Saints, sages and seers have conquered sorrow, pain and death, through faith, devotion and spiritual practices. Claim your birthright and attain the goal of life, Self-realisation. Arise, awake! Lead the divine life of truth, purity, love and goodness.

Swami Sriyanda

NOVEMBER 2019
O Adorable Lord of Mercy and Love!
Salutations and prostrations unto Thee.
Thou art Omnipresent, Omnipotent and Omniscient.
Thou art Satchidananda (Existence-Consciousness-Bliss Absolute).
Thou art the Indweller of all beings.

Grant us an understanding heart,
Equal vision, balanced mind,
Faith, devotion and wisdom.
Grant us inner spiritual strength
To resist temptations and to control the mind.
Free us from egoism, lust, greed, hatred, anger and jealousy.
Fill our hearts with divine virtues.

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

—Swami Sivananda

**IMPORTANCE OF ETHICS**

An ethical man is more powerful than an intellectual. Ethical culture brings in various sorts of occult powers. If you study Yoga Sutras, you will find a clear description of the powers that manifest by observance of the practice of Ahimsa, Satyam, Asteya, Brahmacharya and Aparigraha. The nine Riddhis roll under the feet of an ethically developed man. They are ready to serve him.

The philosopher need not necessarily be a moral or ethical man; but a spiritual man must of necessity be moral. Morality goes hand in hand with spirituality.
11. The learned man who knows Prana thus, his offspring does not perish and he becomes immortal; there is the following verse.
21. I worship with great devotion Sri Gurudev who is the sole abode of twenty virtues namely truthfulness, sacred knowledge, egolessness, compassion, peace, cleanliness, fortitude, dexterity, generosity, forgiveness, purity of intellect, magnanimity, vigour, erudition, equanimity, straightforwardness, firmness of mind, contentment, dispassion and fearlessness.

(Converted)
People have various views on the Swarupa of Lord Shanmukha who is also known as Kartikeya or Subramanya. Some consider Him the Commander-in-chief of the Deva forces. Some consider Him as a helper of the Devas, and therefore not even equal to the Devas themselves, though they think that He is a higher being than men.

The meaning of the very name Subramanya gives us a clue to His Real Identity. Subramanya means one who knows Brahman well. Brahman alone can know Brahman. Therefore, Lord Subramanya is Brahman only.

The story of Lord Subramanya’s birth is very interesting. Lord Siva has six heads—four facing the four sides, one facing upwards and the other downwards. From the Third Eye on each face emanated Tejas. This Light filled all the directions. The whole of ether was permeated by this Tejas. Lord Siva then withdrew this Tejas, into His own hands and gave it to Vayu. Vayu bore it for some time; but unable to endure it longer, gave it to Fire. Fire, in turn, passed it on to Ganga (water). That Tejas assumed the shape of six children and floated on Sharavana-lake. When Parvati took up these children, they together formed one child with six heads. This was Shanmukha. And, He carried on His Lilas on this earth.

That is the story of Brahman also; and the above is the story of Creation. Brahman filled everything. Brahman was of the form of Supreme Light. It filled ether. Thence, it passed on to Vayu, Fire, Water, and Earth. The symbology of Subramanya’s birth, therefore, proves that He is no other than the Supreme Brahman Himself.

The Lord has six heads and therefore He is called Shanmukha. Mukham or the head contains all the five Jnana Indriyas. These five Jnana Indriyas plus the six Indriya Buddhi, are the six gates through which the Antaratma receives impressions of objects. It is through these six ‘holes' that the Light of the Atman passes out. The very fact of the flowing out of consciousness through these six holes proves to wise men that the Atman within is of the form of Consciousness. This Inner Consciousness has, as it were, the six heads. So too, has Lord Subramanya. He is the Supreme Brahman with six heads—the six Jnana Indriyas.

And, the Yogis explain that the six heads of Lord Subramanya represent the six centres within. Each head is of the form of each Devata of the six Chakras. This way, too, we come to the conclusion that Lord Subramanya is Para Brahman and not a mere divine being.

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1 Taken from DL 1950
Meditation on Lord Subramanya, therefore, is according to the Bhaktas, the surest way to obtain intuitive Knowledge of Brahman. Lord Subramanya is Knowledge Absolute Itself; therefore, meditation on Him is productive of this Knowledge.

Apart from this, even if a beginner in concentration is taught about the Swarupa of Lord Subramanya, and is asked to meditate on the six-headed form of Subramanya, riding on the peacock holding the spear, with Valli and Devayani beside Him, the aspirant would sit absorbed in Him for three hours without any difficulty. To pass the mind from one head to the other, from one eye to the other of his eighteen eyes, from one hand to the other of his twelve arms, etc, would be so absorbing that the mind would never wander.

As the aspirant advances in the practice, he can gradually dispense with all this paraphernalia and concentrate upon the Vel (Spear) alone. This Spear is the Real Swarupa of Lord Subramanya. It represents Consciousness. When all the rest has vanished, this alone remains behind.

The characteristics of Buddhi are: depth of thought, heights of intuitive perception, breadth of vision and sharpness of intellect. All these are represented by the Vel (Spear). It is high (tall). It is deep (i.e., it has a long stem which reaches down to the feet). It’s leaf is broad. And, it has a sharp top. Therefore, it symbolises Consciousness. The advanced Sadhaka meditates on this. One who meditates on this as Consciousness surely attains the Supreme Brahman which is Satchidananda.

May the blessings of Lord Subramanya be upon you all!

Prostrations and salutations to Lord Subrahmanya, the Supreme Being,—who is the ruler of this Universe, who is the Indweller of our hearts, who is the second son of Lord Siva, who is the beloved of Valli and Devayani, who bestows boons quickly on His devotees and who is an embodiment of Power, Wisdom, Love and Bliss.

Lord Subrahmanya is an Avatara of Lord Siva. All incarnations are manifestations of the One Supreme Lord. Lord Subrahmanya and Lord Krishna are one. Lord Krishna says in the Gita, “Senaninam Aham Skandah,”—“Of the Generals, I am Skanda.” The Lord manifests Himself from time to time in various names and forms for establishing Dharma and punishing the wicked.

—Swami Sivananda
THE ESOTERIC SIGNIFICANCE OF THE LILAS OF SKANDA
(Sri Swami Chidananda)

THE BIRTH OF SKANDA

Just as we have the nine-day worship of the Divine Mother, during the Navaratri, even so Skanda-Shashthi is the traditional six-day worship of Lord Skanda or Kartikeya, the spiritual offspring of Lord Siva. We may even say that He is Lord Siva Himself—the Power of Lord Siva personified.

We are told that He burst forth from the Ajna Chakra of Lord Siva. Thus He is the Jnana Jyoti. A very significant fact is that ultimately, He was taken out of six lotuses by Goddess Parvati from the Saravanappoigai, the lake where reeds are growing. We know that the supreme spiritual experience or Aparoksha Anubhuti is attained through Shad-Chakra-Bheda or by piercing the six plexuses. It is the emerging out of the six lower lotuses that finds the Jiva ultimately in a state of perfect Yoga or Wisdom in the Sahasrara Chakra. Thus, in Skanda we have the ultimate product of an emergence out of the six lotuses or Shat-Chakras and this we know to be Supreme Wisdom. Therefore, Lord Skanda is a mass of transcendental Supreme Knowledge that has to destroy nescience, Ajnana or darkness, represented upon the plane of the manifest cosmos in the form of the Asuric hosts.

This great Avatara of Kartikeya is of deep significance to us, who have dedicated ourselves to the spiritual ideal, who have, by the Grace of God, begun to feel that the real purpose of life is not to be attained by enjoyment of the perishable objects of this physical world, but by striving for the attainment of the Eternal, the Imperishable. The manifestation of the Lord as Skanda has been a practical demonstration of the laws that operate upon the inward path of ascent unto divinity. Saints and sages are, as it were, a living commentary upon the great scriptures. Also the life and Lilas of the great Avataras, the divine personalities of our Puranas, are a demonstration of the laws that operate upon the spiritual realm, the truth pertaining to the inner life of Yoga, Sadhana and Sakshatkara. Different aspects of this inner life of Yoga and Sadhana are brought out and demonstrated by manifestations of the supreme Deity and their various Lilas. If their right significance is understood, it will be of immense help and guidance to the Jiva who is trying to attain the Supreme and to realise the Paramatman.

