was advised. Unimaginable happy is this gentleman, in spite of his severe handicap, and therefore needing assistance with each and every aspect of his physical existence. But a wonderful smile can be seen on his face and the sparks in his eyes contain a secret, a fulfillment of a higher order.

"When you have no support or shelter, when there is no hope left, when your body is fully tired and breaks down, when your mind ceases to function, then your Atma becomes free to meet Him. The bulb or outer shell breaks down and the energy returns to the powerhouse or source."

(Sri Swami Satyananda Saraswati)

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

CHRISTMAS EVE CELEBRATIONS AND THE CHRISTMAS RETREAT

Holy Christmas was celebrated on December 24, 2009 in the Swami Sivananda Auditorium Annex "Satsang Hall" of the Ashram. Devotees from the entire area joined ashramites and guests in the joyous function that began with Jaya Ganesh Kirtan at 7.30 p.m. and concluded with the distribution of sacred Prasad well past midnight.

The nativity scene, illustrating the birth of the new child, was installed in a temple in the centre front of the Satsang Hall. A beautifully decorated tree was placed at the front right of the Hall.

The evening featured many songs in German, Spanish, French, Tamil, Hindi and English. Many of the devotional songs were offered in *kirtan* and *bhajan* style which added to the beauty of the evening. The Bible readings and accompanying songs began at

11.00 p.m. and continued till midnight. The evening concluded with silent meditation and closing prayers.

From December 26th to January 1, 2010, the 14th Annual Christmas-New Years Retreat for Devotees from Abroad was held at the Headquarters. Sixty devotees from nearly twenty countries attended the rewarding sessions. Morning talks were given by senior swamijis of the ashram in the Swami Sivananda Auditorium Annex "Satsang Hall." The speakers offered their wisdom and insight on this year's theme: The Power and Usefulness of Integral Yoga. Morning meditation and evening *satsanga* as well as optional sessions on yoga asanas and chanting were also included in the very successful programme.

ANNOUNCEMENT

2ND ZONAL SPIRITUAL CONFERENCE AND 2ND ANNIVERSARY OF SIVANANDA ASHRAM, CHANDIGARH 7TH AND 8TH MARCH 2010

The Divine Life Society, Chandigarh Branch will be celebrating the 2nd Anniversary of Sivananda Ashram, Chandigarh on 7th and 8th of March 2010. A Zonal Spiritual Conference is proposed to be held on this occasion. Senior saints from Sivananda Ashram, Rishikesh will grace the occasion with their holy presence. All devotees are cordially invited to participate in the function.

For enrolment and information please contact:

Sri F. Lal Kansal, President, 09814015237

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—THE DIVINE LIFE SOCIETY

CULTURAL TOUR OF H.H. SRI SWAMI NIRLIPTANANDAJI MAHARAJ

H.H. Sri Swami Nirliptanandaji Maharaj, Vice-President, Divine Life Society Headquarters, went on Cultural Tour during December, 2009 in India. Swamiji visited Chhattisgarh State to attend the All-Chhattisgarh 3rd Divine Life Conference. He also visited D.L.S. Branches and took part in their programmes.

On 11th December Swamiji visited D.L.S. Ahiwara Branch. The Branch had arranged a holy procession of devotees in the town with chanting of the Divine Name, singing and music for the occasion. Swamiji participated in it. There was great enthusiasm among the devotees. He also inaugurated the newly set up Vachanalaya or Reading Room with holy books for the benefit of the general public. Swamiji also attended the public Satsanga organised in the recently constructed Satsanga Hall of the Branch. There was a good gathering of devotees and Swamiji gave a discourse on the occasion.

The 3rd State-level D.L. Conference of Chhattisgarh was held at Nandininagar from 12th to 14th December. This was organised by D.L.S. Nandininagar Branch on the occasion of its Silver Jubilee. Started in 1985, the Branch entered the 25th years of its existence this year. Hence the Branch was celebrating its Silver Jubilee, and holding the State-level Conference was part of the activities of the Silver Jubilee Year. It is one of the dynamic Branches and in these twenty-five years many laudable activities have been taken up on behalf of the Branch. Its office-bearers and devotees have been taking part in its programmes with great sincerity. As a result, one Spiritual Conference, one State-level Divine Life Conference, 24 Yoga Camps, 3-day Spiritual Conferences for the

Youth, recitals of Ramcharitmanas, adoption of village Potia and many social welfare activities in it, etc., have been conducted by the Branch.