In the Skanda Avatara is brought out the fact of the eternal struggle between Avidya and Jnana, between the lower Asuric and the higher divine forces that operate both

1 Taken from DL 1969
upon the cosmic scale as well as within the individual Prakriti. The resolution of this eternal struggle and its consummation in supreme triumph to the divine forces is brought out in the Skanda Lilas.

**THE PREREQUISITE TO THE DESCENT OF GRACE**

The very first factor which seekers have to realise is that the Grace of the Lord that came out to support the Devas was the fitness of the party that dictated the descent of the Grace. Herein the first truth is revealed that if the aspirant in his struggle should become fit to approach the giver of Grace for the bestowal of Grace, he must first make himself of Daivi-Prakriti and possess Daivi-Sampat. The accessibility to this fountain of Grace is conditioned by the nature of the one who approaches. Because they were Devas, they could approach the Gracious Lord in order to ask for His Grace. We have to become Adhikaris, if we may approach the one who is bestowing grace upon us and provide us with the necessary leadership and the strength to overcome the evil forces. This is given by all Acharyas, all great seers and Mahapurushas in the form of the Sadhana-Chatushtaya, the Yama-Niyama or the Sadachara—the acquisition of Daivi-Sampat. This is an indispensable prerequisite for every seeker who wishes to get the better of the lower self and set foot on the path of Yoga.

**GURU IS SKANDA-SHAKTI**

Upon the human plane, the Guru or the spiritual preceptor who is to help us and lead us to victory in our battle with Avidya or our lower nature is the personification of Skanda-Shakti. Skanda is the personification of the total Sadhana-Shakti or Yoga-Shakti. It is through Yoga-Shakti that one can attain perfect victory over all the forces of darkness of Ajnana or ignorance and attain the fullness of wisdom. The law which has been demonstrated by the Skanda Avatara is brought out by Skanda in the form of the Guru and by the Devas or the celestial party in the form of the aspirant who has purified himself and attained the Sadhana-Chatushtaya and has become an Adhikari in order to approach the Guru and try to get his Grace.

We have to consider the next stage in the unfoldment of Skanda Lila. The Devas did not at the very outset approach the Lord and say, “Lord, there is a battle to be fought between ourselves and the Asuras. In this battle we desire to have victory. Therefore, you should help us”. First and foremost, they had recognised that there is a certain force to be opposed and that this force is something undivine and against their real nature, which should be overcome. In thus doing, they gave out two laws. One is that we have first to recognise the presence of the lower self and that we are distinct from it; and that the lower self is an obstacle within us, an undesirable element within our nature.
And we must align ourselves not with that force but with the divine forces. The second is the truth that mere recognition of this fact that the lower self is undesirable and must be overcome is not enough; we must put this recognition into dynamic action. We must manfully set about trying to do this process of breaking down all these elements of the evil lower nature with all our heart and all our might. God helps those who help themselves, is a well-known old adage. This is very true upon the spiritual path. Unless we demonstrate our sincerity and completely rid ourselves of the impurity, the unspiritual and undivine, we have not attained the fitness to ask for Grace. We must exert; then we become deserving. Then we can desire to obtain the help of the higher powers. This is a law which the majority of seekers are prone to disregard because recognition and acceptance of this law is very uncomfortable and inconvenient. It implies that we have to strive and make effort, and the lower nature will not easily sanction this. In the beginning of the spiritual practice, to a great extent, the personality of the seeker is under the habitual dominance of the lower nature, its old tendencies, old habits, inclinations, etc. There may be a desire or even sincerity; but it is all theoretical, and the Tamo-Guna which is the prominent feature of the lower nature will not easily allow the aspirant to put forth right exertion. To bring out this law in a telling manner, we are told that the Devas again and again gave battle to the Asuras. It was only after repeatedly being worsted in battle, and they saw that in spite of their earnest and sincere efforts to overcome the evil forces, they were yet not crowned with victory. Then the celestial hosts turned to the Supreme Lord and prayed for His Grace. And it is only when these conditions are fulfilled that the Lord will hear the prayer and bestow His Grace.

THE INITIATION

The Sadhana-Shakti or the awakening impulse of the Jiva slumbering in the powerful sleep of ignorance or Ajnana is imparted by means of the Diksha (initiation) of the Guru. By Diksha we do not necessarily mean the secret imparting of a Mantra into the ear of the disciple or any actual Shakti-Sanchara Kriya or any outward act at all. It may merely be the Sat-Sankalpa of the Guru. It may be by a passing glance, a simple gaze, a touch or a single word, a thought. The mysterious way in which this Sadhana-Shakti is made to enter, indwell and work in the nature of the disciple, only the Guru knows and only the realised ones perceive.

THE MEANING OF PRAYER

The entire process of the spiritual ascent is from start to finish one of earnest practice. There is no other road except Abhyasa. One may have the best feeling, the best heart, the most sublime Bhava, but unless and
until every part of this is put into actual practice, there is no hope. Abhyasa is the key-note of the life of Sadhana. Without it Sadhana will not go towards its fruition of Anubhuti. Thus we have, the celestials standing at the door of Mahadeva. They hymn Him, glorify Him and pray unto Him; and this is our next clue. It is the law of prayer that is now given to us as our sole guide upon the path. Prayer means, first and foremost, a perfect belief in a higher power. It means the desire and the willingness to submit our ego at the feet of a higher power. Thus, the acquisition of Shraddha is now pointed out to us. The submission of our ego or Abhimana is next pointed out to us. The natural consequence is the cultivation of absolute humility. The fourth thing that prayer implies, as it has been given to us specifically in the unfoldment of the Skanda Lila, is that the purpose of this prayer was to be given a leader, whom the Devas were to follow. The seeker has to mark this. The prayer was not for power or ability of oneself. If we carefully reflect over this, we will find how this brings forth the underlying law of spiritual unfoldment with its ultimate connotation of the total eradication of the ego. The entire anatomy of the spiritual life can be summed up in this one phrase: the annihilation of the individual ego so that the universal ego-consciousness may be experienced. The Devas prayed not that they may get power to win the Asuras. There is the attitude of willing self-effacement, self-abnegation, a standing aside so that the fullest manifestation of the divine power may take over. They said, “We are nothing, give us a leader whom we shall willingly follow and obey and under whose lead this victory may be brought about”. This indicates the recognition of the non-doership of the individual self and the supreme doership of the One Doer, the Supreme God. It indicates that the Sadhaka or the seeker is but a mere instrument; and it is the Lord Himself, the indweller in the individual, who takes over the Sadhana and actually does it. When the seeker begins to feel that even the Sadhana is not done by him, but that the Divine Shakti works within him and achieves the fulfillment of the Divine Will, then he starts on the real upward march and rapid ascent towards triumphant divinity.

Thus the second aspect of prayer unfolds itself before us. We completely allow the Divine to take charge of our personality. The seeker recedes into the background and there is a total resignation to the will of the divine. “I am nothing; Thy will be done”. This is the formula that keeps tune to every beat of his heart, every pulsation in his body. The seeker becomes a transformed being.

THE FINAL VICTORY

Skanda Shashthi is the joyous occasion for us to worship the Lord in his triumphant, all-conquering aspect, when He annihilates the last remnants of the Ajnana of the Jiva and signals the
final victory of the divine over the undivine, of light over darkness, of the ultimate Reality by experiencing which we transcend all that is evanescent, transitory and unreal. We find that He reveals to us, in His Lila, the truth embodied in the Upanishadic utterance: Rite Jnananna Muktih (without Jnana, without the Transcendental Knowledge, there is no freedom, no ultimate salvation). This great declaration tells us beyond all doubt how it is the eradication of the last traces of Ajnana or Maya that alone can bestow to the Jiva the highest Kaivalya Moksha. This is brought out to us in a thrilling manner in the final episode where the Lord engages in battle and vanquishes the three great Asuras—Taraka, Simhamukha and Surapadma, representing Karma, Kama and Avidya, respectively.

After the fall of his brothers Taraka and Simhamukha, Surapadma himself comes to the battle-field. He tries all his devices and finds that none of these could stand the onslaught of the divine Vel (Spear) of Lord Skanda. Then he takes different forms and fights with the Lord, sometimes visible and sometimes invisible. But the Lord destroys all his illusory tricks and makes him stand bereft of his chariot and everything. Surapadma gives up the struggle and in the last assault rushes upon the Lord in his true form—simple ego. Once again, he is met by the divine spear of Skanda, and there is the annihilation of Surapadma, and the Lord alone shines in all His triumphant glory.

The Vel itself reveals yet another great law upon the higher rungs of Yoga. The Vel is a Spear that tapers off into a very sharp point and vanishes into nothingness above it. It represents the absolute one-pointed concentration, the unitary Brahmakara Vritti. When it is held to the exclusion of all other Vrittis, the Jiva ultimately leaps the barrier between Savikalpa and Nirvikalpa and he is merged in the higher state of Turiya, where the Atman alone shines resplendent, and there is no trace of Ajnana or Maya left.

We have seen how the acceptance of Grace in the form of the purified mind or the Skanda-Shakti means the necessary surrender of our Abhimana at its feet. The battle is over, and victory is to the Divine. After that, the culminating event is the sacred alliance of the Lord with Valli. This too gives the clue to the true import of the scriptures when they refer to the ultimate nature of Absolute Oneness, Absolute Union of the Jivatma with the Paramatma. The seeker has completed the process of Yoga, and Satchidananda alone exists. It is all Light, Consciousness, Bliss.

We shall be greatly benefited if we reflect upon these truths demonstrated by the Skanda Avatara. May the Grace of Lord Skanda be ever upon you all, is my prayer.

Hari Om Tat Sat!
In the divine sense at least, prosperity, Lakshmi, is not mere mortal gold and silver, though God is not in dearth of even gold and silver. Everything is abundant there. Even that will be showered upon us, as Bhagavan Sri Krishna showered it upon Sudama, and we have instances of that kind galore. God can rain down gold and silver upon us if He has the will and feels the need to do that. He can shower upon us anything that we need, but our needs are paltry. They are a child’s desires, and the wise Parent, who is the Almighty, knows very well the futility of our askings. Therefore, the power of sustenance, which is the real caretaker, comes into action and puts an end not only to our possessions but even to the body itself. Death takes place. So the action of Durga is a complete transformation of not only what we seem to possess as our belongings, but even of ourselves as a false individuality in this world of interrelationships and mutual fraternity of a kingdom of ends.

There was great insight, indeed, in this institution of worships by the ancient masters who created occasions at different periods of the year when we are in a position to search our own hearts, to be true to our own selves, and thus, to be able to be true to others also. When we are true to ourselves, really true to our own deepest self in us, we shall be able to be true to other people in a similar spirit. Then we shall be true to the Almighty God because God is the sustaining link between ourselves and everybody else. The world outside and the seer of the world, yourself and myself, the seer and the seen, are brought together by the universal linkage of God-existence. Therefore, he who is true to himself can also be true to others and, at the same time, be true to the Almighty God.

Therefore, in these worships we search our hearts to bring our roots to the surface of our consciousness. We begin to see ourselves face-to-face as if in a mirror, and root out any hypocritical tendency that may be within us because Durga shall see them and destroy them for the sake of the entering of Lakshmi, the prosperity
which is true and sustaining, which can be possible only on illumination, which is equated with the coming of Saraswati, the goddess of learning—learning not in an academic or bookish sense, but in the sense of true wisdom and insight into the truth of all things.

Also, we are accustomed to reading a great meaning into this nine-day drama of worship as an endeavour of the soul of man to overcome his bondage as involved in the processes or gunas of prakriti—tamas, rajas and sattva. We fight, as it were, in this arduous sadhana which is the whole of life, and disentangle the soul from its involvement in the coming and going of things, samsara chakra, which is the process of birth and death, transmigration or metempsychosis.

Whoever is involved in these gunas of prakriti shall have to come and go. But the sadhana of the true spirit that is within us, the deepest soul that is in us, is and has to be a piercing endeavour to break through the fortress of gold, silver and iron—the Tripura, as it is sometimes known in the Puranas, which was shot through by a single arrow by Rudra, Siva, who is known as Tripura Samhara. Many a name is given to this kind of involvement: avidya, kama, karma, the granthis, and tamas, rajas and sattva. We may call it the gold pot, silver pot and iron pot of the Tripura’s items, or Brahma-granthi, Vishnu-granthi and Rudra-granthi. There seems to be a threefold involvement which philosophers call the entanglement of the soul in prakriti, purusha involved in prakriti. This is shot through by the arrow of Rudra, and Rudra did not act singly. Brahma and Vishnu also combined with him in this action. We can read the story in the Siva Purana, and also in the Mahabharata, of how the Tripura Samhara took place, how Brahma, Vishnu and Siva jointly broke through the threefold fortress of the Tripuras, and there was rejoicing of the gods. The angels regained their position, which means to say, the gods in our senses enter Virat instead of being locked up in our physical bodies, and liberation is attained. That is the success, the victory, the vijaya which is the tenth day, called Vijaydasami. Dasami is ‘the tenth day’, and vijaya is ‘victory’; therefore, it is the day of victory of the seeking spirit.

Many other connotations are made regarding the nine days of worship and the tenth day’s
Vijayadasami as being the saga of the Ramayana, the destruction of Ravana by Rama, and many other things we read in the Puranas, all which finally focus upon a single truth and purpose, namely, the ardent march of the soul of man to the realisation of Godhead.

The Tantra Shastra is an elaborate description of these processes through which the soul has to pass in the practice of sadhana, whereby the creation of God is recognised as a part of God only, not something outside God. God could not have made this world out of material external to Himself. “Where is the wood and the timber, where is the iron and the cement with which God could have manufactured this great cosmos?” says one Sukta in the Veda. There is no material. God has no cement factory to manufacture huge structures. Therefore, the creation which we call this universe could not have been outside the body of God Himself.

Sometimes religions say that God Himself appears as this world because nothing else can appear as the world, inasmuch as outside God nothing can be. Sometimes it is said that God created the world out of nothing. The biblical story of Genesis perhaps makes out that God did not transform Himself into this world, nor was there a material. “Let there be light,” God declared, and there was light. But from where did it come? It came from nowhere. So the world is nothing, finally. It is a kind of hollow balloon. The substance of the world is zero. This is one interpretation of mortal existence. Basically it is a hollowness. Everything in the world is tinsel, a meaningless substance. The world is a vale of sorrow. It is a tragedy finally, where everyone weeps and goes. This is one way of looking at things. But the other way of looking at things is that it is God resplendent, splashing Himself forth as this Viratsvarupa, and the radiance of the Almighty is seen with our own physical eyes in the form of these substances that stand before us as the mountains and the trees, and the sun, the moon and the stars.

The sadhana of the soul, according to the Tantra Shastra particularly, is that there is nothing to reject in this world inasmuch as God could not have created anything which is undivine. If He created anything undivine, there must be something other than God, which cannot be. Therefore, the world is divine. It is the
power of God. It is Shakti; therefore, Shakta, the owner of Shakti, is reached only through Shakti. The Almighty, the Creator, is reached through the creation. Narayana is reached only through Lakshmi, Siva can be seen only through Parvati, and the great God of the universe, the Protector, the Creator, the Sustainer, is capable of communion and encounter only through His creation. Nature evolves through a graduated step-by-step process, and the meticulous calculation of the details of these steps or processes of graduated ascent is the beauty of tantra sadhana. It is not a sudden jump into the skies.