Swamiji attended the 3rd Chhattisgarh State-level Conference and presided over it. Everyday he gave discourses in the morning meditation session as also in the other sessions during the day. The Conference was attended by delegates from all the Branches of the State and also from other States. It gave good inspiration to the devotees and a great thrust for the Divine Life movement in the State. Revered Sri Swami Sivachidanandaji Maharaj, Sri Swami Vaikunthanandaji Maharaj, Sri Swami Dharmanishthanandaji Maharaj, Sri Swami Vijnananandaji, Sri Swami Devabhaktanandaji, Sri Swami Anandaswarupanandaji, Sri Swami Visuddhanandaji and other saints also attended it.

Swamiji Maharaj visited Kalyan Mahavidyalaya, Sector 7, Bhilainagar on 14th December and addressed the Post Graduate Students of its Education Department. The Head of the Deptt., faculty Members and students were present. Swamiji spoke on Indian Spiritual Culture and Ethical Values. There was very good response and interest from the students' side. The talk had a good impact on the audience.

From Nandininagar Swamiji proceeded to Dongargarh on 15th December. There Swamiji had Darshan at the famous holy temple of Goddess Bamleswari. He also visited Sivanand Kutir Yogashram of Swami Vidyandaji Maharaj. Swamiji also paid a visit to government Higher Secondary School Dongargarh and addressed the students.

In the afternoon of 15th Swamiji visited Mithila Dham Ganesh Mandir at Rajnandgaon. He participated in the Satsang arranged on the occasion and gave a discourse for the devotees present.

Then Swamiji went to Bhilainagar and visited the D.L.S. Branch (Sivananda Yoga Niketan). There was a very good gathering at the Satsanga organised by Sivananda Yoga Niketan. Swamiji gave a discourse on Bhakti Yoga. The next morning Swamiji attended their prayer-cum-meditation session and gave another talk on "Yoga in Daily Life" for the Yoga-practitioners present.

At Bhilainagar on 16th December Swamiji also visited Jnana Darshan Yogashram under the Bihar, School of Yoga, Munger, at their earnest invitation. A large number of devotees of the Yogashram and Revered Sri Swami Sheelanandaji Maharaj, the In-charge, were present. Swamiji gave a talk at the Satsanga.

Thereafter Swamiji attended the Public Satsanga organised by D.L.S. Bhilainagar at Lord Jagannath Temple. There was a good gathering of devotees. A discourse was given by Swamiji at the Satsanga.

Next Swamiji visited Raigarh. On 17th December Swamiji gave a discourse at the Public Satsang arranged by the D.L.S. Raigarh Branch at the local Dharmashala.

Swamiji also visited Balco City (Korba) on that day. The local devotees are keen to open a Branch of the D.L.S. at Balco City. Swamiji gave a short talk at the local Sri Ram Temple in Sector-4 in the Satsang arranged for the occasion.

On 18th December Swamiji Maharaj visited Bilaspur. The D.L.S. Bilaspur Branch which is an active Branch had arranged a

Public Satsang on the occasion of Swamiji's visit. It was well attended by sincere devotees. Swamiji gave a discourse at the Satsang.

Then Swamiji visited Raipur. At the house of Smt. Mehta in Shankarnagar there was a Satsang. The local devotees are keen to open a Branch at Shankarnagar, since the existing Branch in Raipur City is quite far away and they find it difficult to attend Satsang there. Swamiji participated in the Satsang and gave a discourse for the benefit of the devotees present.

Swamiji visited Mahasamund on 19th December. Two Satsangas were arranged by Sivanand Yoga Mitra Mandal, Mahasamund, on that day (1) for the School Students and (2) for the Public and students of Adarsh Shasakiya Kanya Uchchatar Madhyamik Vidyalaya, Mahasamund, at the Yoga Vedanta and Spiritual Shivir in the local Town Hall. Swamiji attended them and spoke on both the occasions.