All these ideas I have placed before you in honour of this glorious occasion of the worship of Durga, Lakshmi and Saraswati, which is a vast religious field of contemplation for us. The more you think about it, the more glorious will it appear before you. Thus be our humble adoration to Mother Durga, Lakshmi, Saraswati. God bless you all! Om Namo Narayanaya.

Purity of food brings purity of mind. Mind is the subtlest essence of food. Food has very close connection with the practice of Brahmacharya (celibacy). If proper attention is given to the purity of food we take, Brahmacharya becomes easy.

An aspirant should be careful in the selection of articles of diet in the beginning of his spiritual life. Later on drastic restrictions can be removed. Take wholesome, pure food, half-stomachful with pure water. This is quite hygienic and is in harmony with the dietetic principles of modern medical science.

The food must be simple, bland, spiceless, non-irritating and non-stimulating. Stuffing the stomach is highly deleterious. You should take food only when you are really hungry. Fresh fruits, sugarcandy, honey, milk, butter, coconut, almonds, cheese, barley, maize, wheat, tomatoes, green gram, cabbages and potatoes are pure articles of diet. Hot curries, highly seasoned dishes, spices, chutneys, fish, meat, eggs, tamarind, mustard, onions, garlic, asafoetida, salt, brinjals, pickles, things fried in oil, pastry preparations, tobacco, alcohol and narcotic drugs render the mind impure and restless and should be avoided.

—Swami Sivananda
19th NOVEMBER, 1958

Today Swamiji sprang a most happy surprise on us that made us all cheerful, with his child-like innocence, increasing the warm spot of love in our hearts for him.

As I approached him in his Kutir, he welcomed me with a joyous expression, sweetly saying, “Here is a plantain (banana) for you”.

As I held it, immediately feeling its lightness, then looking at it, saw that it was only the skin of the plantain carefully folded and appearing like a genuine fruit, as the fruit was taken out without much damage to the skin.

Then looking at Swamiji who was bursting with laughter, I also heartily laughed, enjoying his simple and pure humour.

About fifteen minutes afterwards, Sri Atmaram came in and Swamiji graciously presented him with the hollow plantain, which he accepted in all sincerity only to discover upon his attempt to eat it, that it was hollow. Upon this discovery, we all burst out laughing, and in his devotion to Swamiji, he placed it into his bag.

I tried a few times to get him to return it to Swamiji, but he refused.

At the office, however, Swamiji kindly asked him for it, and he returned.

Then, as Swamiji gently turned his head to his right side, his sparkling eyes fell upon a devotee, a doctor’s wife, immediately he graciously handed her the hollow plantain, which she accepted in great devotion, and upon her discovery of its hollowness, we all cheerfully laughed.

And as Swamiji gently stretched forth his hand to retrieve it, she begged, “Can I keep the banana?”

Swamiji sweetly said, “What will you do with it? It will spoil tomorrow”.

She quickly replied, “I will keep it after drying”.

Swamiji gently nodded his head in approval.

At this point, she and her husband, the doctor, were about to leave the office to visit another place, and Sri Atmaram immediately said in an effort to offer his kind services, “I will keep it for you until you return this afternoon”.

She immediately retorted, “No, No, I will keep it forever”.

To most of us, an empty banana skin is valueless in terms of material values, but when coming from the hands of Swamiji, as we have easily experienced, it is worth its weight in gold, and I doubt if the possessor will part with it for its weight in gold, as genuine love coming from the spirit cannot be bought or sold.

Thus, a banana skin has become

1 From Sivananda Day-to-day
a priceless and most valuable symbol of remembrance to a sincere devotee of her Master, which unfolds to us a mere fragment of the miraculous power of love that binds flowing from the Universal heart of Swamiji.

22nd NOVEMBER, 1958
WASTE NOT A SECOND

On his way to the office, Swamiji noticed a young man leaning against the wall of the hospital in an idle manner. Swamiji immediately said to him in a soft but firm tone of voice, “How did you spend the twenty-four hours? Tomorrow give me your diary”.

Swamiji means that we must be active all the time, engaged in some study or selfless work for the benefit of ourselves and humanity, as he teaches that: “An idle person is a temptation for the devil”.

ATTENTION: INTENDING VISITORS

An aspirant told Swamiji that a member of her family wants to come here, and what instructions he would like to send.

Swamiji, with a joyous expression, sweetly said:
“All that is necessary is
Faith four grains,
Devotion four grains,
Adaptability one ounce,
Tolerance two teaspoons full,
Cheerfulness half-an-ounce”.

Swamiji tries his very best to make it as easy and comfortable for us to stay here, he cannot do our Sadhana for us; and while the above appears very simple on paper, in actual practice one will find that it is not so easy for most people.

However with his grace, blessings, and exemplary life, we are inspired to bear whatever inconveniences may arise from time-to-time to attain liberation.

—Swami Sivananda
Sadasivendra Sarasvati was a Sannyasin of great reputation, a born Siddha, who lived in Southern India in the beginning of the eighteenth century. He lived near the town of Karur in the district of Tiruchirapalli. He was popularly known as Sadasiva Brahman. Sadasiva was a Telugu Brahmin by birth. He was born of Somanatha Yogi and his wife Santha at Madurai. His name was Sivaramakrishna. He was a very brilliant student. He became well versed in Sanskrit. He gained profound knowledge in Prasthanatraya and in the six schools of philosophy. He studied Vedanta under Ramabhadra Shastri in Thiruvisanallur.

Sadasiva was married while yet a student. Once news reached Sadasiva's mother that her son's wife had attained puberty. So she started cooking some extra nice preparations for the day. Sadasiva returned from his teacher's house. He had to wait for two hours for his meals. He thought within himself, “The life of a householder is very miserable indeed! I have not yet started my married life and yet I have to fast for two hours today. This is the beginning of the miseries of my married life. This gives me a rough idea of the future miseries I will have to undergo in married life. Enough, enough.” He then determined not to enter the Grihastha Ashram and left the house in search of a Guru.

Sadasiva's Guru was Parama Sivendra Sarasvati. Sadasiva practised Yoga under his guidance. He entered into heated debates with the people. Some people made a report of this to his Guru. Parama Sivendra Sarasvati said, “O Sadasiva, when will you shut up your mouth?” Immediately Sadasiva took a vow of lifelong silence and wandered about as an itinerant mendicant or Paramahamsa for some time.

Later on, Sadasiva lived on the beautiful banks of the Amaravathi and the Cauvery in Coimbatore district. He spent much of his time in meditation.

Once, while meditating on the sandy banks of the Cauvery, Sadasiva entered into Samadhi. Suddenly, there was a flood in the river which carried him away and buried him under the sands. After the rainy season was over, a labourer dug a pit on the bank. His spade was covered with blood. He was struck with wonder. He, with the help of some of his friends, dug out a very deep pit round the spot. He found buried deep in the sand Sadasiva Brahman. He shook the Yogi several times and brought him back to consciousness. Sadasiva Brahman looked around him as if he had just awakened from deep sleep and walked away quietly as if nothing had happened.

Sadasiva Brahman had no consciousness of his body. He moved about in a nude state. Once he entered
the tent of a Nawab in a naked condition. There were ladies in the tent. The Nawab became very furious, took his sword and cut off one of the arms of Sadasiva. The sage was not at all affected by this cruel act of the Nawab. He did not even take notice that his arm had been cut off. He continued with his wanderings as usual. The Nawab was struck with wonder. He knew at once that the nude man must be a great saint. He followed Sadasiva wherever he went. After several days, the sage noticed that a Mohammedan was following him. Sadasiva asked the Mohammedan, “Why do you follow me?” The Nawab replied, “Venerable sage! I have committed a serious crime. Please forgive me.” Sadasiva said, “Well sir, you have not done me anything. May I know what crime you have committed?” The Nawab said, “Revered saint! You entered my tent in a nude state when I was in the company of my wife and daughters. I became extremely angry and chopped off one of your arms. I did not know that you were a great saint.” Then only Sadasiva came to know that one of his arms had been cut off. This clearly shows that he was above body-consciousness when his arm was chopped off. Sadasiva touched the maimed arm with the other arm. He immediately regained the whole arm. What a great miracle! The Nawab was struck with amazement and implored the sage to bless him. Sadasiva blessed the Nawab and continued with his usual wanderings. Saints do not bear any ill-will even towards those who persecute them. They are oceans of mercy. They bless even those people who are ready to take away their lives.