On that day in the evening Swamiji also visited Patan Town and attended the Satsang organised by Sri Devangan of that place. The devotees are very eager to open a Branch of the Divine Life Society at Patan. There was great devotion among the people. Swamiji gave a discourse at the Satsang on the need for spiritual life.

All the programmes in Chhattisgarh State were organised and coordinated by Sri K.S. Thakur of Nandinagar, President of Chhattisgarh Divine Life Society. Sri Thakur accompanied Swamiji Maharaj all along for all the programmes. The programmes provided great inspiration and boost for the activities of the D.L.S. in that State.

From Chhattisgarh Swamiji went to Jharkhand State to attend the Shodashi Cer-

emonym of Parama Pujya Sri Swami Satyanandaji Maharaj at Rikhia, to represent the Holy Ashram of Gurudev. Sri Swami Satyanandaji Maharaj was a direct disciple of Gurudev Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj and was in our Ashram for about ten years during Gurudev's time. He had served in our Ashram in many departments. He was in charge of our Hindi Section for some time and wrote many articles in Hindi. He was also greatly responsible for the bringing out of Gurudev's English commentary on The Brihadaranyaka Upanishad. With the blessings of Sri Gurudev he engaged himself in the propagation of Yoga and set up the Bihar School of Yoga at Munger and many other similar institutions. In December he attained Mahasamadhi and his Shodashi function was held on 22nd December at Rikhia, where he spent his later years. Swamiji attended this function and paid respects to the sacred memory of Parama Pujya Sri Swami Satyanandaji Maharaj.

Thereafter Swamiji proceeded to Orissa to attend the 32nd State Level Conference of Divine Life Society at Polasara in Ganjam District.

Together with the State Level Conference, a State-level Youth Camp was also organised at Polasara simultaneously, from 27th to 31st December 2009. Swamiji Maharaj inaugurated the Youth Camp on 27th and attended the different sessions on all the days. More than 700 students both boys and girls, had joined the Shivir. Swamiji gave discourses to the participants on various topics like "Mind Control, Concentration and Meditation," "Life and Ideals of Swami Sivanandaji", "Divine Life and Swami Chidananda", etc. There was great enthusi-

asm among the Youth and they were immensely inspired and benefited by the Youth Camp.

The 32nd All-Orissa State D.L.S. Conference was from 29th to 31st December. Swamiji Maharaj presided over the Conference. Parama Pujya Gajapati Maharaja Sri Dibya Singha Deb, Revered Sri Swami Sivananda Gurusevanandaji, Sri Swami Sivachidanandaji, Baba Sri Kishori Charan Dasji, Sri Swami Vaikunthanandaji, Sri Swami Dharmaprakashanandaji, Sri Swami Dharmanishthanandaji, Sri Swami Vivekarupanandaji, Prof. Hrudananda Rayji, Sri Swami Devabhaktanandaji, Sri Swami Brahmasakshatkarandaji, and others attended it. Revered Sri Niranjana Pradhan, the M.L.A. of Polasara was the Chairman of the reception and he played a very vital role in organising the Conference, making arrangements for it, and its conducting, from inception to conclusion. Revered Smt. Renubala Pradhan, Member, Rajya Sabha also addressed the Conference on the concluding day. More than 2000 delegates from various parts of Orissa participated in the Conference. Everyday, including the members of the general public, about 6 to 7 thousand devotees were attending the Conference. Swamiji Maharaj gave discourses in the early morning meditation session, and also in the other sessions. Swamiji spoke on "Meditation", "The Spiritual Heritage of India and Swami Sivananda", "Vedanta Philosophy", "Swami Chidananda, the embodiment of Divine Life", etc. The Conference was very well organised and was a grand success. The participants were greatly inspired and got immense benefit.

REPORTS FROM THE D.L.S. BRANCHES

INLAND BRANCHES

Ahiwara (Chhattisgarh): During the month of December 2009, the Branch conducted daily Puja, prayer and recitation and on Ekadasis collective Japa of Mahamrityunjaya Mantra. December 11 was a memorable day for the Branch. After Nagar Sankirtan Yatra led by H.H. Sri Swami Nirliptanandaji Maharaj and other revered Sannyasis, Swamiji Maharaj inaugurated the newly built Swami Sivananda Bhajan Mandir and Swami Sivananda Library. All the saints present on this occasion gave talks expressing their good wishes. On 31st December, the New Year was greeted with 6-hour Akhanda Kirtan of Mahamantra till midnight.

Ambala (Haryana): The Branch conducted daily Satsanga with meditation and recitation of hymns or Japa. The monthly programme of video show was on 13th December, and 2-hour Akhanda Japa of Mahamrityunjaya Mantra on 3rd December. It continued daily Yogasana class for women and Seva through two Homoeopathic clinics.

Bangalore (Karnataka): The weekly Satsanga on Thursdays included Paduka Puja and Svadhyaya of Gurudev's teachings, the Friday Satsanga included recitation of Sri Vishnu-sahasranama and Sri Lalita-sahasranama Stotras. The programmes on Sundays were Abhishekam, recitation and Svadhyaya of Gurudev's teachings on the first Sunday, 3-hour Akhanda Kirtan on the 3rd, devotional music on the 4th and Free Medical Camp on the 5th Sunday of November. Earlier, it organised 6-day Skanda Puja, Bhajans and worship of 6 boys on the concluding day.

Bargarh (Orissa): The Branch conducted daily 2-time Puja, Svadhyaya, meditation, and Yogasana-Pranayama. The weekly activities were Satsanga on Saturdays, Paduka Puja on Thursdays and Srimad Bhagavad Gita Patha Chakra (both recitation and discourses) on Sundays. It held Sadhana Day on December 11 and 23. The Charitable Homoeopathic Dispensary treated 200 patients during the month.

Baripada (Orissa): The Branch held two Satsangas, the monthly Sadhana Day and Paduka Puja on Sundays. Medicines were pro-

vided free to the Leprosy inhabitants. Narayana Seva was done in the old-age home on 13th and in the Leprosy colony on 18th December. Sweets and blankets were distributed to 70 inhabitants of the Leprosy Colony.

Bellary (Karnataka): In addition to the daily Puja, the Branch held the weekly Satsanga and Paduka Puja on Sundays, and Sri Vishnu-sahasranama Stotra Parayana on Vaikuntha Ekadasi.

Bhawanipatna (Orissa): The Branch conducted biweekly Satsanga on Thursdays and Sundays, Sadhana Day on 6th December, and Paduka Puja and other programmes on Sivananda Day. Sri Swami Vaikunthanandaji and Sri Swami Devabhaktanandaji performed Bhumi Pujan for Swami Sivananda Bal Vihar Vidya Pith on 25th December.

Bhimkand (Orissa): The Branch conducted daily morning Paduka Puja, weekly Satsanga on Sundays, the monthly Sadhana Day on 20th December, and one mobile Satsanga. Sri Bhagavad Gita Jayanti programme included Paduka Puja, Havan and Narayana Seva.

Bhongir (A.P.): The Branch conducted daily Puja and Sri Vishnu-sahasranama Stotra Parayana. In the special Satsanga on Sri Bhagavad Gita Jayanti, Gita Puja and Parayana were done.

Bhuj (Gujarat): The Branch arranged a discourse on Sri Bhagavad Gita and Svadhyaya of Gurudev's teachings on 10th October, and a special Satsanga on Dipavali. On 14th November, Revered Swami Dharmanishthanandaji addressed the Branch members in the morning and a public meeting in the evening.

Bikaner (Rajasthan): In addition to 2-time Puja and daily Svadhyaya and Satsanga, the Branch conducted two Matri-Satsanga with Sri Sundarakanda Parayana and reading of a Sikh scripture, Sivananda Day programme of Paduka Puja and Bhajan-kirtan, and Chidananda Day of Yajna. The special activities were: Mahamantra Kirtan on 3rd December. 'Om Namah Sivaya' Mantra Kirtan on 31st, Sri Dattatreya Jayanti; Sri Sundarakanda Parayana on 7th; Havan and distribution of snacks to school children on 9th; and a special Satsanga with a talk on Lord Jesus's

teachings on the Christmas Day. It continued its social service through Sivananda Library, Yogasana and meditation class, and Scholarships to the deserving students.