Children used to play with Sadasiva. One day they said to the sage, “Swami, take us to Madurai. We wish to see the grand festival in the temple tonight.” Sadasiva made signs to the children to mount his head, back and shoulders. The children immediately found themselves in Madurai, before the temple. They enjoyed the festival. Sadasiva Brahman brought them back to their homes before daybreak.

Once some people came to beat Sadasiva Brahman with sticks in their hands. They were not able to move their hands. In Chidambaram, Sadasiva drank molasses in a boiling condition. He brought back to life a girl who died of cobra-bite in Tiruchendur. It was usual for Sadasiva to be seen by the people simultaneously in several places.

Sadasiva has written many books in Sanskrit. Of these, the Brahma Sutra Vritti is the most important. He has written Dipikas for twelve Upanishads. Advaita Rasamanjari, Atma Vidya Vilasa, Siddhanta Kalpa Valli, Suta Samhitasaram, Yoga Sutra Vritti, etc., are his minor works. Atma Vidya Vilasa is a small poem of sixty-two verses. In this book, there is a description of the greatness of the Yogi who has attained Self-realisation. The book is very charming and of absorbing interest. Sadasiva's writings inspire the readers and elevate them to lofty heights of divine splendour and glory.

Sadasiva told the Brahmins of Nerur, a village near Karur, that he would enter into Samadhi on a
particular day and that a Brahmin from Kashi would bring a Bana-linga which should be installed in a temple by the side of his Samadhi. The Brahmins accordingly dug a pit for the sage and waited for the particular day. To their great astonishment, a Brahmin did come from Kashi with a Bana-linga. Sadasiva Brahman descended into the pit, entered into Nirvikalpa Samadhi and merged himself in Para Brahman, the Light of lights. The Brahmins made the necessary Puja or worship for the Samadhi and erected a temple with the Bana-linga by the side of his Samadhi. Even now thousands of people visit the Samadhi every year and attend the anniversary which is celebrated on a grand scale. Sadasiva Brahman entered into Samadhi simultaneously at Nerur, Kashi, Onkar and Kancheepuram.

Sadasiva Brahman was a great Siddha, a perfect sage and a full-blown Yogi—a rare combination, a rare spiritual crest-jewel. He was an Avadhuta. He was an Ativarnashrami and did not observe caste differences. He used to take food from the hands of anyone. He had equal vision. He saw the one Self everywhere. He roam about wherever he liked. He was absolutely fearless and desireless and never cared for worldly riches. He was an Emperor of emperors, a King of kings, a Yogi of Yogis. He was a torch-bearer of wisdom, a magnificent beacon-light for the aspirants.

Lord Skanda’s grace is easily obtained. Saint Arunagiri says in his soul-stirring Tiruppugazh songs that even if the word MURUGA is uttered but once with Bhava, the Lord's Grace descends on the devotee. Once the aspirant obtains the Lord's grace, the demons take to their heels; and he is at once admitted into the realms of Immortality and Eternal Bliss.

Pray to Him fervently with faith and devotion. You will very soon cross this vast ocean of Samsara. Subrahmanya is the Pratyaksha Devata (visible God) of this Kali Yuga. Worship of Him bestows instant fruits on the devotee. It is a very rare privilege to take part in the Laksharchana celebrations. The Lord's Names are very, very powerful. Their utterance or listening to them will destroy sins committed in all one's countless births.

May the grace of Lord Skanda be upon you all!

—Swami Sivananda
One of the principal steps of Yoga is dealing with the tossing of the mind. Most devotees complain that they cannot control their mind. Often they are advised to repeat God's name, to meditate, to do certain other spiritual exercises, such as Pranayama, that have a calming effect on the mind. But strangely enough, one of the reasons that we may find our mind is difficult to control is simply because we always want to be in charge. We don't want to let go of control even though the mind always seems to slip away.

What if we are trying to do exactly the opposite of what we should be doing? What if trying to control the mind directly is the wrong approach? A poet had an experience. He said: "I said to the man who stood at the gate of the years, 'Give me light that I may tread safely into the Unknown.'" He replied, "Go out into the darkness, put your hand in the hand of God. That shall be to you better than light and safer than the known way."

In other words, what if the way to control our mind, to actually feel as if we are in control, is to walk out into the darkness? It is to leave all our determination to be in control behind, and trust the Unknown—knowing that God is there. It will be to us better than light and safer than the known way. Better than light because the darkness of God is better than any light of the ego. Safer than the known way because the wisdom of God is better than any judgment of the ego.

When we say “I,” that I can apply to the body, to the mind, to the intellect, to the ego, to the witness, and That which is unknown, beyond everything. We don't tap into that part of ourselves that is unknowable to the mind. We're trying to control our life with the most ignorant part of our “I” which is the ego. We don't take advantage of the depths of ourselves, which can only manifest when we let go, when we walk out into darkness trusting the Unknown. Everything is our own Self. We have to explore it at all levels and moment by moment apply that part of ourselves that is appropriate at that instant.

Therefore, we must be aware of our depths. It is all our own Self; actually not only within, but without as well. But that knowledge begins with letting go, going out into the darkness, putting our hand in the hand of God, which is actually the depths of our own Self, which is actually our own Self.
The general belief among the devotees of the Lord is that Mother Parvati incarnated Herself as Sri Avadayakkal of Shenkottai. Avadayakkal was born of a pious Saiva Vadama couple of Shenkottai in South India. Even as a child, she showed signs of a high mental state. She would do nothing voluntarily. For everything, she had to be prompted. She would eat what was given; she would put on whatever dress was given. She would go where she was asked to go; and do whatever she was told to do.

Avadai was married to a Brahmin boy even when she was a girl. When she came of age, the parents fixed a date for her nuptials. Avadai was dressed nicely for the occasion and led into the bridal chamber by her relatives, who shut the door and came away. Her husband was sitting on the bed and watching her. She would not move from the spot where she was left by her relatives. The boy picked up a garland of flowers that was lying on the bed and smelt it. There was a venomous cobra in the garland and it bit...
him at once to unconsciousness. Before long, the husband was dead.

The next morning, the ladies of the house came to the bridal chamber and opened the door. To their astonishment, the girl Avadai stood there rooted to the same spot where she had been left. They asked her why she merely stood there. She replied, “Why! You had asked me to stand here!” They looked at the husband; they grew suspicious. When they went near the bed, they found the husband dead.

The obsequies were duly performed and the girl's head was shaven, ornaments removed and white cloth given. But Avadai did not have any feelings at all about the loss of the young husband. The world declared her a widow, an embodiment of inauspiciousness, forbidding her to come out of her room or to attend any festivities. Avadai would get up very early in the morning and go to the river for bath; for, she had to return to the house before the other people were up! One morning, Avadai went to the river to take her bath. Before bathing, she picked up a mango leaf from the bed of the river to clean her teeth. The moment she applied that mango leaf to the teeth, she had a strange transcendental experience.