Brahmapur, Lanjipalli (Orissa): The Branch conducted weekly Satsanga on Saturdays and Sankranti, and monthly Sadhana Day and Narayana Seva on the last Sunday every month.

Chatrapur (Orissa): In addition to the daily Satsanga, the Branch conducted weekly Satsanga on Thursdays, five mobile Satsangas, two Satsangas in nearby villages, two special Satsangas with discourses in two temple premises, Paduka Puja on Sivananda Day and Chidananda Day, and Sri Sundarakanda Parayana on Sankranti.

Special Activities: (1) Sri Bhagavad Gita Jayanti: Complete Parayana of the Divine Song for three days; Gita recitation competition for school children—42 participants. (2) Poornahuti the monthlong Sri Rama-charit Manas concluded on 2nd December with a special function and a talk by Revered Sri Swami Arpanandaji.

Jaipur, Raja Park (Rajasthan): Regular Activities: Daily morning Sri Devi Bhagavat Katha; daily evening Satsanga with Mahamrityunjaya Mantra Japa on Thursdays, Sri Sundarakanda Parayana on Saturdays and 3rd November and Svadhyaaya on the remaining days; weekly Satsanga on Sunday morning with Havan, recitation of various hymns and Svadhyaaya of Gurudev's writings; Matri-Satsanga on Monday afternoons; Homoeopathic clinic—1498 patients treated during November; daily Yogasana class; monetary aid of Rs. 150/- each to 26 poor widows; daily Narayana Seva with special items on Sundays to 300 destitutes; distribution of 108 Kg. dry ration in a leprosy colony; Rs. 45,000/- per month scholarship to 105 students; and Swami Sivananda Library.

Special Activities: (1) Parayana; Sri Vishnu-sahasranama Stotra Parayana daily from November 1 to 9. (2) Sri Bhagavad Gita Jayanti: (i) Havan, special Pujan of Navagraha, Sri Krishna, Bhagavan Vedavyasa and the scripture on 22nd November. (ii) Katha: Sri Bhagavad Gita Mahatmya Katha in the forenoon from November 22 to 25. (iii) Recitation competition: the participating students were given training and guidance by a Sanskrit scholar, all the participants were given two books, and special prizes to the three winners. (iv) Discourses: 6 distinguished scholars

gave discourses on Srimad Bhagavad Gita from November 22 to 27. (v) Srimad Bhagavad Gita Parayana on 27th November. (vi) Yajna: 55 participants gave 10,000 oblations along with Slokas of Srimad Bhagavad Gita. All these programmes were given wide coverage by various newspapers.

Kakinada (A.P.): The Branch organised Satsanga at three different centres on all Sundays afternoons and evenings and Tuesdays, and medical camps on 2nd and last Sundays. Revered Swami Gurucharananandaji participated in the Satsanga on 27th December and gave a talk. In November saints gave talks on 1st and 22nd on Srimad Bhagavad Gita and on 29th on the life teachings of Gurudev Swami Sivananda.

Kantabanji (Orissa): The Sunday Satsanga of the Branch included Svadhyaaya of Bhagavad Gita.

Phulbani (Orissa): The Branch conducted twice-a-day Puja, weekly Satsanga on Sundays, and Paduka Puja on Sivananda Day and Chidananda Day. It organised special Puja, and Havan with oblations after each Sloka of Srimad Bhagavad Gita.

Raigarh (Chhattisgarh): H.H. Sri Swami Nirliptanandaji Maharaj accompanied by Revered Swami Dharmanishthanandaji, Sri Swami Vaikunthanandaji and Sri Swami Devabhaktanandaji visited the Branch, and gave a talk in a public gathering on 17th December. This 4-hour programme was attended by a very large number of devotees.

Raipur (Chhattisgarh): The Branch conducted weekly Satsanga on Sundays, and Puja and Sri Vishnu-sahasranama Stotra Parayana on Ekadasis. A special Satsanga was arranged on the visit of Revered Sri Swami Sivachidanandaji on 12th November. H.H. Sri Swami Nirliptanandaji Maharaj and party visited the Branch on 20th December and conducted Mantra initiation to the devotees.