It so happened that just that morning, the Sage Ayyaval (a Gurubhai of the world-renowned sage Sadasiva Brahman) was there, meditating underneath a Pipal tree. He had cleansed his teeth on the banks of the same river and thrown away the mango leaf used by him on the bed of the river. Avadai had used that leaf; and the moment the sage's Ucchishta or sacred remnant was swallowed by her, the little dirt that covered the Atma Jyoti in her was washed away. She at once realised the Atman within. Instinctively she walked to the feet of the sage under the Pipal tree. Avadai prostrated to Ayyaval. Placing his hand (Hasta-disksha) on her head, the sage pronounced, “Brahma Satyam”. Avadai's heart was illumined. She entered into Samadhi or that indescribable superconscious state.
A little while later, Ayyaval gave her a Linga for worship and went away. That very moment Sarasvati had taken her abode on Avadai's tongue; and her transcendental experience flowed through her tongue in the shape of divine, inspiring songs. She astounded one and all in the town by her extraordinary wisdom. Whatever she said, whatever she sang, portrayed her inner illumination. People however considered that Avadai had gone mad and merely confined her to her room!

In the meantime, Avadai's parents died. This gave Avadai a great independence of movement. She at once opened the door of her room and went out into the wide world—her own home! She went alone from place to place—a young woman, singing, radiating and transmitting wisdom to one and all that came near her.

Avadai reached Tiruvananthapuram. The king, who had heard of her and of her regular worship of the Linga with Bael leaves, had sent her a basketful of golden Bael leaves for her worship. Avadai bathed in the tank and set about on the bank to perform the worship with the golden Bael leaves. As soon as the Puja was over, Avadai collected the Bael leaves and threw them into the tank as Nirmalya (offered flowers), as is the custom. The king was astonished to hear this. He understood the great renunciation of Avadai and her Para Vairagya! To Avadai, gold and leaf were the same!

From Tiruvananthapuram, Avadai went to a conference of the heads of religious sects. She thrilled the audience with her supreme wisdom and established the unity of all sects! They spoke derisively of her at first, referring to her shaven head and calling her, “You Mottai!” Avadai quickly retorted, “Who is Mottai? Is it my body? Is it my mind? Is it my Prana? Is it my Jiva? Or, is it my Atma? Who am I? How can 'I'
be Mottai?” In the end, they all eulogised her greatly for her divine wisdom and prostrated to her.

On another occasion, the king of a State called Avadai to his Durbar and offered to marry her. “You, so young and beautiful, should not wander about like this. Become my wife and remain in the palace as my queen with all powers”. Avadai feigned to agree to this proposal provided the king answered some questions she would put him. And the questions were so grand and sublime that the king felt ashamed of himself and got initiated into Jnana by her!

Avadai again met her Gurudev, Sri Ayyaval, and joined his group of disciples. She was the only woman member of the group. The other disciples of sage greatly ill-treated her. She was treated more as a dog, to be looked after with the remnants of the Ashram food, than as an inmate. Sri Ayyaval wanted to teach them all a lesson. One day, all the disciples of Sri Ayyaval rowed to a sand-mound in the middle of the river Cauvery. They all meditated there. Ayyaval was on the banks of the river. Suddenly they felt the water-level rising. They quickly perceived the danger and wanted to return. Avadai, however, was deep in Samadhi. They wanted to test her and so left her there and went away. Water was rising at great speed. Soon it looked as though Avadai would be drowned. She had got up from Samadhi and found that the others had gone away. She looked towards her Gurudev. He merely held up his arm to signal to her: “Stand there itself!” Avadai obeyed. And what a great miracle! Avadai stood there three days and the rising flood left just that much of the sand-mound where her feet rested! She returned when the flood went down, after three days. By this and other similar incidents, everyone in the Ashram realised the greatness of this lady-saint. Later, Sri Ayyaval too made no secret of her glory. People began to flock to her for her blessings. She sang and sang; and through her songs runs the current of the divine wisdom of the Upanishads.

—Swami Sivananda
RELY ON YOUR OWN SELF


Be devoted to God. Purify the mind. Sit in a solitary place for some hours daily. Withdraw all the senses from their objects. Bring the mind under control. Turn it towards God. The Divine Grace will descend upon you.

—Swami Sivananda
O Mother, Thou are the great primal Energy, the source of infinite strength. Thou are the seed of the world and illusion divine. Thou has enchanted the whole universe, O Goddess Supreme, by Thy deluding charms, and yet being propitious, Thou bestowest salvation upon Thy devotees.
The Navaratri is the blessed occasion of the nine-day worship of the Supreme Being as Divine Mother. As per yesteryears, the Navaratri was celebrated with great sacredness and spiritual rejoicing at the Headquarters Ashram from 29th September to 7th October 2019. The Divine Mother in her three aspects – Sri Maha Durga, Sri Maha Lakshmi and Sri Maha Saraswati was devoutly worshipped all these days in the delightfully decorated altar at the Sivananda Satsanga Bhavan. A large number of devotees from India and abroad gathered together to be a part of this sacred celebration.

Every morning, the programme commenced with the ritualistic worship and chanting of Devi Mahatmya in a room of the Atithi Bhavan. In the forenoon, the members of Sivananda Matri Satsanga Group along with the devotees and guests of the Ashram offered worship to the Divine Mother daily from 29th September to 6th October at the Sivananda Satsanga Bhavan with the recitation of Sri Lalitasahasranama Stotra, Sri Mahishasurmardini Stotra and Bhajans-kirtans glorifying the Supreme Mother.
During the night Satsanga, besides regular chants and prayers, Sri Durga-Saptashati was recited in Sanskrit by H.H. Sri Swami Padmanabhanandaji Maharaj. Thereafter, the Hindi and English meaning of Sri Durga-Saptashati was read by Sri Swami Dharmanishthanandaji Maharaj and Sri Swami Gurubhaktanandaji Maharaj respectively. It was followed by the chanting of Tantrokta Devi Suktam by Sri Swami Vaikunthanandaji Maharaj. The Satsanga concluded with the floral Archana to the chants of Ashtottarashata-Namavali of Goddess, Arati and distribution of special Prasad. During the last four days of the Satsanga, the devotees presented soulful Bhajans, Kumari Arpita, Kumari Shraddha, Kumari Bhakti, Kumari Aparna of Bangalore and Dr. Vidya Shimladka, Professor at Rewa University, Bangalore rendered beautiful performances of Bharatnatyam and Master A. Veera Tirupugazh of Pattukottai, Tamilnadu gave a marvellous demonstration of Yogasanas.
On 7th October, Sri Mahanavami day, Chandi Havan was performed at the Ashram Yajnashala and special worship was offered to Mother Sri Saraswati with Archana and Arati followed by the Kanya-Puja. H.H. Sri Swami Yogaswarupanandaji Maharaj, H.H. Sri Swami Nirliptanandaji Maharaj, Sannyasis, Brahmacharis, devotees and guests of the Ashram worshipped the nine Kanyas representing nine forms of Devi and offered them food, clothes and other gifts. Navaratri message of Sadgurudev Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj was read by H.H. Sri Swami Padmanabhanandaji Maharaj during the night Satsanga. Three books were also released to mark this auspicious occasion.

On 8th October, the Vijayadashami Day, the programme commenced in the forenoon with Jaya Ganesh prayer followed by special Puja and Archana of Mother Para Shakti. Vijayadashami is the day to offer our adorations to the Mother in Her radiant form of Para Vidya i.e. Supreme Knowledge.
As a token of this worshipful adoration, the selected portions from the Vedas, Upanishads, Brahma Sutras, Srimad Bhagavad Gita, Sri Valmiki Ramayana, Mahabharata, Srimad Bhagavata, Patanjali Yoga Sutra and Sadhana by Sadgurudev Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj were read by H.H. Sri Swami Padmanabhanandaji Maharaj. The Satsanga concluded with the blessing message of H.H. Sri Swami Yogaswarupanandaji Maharaj.

In the evening, Mother Ganga was worshipped with great devotion at Sri Vishwanatha Ghat. During the night Satsanga, Dr. Vidya Shimladka and Kumari Aparna presented Bharatnatyam as their devout offering at the lotus feet of Sri Gurudev.
The celebration concluded with Arati and distribution of Prasad.

*May the blessings of the Divine Mother and Sadgurudev be upon all.*
As per yesteryears, the Divine Life Society Headquarters Ashram, in collaboration with, Shivananda Mission Virnagar, Gujarat and the Divine Life Society Rajkot Branch successfully organised the Drishti Dana Yajna (Eye Camp) at the Sivananda Charitable Hospital, Shivanandanagar, Rishikesh from 14th to 18th October 2019.
Prior to the Camp, the volunteers from DLS Rajkot came and started doing the publicity work from 6th to 11th October. In six days, they visited nearly 80 villages of Tehri and Pauri districts to spread the news about the upcoming eye camp. This was followed by 23 OPD camps conducted by the OPD team consisting of Para Medical Staff, technicians and volunteers of Sivananda Mission Eye Hospital, Virnagar. All those patients who were screened for the cataract were referred to the Ashram for the consultation of Eye Surgeons during the final OPD.
On 14th October 2019, the Camp was inaugurated in the Swami Sivananda Satsang Bhavan (Auditorium) with the lighting of the sacred lamp by H.H. Sri Swami Yogaswarupanandaji Maharaj and H. H. Sri Swami Padmanabhanandaji Maharaj along with other senior Swamijis. Thereafter, both the Swamijis felicitated Dr C. L. Verma, CMO Sivananda Mission Eye Hospital, Virnagar, Dr. Lucas from Switzerland, Dr. Kiran Shinde, Dr. Dinesh Aggrawal, Dr. Chitra Singh from Rishikesh, Dr. Dinesh Singh from Neelkanth Netralaya,
Haridwar and Smt. Snehlata Shukla from USA who donates every year the Intraocular Lens. The Inauguration Ceremony concluded with the blessing message of H.H. Sri Swami Yogaswarupanandaji Maharaj. Thereafter, the final OPD was conducted at Swami Sivananda Satsang Bhavan by Dr. C. L. Vermaji and his team of doctors. A total number of 932 cases were attended during the OPD, out of which 375 were selected for the cataract surgery.
On 15th and 16th October, these 375 patients were successfully operated with Inter Ocular Lens by the team of eye surgeons under the leadership of Dr. Verma. Following the surgery, the patients along with their attendants were accommodated at the Auditorium of the Ashram. Post operative care with necessary medicines and diet were provided to them. Snehlata Mataji distributed blankets to all the patients and the devotees of DLS Rajkot Branch distributed a set of plate, bowl and water glass along with a biscuit packet to each of them. The students of 93rd batch of Yoga Vedanta Forest Academy rendered their valuable services to the patients on all the days of the Camp, right from pre-surgery to post operative care. On 18th October, they were discharged with medicines and instructions as well as Prasad distributed by H.H. Sri Swami

The Divine Life Society Headquarters acknowledges and appreciates the dedicated efforts of Sivananda Mission Eye Hospital Virnagar, volunteers of Rajkot branch, Academy students, the hospital staff of the Ashram and all others who directly or indirectly contributed in making this Yajna a success.
May the grace of Lord Almighty and benedictions of Sadgurudev Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj be upon all.
Deepavali Celebration, Go-Puja and Govardhan Puja at Headquarters Ashram

All the lights of world cannot be compared even to the ray of inner light of the Self. Merge yourself in this Light of lights and enjoy the Supreme Deepavali.

-Sadgurudev Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj

The joyous occasion of Deepavali is an annual call to banish darkness of ignorance and attain illumination. Every earthen lamp lit on this Festival of lights seems to inspire one to celebrate eternal Deepavali by merging oneself in the Light of lights.

As in yesteryears, the entire Ashram with its sacred Shrines and every residential Kutir was beautifully illumined with thousands of earthen lamps on the auspicious day of Deepavali i.e. 27th October 2019. Wherever one turned one's face, glowing radiance penetrated one's eyes and heart, reminding about one's True Effulgent Nature. A large number of devotees, basking in this blissful brilliance, devoutly participated in the
night Satsanga wherein Mother Lakshmi, installed in a delightfully decorated altar in holy Samadhi Mandir, was offered a special worship.

After the chant of regular prayers and Stotras, H.H. Sri Swami Padmanabhanandaji Maharaj recited Kanakadhara Stotra and Mahalakshmyashtaka Stotra and blessed the gathering with his message as well. The Deepavali message of Sadgurudev Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj was also read out by Sri Swamiji Maharaj. One book and two booklets were released to mark the sacred occasion. Thereafter, H.H. Sri Swami Yogaswarupanandaji Maharaj in his brief Deepavali message extended his heartiest wishes and invoked the grace of the Divine Mother and Sri Gurudev upon all present. The Satsanga concluded with floral Archana of the Mother with Ashtottararashatanamavali, Arati and distribution of special Prasad.
The next day, on 28th October, there were Go-Puja and Govardhan-Puja at the Vishwanath Goshala of the Ashram. The cows were worshipped and fed with great love and devotion. H.H. Sri Swami Padmanabhanandaji Maharaj together with Sannyasis and Brahmacharis of the Ashram attended the Puja. The celebration concluded with Arati to the Go-Mata and Lord Krishna and distribution of sacred Prasad.

*May the Supreme Lord, The Divine Mother and Sadgurudev Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj bless us all with the light of wisdom.*
**Valedictory Function of the 93rd Basic Yoga-Vedanta Course**

The Yoga Vedanta Forest Academy of the Headquarters Ashram has been conducting three 2-month courses every year to initiate the spiritual seekers into the knowledge of Yoga and Vedanta. With the divine grace of Sadguru Dev Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj, the Academy successfully concluded its 93rd Basic Yoga-Vedanta Course in October 2019. The Valedictory Function of the Course was organised on 17th October 2019 in the august presence of H.H. Sri Swami Yogaswarupanandaji Maharaj.

After the invocatory prayers and presentation of the Course report, some of the students expressed their views and impressions about the Course. Then, the faculty members were felicitated. It was followed by the distribution of certificates and Jnana-prasad to the students.

H.H. Sri Swami Yogaswarupanandaji Maharaj in his valedictory message inspired the students to put into practice the divine teachings of Sri Gurudev and become his ideal representatives and thus inspire others to practise them. The function concluded with the worship of The Divine Mother Saraswati and distribution of Prasad.

May the Lord Almighty and Sadgurudev shower abundant blessings upon all.

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**9th CHHATTISGARH STATE SPIRITUAL CONFERENCE**

4th to 6th January 2020

By the grace of Worshipful Gurudev Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj, the 9th All-Chhattisgarh State Spiritual Conference will be held from 4th to 6th January 2020 at Bilaspur, Chhattisgarh.

The Conference will be blessed by senior monks from Headquarters and saints and scholars from other institutions. Devotees from all the Branches of the Society in the State are cordially invited to participate in the programme aimed at dissemination of spiritual knowledge.

There will be No Delegate fee for the Spiritual Conference.

The last date for Registration is 30th November 2019.

Address for communication:
Sri Sanjay Kumar Gouda, B-201, Vaishali Residency, Shankar Nagar, BILASPUR, Chhattisgarh-495005.

For Registration and Information please contact:
1) Sri Sanjay Kumar Gouda 0 70675 55640
2) Sri Jayant Kumar Dehuri 0 97524 41589
3) Sri Manoj Kumar Mohanty 0 97524 42198

—The Divine Life Society
Akhand Mahamantra Sankirtan Saptah at the Headquarters Ashram

Thirty nine devotees of the Divine Life Society, Bhadrachalam Branch (Andhra Pradesh) offered their worshipful adorations at the feet of Sri Gurudev in the form of Akhand Mahamantra Kirtan at Bhajan Hall for seven days.

Their devout and soulful singing of Mahamantra with accompaniment of harmonium, Mridanga and cymbals commenced at 9 a.m. on 15th October 2019 and concluded at 9 a.m. on 22nd October 2019. They all were felicitated by H.H. Sri Swami Padmanabhanandaji Maharaj on the concluding day.