South Balanda (Orissa): The Branch continued its regular activities of 2-time Puja, weekly Satsangas on Fridays, special Satsanga on Sivananda Day and Chidananda Day, Paduka Puja in the morning and 3-hour Akhanda Japa of Mahamrityunjaya Mantra in the evening, and monthly 3-hour Akhanda Sankirtan of Mahamantra on 29th December.

Sunabeda, Ladies Branch (Orissa): Regular Activities: Daily Puja, Srimad Bhagavata Path

and Japa in the morning, and 1-hour Mahamantra Sankirtan and Bhagavad Gita Path in the evening; Satsanga on Wednesdays and Saturdays; Satsanga for Children on Sundays; common Satsanga on Sundays; Paduka Puja and Sri Vishnu-sahasranama Parayana on Ekadasis; 12-hour Akhanda Japa of Mahamrityunjaya Mantra, Paduka Puja and Prasad Sevan on Chidananda Day; and Narayana Seva on Tuesdays.

Special Activities: Kartika Purnima: 12-hour Akhanda Sankirtan of Mahamantra, Paduka Puja and Prasad Sevan.

Vadodara (Gujarat): The Branch continued its regular activities of weekly Satsanga on Thursdays, Paduka Puja and 9-hour Akhanda Japa on Sivananda Day and Chidananda Day, Homoeopathic Dispensary (4 days a week), Ayurvedic Dispensary (2 days), acupressure treatment (once a week), and distribution of medicines to the poor patients.

Varanasi (U.P.): The Branch held the fortnightly Satsanga on the second and fourth Sundays and mobile Satsanga on the remaining three Sundays.

OVERSEAS BRANCHES

Hong Kong (China): The Branch held monthly Satsanga on second Sundays (188 participants in 4 Satsangas in August, September, October and November 2009), and one hour Mahamantra Japa on other Satsangas (88 participants). 1004 trainees took part in the regular Yogasana class, 33 in 3 Yogasana workshops for teaching techniques each of 4 sessions, and 23 in 29-days advanced class.

Special Activities: (1) First Punyatithi of H.H. Sri Swami Chidanandaji Maharaj: 36 participants

in the special programme including Paduka Puja. (2) Chidananda Jayanti (i) A special programme on the previous Sunday included bhajans, 4-hour Akhanda Japa of Mahamrityunjaya Mantra, Arati, Prasad (40 participants), (ii) Paduka Puja on 24th September (34 participants). (3) 'Yoga Gala': a special programme of Yogasana demonstration.

SPECIAL ACTIVITIES

Diamond Jubilee of Vadodara Branch

The yearlong programmes of the Diamond Jubilee of Vadodara Branch began with inauguration of 'Satsanga Hall' by H.H. Sri Swami Vimalanandaji Maharaj who was accompanied by H.H. Sri Swami Padmanabhanandaji Maharaj, Revered Sri Swami Tyagavairagyanandaji, and Revered Swami Dharmanishthanandaji on 1st November. Swamiji presided over a Religious Conference on the theme 'Role of Spirituality in our personal, social and National Life', in M.S. University Auditorium. Scholars and saints of Jain, Islam, Christian and Hindu religions spoke on the subject.

Swamiji and party visited "Shram Mandir" situated at 15 Km. from Vadodara on 3rd November forenoon. In the evening H.H. Sri Swami Padmanabhanandaji Maharaj addressed college students on "Relevance of Ancient Indian Culture in Modern Times".

H.H. Sri Swami Vimalanandaji Maharaj inaugurated "Swami Sivananda Study Centre for Spiritual and Cultural Heritage of India" at M.S. University. H.H. Sri Swami Padmanabhanandaji Maharaj delivered the first talk in the centre on "Eternal Message of Indian Scriptures to Mankind".

All the Saints participated in the special Satsanga at night.

GRATEFUL THANKS

Devotees, seekers and friends had sent their loving greetings and good wishes to me for the New Year 2010. They are too numerous in number to write and acknowledge them individually. Therefore, I offer to all of them my sincere thanks and appreciation through this Divine Life Magazine. I wish them all that is best, joyful and auspicious in life. May the benedictions of Sat Gurudev Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj ever be upon them



Swami Vimalananda
President, The Divine Life Society