May the blessings of the Lord Almighty and Sadgurudev Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj be upon all.
SEVA THROUGH SIVANANDA HOME

‘Sivananda Home is a Centre for the loving care of the destitute and the dying people who are found by the roadside, with no one to care for: the people who are home-less, temporary or permanent, fell sick, got lost or were abandoned.’

(Swami Chidananda)

Fever hits many in different grades and shapes this month, sometimes accompanied by vomiting, loose motions, headache, sore throat, breathlessness or abdominal involvement. Two cases of pulmonary tuberculosis were diagnosed, besides several cases of dengue, viral fever, urinary tract infections and infected wounds. After investigations, medicines were administered accordingly and the illness subsided, in short time or needed to go for longer-duration treatment.

New patients were brought in this month too, one of them being an elderly gentleman who, as was told to us, had been roaming in the streets, hanging around in front of shops at the bazaar, with torn and dirty clothes, searching for shelter and food. Not able to answer questions of any kind, an anxious and worried look in his eyes and sometimes his fists upheld, ready for fight. It takes time for him to realise that food, clothing and shelter are given to him, unconditionally and freely. That he need not ask, and that the clothes which are washed will be returned to him. That he does not have to protect himself and be vigilant that his food or scarce possessions are being snatched away from him. Safety and security are luxury conditions, though so often taken for granted. To be at ease in one’s place of living is nothing but grace.

Few days later, a female patient entered the Home with bags full of garbage, to our eyes at least. For her, this meant her whole life, and it did not matter if it was clean or dirty; it belonged to her, and that mattered most, providing a sense of safety, a certain hold and grip. It was and is literally her everything and her one and only material thing left to lose. Praying for her wellbeing, for faith and patience to let go.


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

—Swami Sivananda
With a deep sense of loss and profound sorrow, we report the sad demise of Brig Sri L. N. Sabherwal, AVSM (Retd), one of the former trustees of the Divine Life Trust Society, on 19th October 2019 at his residence in Dehradun.

Sri L. N. Sabherwalji, born in 1929 in a family of soldiers, was destined to enter into Indian Army to serve his motherland like his ancestors. Being spiritual-minded since childhood, he came into direct contact of Sadgurudev Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj at the age of 13. He would study Srimad Bhagawad Gita and write to Sri Gurudev requesting him to explain the deeper meaning of some verses. He always received a reply from Gurudev which strengthened his resolve to delve further into the holy texts.

This spiritual phase was interrupted for a while as Sri Sabherwalji joined the Army. After some years, he resumed his
connection with the holy Ashram of Gurudev. By then, Sri Gurudev had entered into Mahasamadhi and Sri Sabherwalji received his Mantra Diksha from Worshipful Sri Swami Chidanandaji Maharaj. This was a turning point in his life which had deep impact on his thoughts, his words and his actions. Through battle and peace postings, he now zealously pursued intense study of scriptures and spent maximum time in Satsang with Sri Sri Anandamayi Maa, Worshipful Sri Swami Chidanandaji Maharaj and other saints of the Divine Life Society.

After his retirement from the Army in 1984, Brig Sabherwalji settled in Dehradun for its proximity to the Ashram. As a proactive Trustee, Brig Sabherwalji contributed significantly in furtherance of Sadgurudev's sacred mission. He rendered his loving services in organising various events for the Ashram, the most notable being the 'Divine Decade' to commemorate Worshipful Sri Swami Chidanandaji Maharaj's 75th Birth Anniversary. He edited books and compiled the sayings of different saints into booklets. He was also instrumental in reviving the Ashram Branch in Dehradun where Worshipful Sri Swami Chidanandaji Maharaj spent the last six years of his life. Sri Sabherwalji was one of those fortunate few who got the blessed opportunity to have the Darshan of his Beloved Guru daily.

A courageous soldier with absolute integrity, a sincere spiritual seeker and a devoted disciple, Brig. Sabherwalji breathed his last on 19th October 2019 at the ripe age of 90 after a protracted illness that kept him bedridden for 8 years.

We pray to the Lord Almighty, Sadgurudev Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj and Worshipful Sri Swami Chidanandaji Maharaj to bless the departed soul with Supreme Peace and Divine Beatitude.
ANNOUNCEMENT

DIVINE LIFE SOCIETY, WEST BENGAL – SADHANA SHIBIR

The Annual Sadhana Shibir of The Divine Life Society, West Bengal, will be held from 12th February (evening 6.00 pm) to 16th February (forenoon) 2020 at Sri Kashi Viswanath Seva Trust Complex located at Hamiragachhi. Railway Station: Malia on Howrah-Tarekeshwar Railway line; 54 km by road from Kolkata to venue.

Participation fee will be Rs. 450/- per person for delegates from West Bengal and Rs. 350/- per person for delegates from other States. This includes food and dormitory accommodation.

The last date of enrollment is 31st January 2020.

For Enrollment and information please contact:

1. Sri Nitul Parekh 098300 40730
2. Sri Prafulla Kumar Mahapatra 094383 03624
3. Sri Bijoy Kumar Swain, 093393 92845
4. C Meher Ali Mondal Street,
   Mominpur, KOLKATA,
   West Bengal-700027.

All Devotees are requested to participate.

-The Divine Life Society
IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT

YOGA-VEDANTA FOREST ACADEMY (THE DIVINE LIFE SOCIETY)
P.O. SHIVANANDANAGAR, PIN: 249 192, Distt. Tehri-Garhwal, Uttarakhand, (INDIA)

ADMISSION NOTICE

Applications are hereby invited for undergoing the 94th residential Basic YOGA-VEDANTA COURSE of two months' duration, i.e., from 01-03-2020 to 29-04-2020. This Course will be held in the Academy premises at the Headquarters of the Divine Life Society, Shivanandanagar, Rishikesh.

The details are as follows:
1. It is open to Indian citizens (Men) only. The classes are for admitted applicants who have been duly registered as students for the Course.
2. Age Group: Between 20 and 65 years.
3. Qualifications:
   (a) Preferably Graduate with keen spiritual aspiration and deep interest in the practice of Yoga-Vedanta.
   (b) Must be able to converse in English fluently as the medium of instruction is English.
   (c) Should have sound health.
4. Duration of the Course: Two months' residential Course on Yoga, Vedanta and Cultural Values.
5. Scope and syllabus of the Course:
   (b) Practical:—Asana, Pranayama, Meditation and Karma Yoga, Lectures, Group discussions, Questions and Answers, and final examination will form part of the Course.
6. There will be no charges for training, boarding and lodging. Pure vegetarian food (Breakfast and two meals a day only) will be provided. Smoking, drinking and use of intoxicants are strictly prohibited.
7. The students who are admitted for the Course and complete the training shall give an undertaking that they will pursue and practise the teachings in their life.
8. Application Form duly filled-in should reach the undersigned by 15-01-2020. The aim of the Yoga-Vedanta Forest Academy is not merely an academic equipment of students, but to prepare the students for a successful life in the world and to facilitate the living of a wholesome life with an integrated personality. The Course conducted in this Academy is more of the nature of an all-round discipline than merely providing students with scriptural learning or textual information.

For the Application Form and Prospectus please write to:

THE REGISTRAR,
The Yoga-Vedanta Forest Academy,
THE DIVINE LIFE SOCIETY,
PO. SHIVANANDANAGAR—249 192
Distt: Tehri-Garhwal, Uttarakhand
Himalayas, INDIA
Phone : 0135-2433541 (Academy)

Note:— (i) The selected student alone is expected to come. He is not permitted to bring along any other family member or relative with him.
(ii) The above syllabus (vide 5) is subject to slight alterations without previous notice, in case such a need arises.
MEMBERSHIP FEE AND BRANCH AFFILIATION FEE OF THE DIVINE LIFE SOCIETY HEADQUARTERS
SHIVANANDANAGAR—249 192, Uttarakhand

1. New Membership Fee* ₹ 150/-
   Admission Fee ....  ₹ 50/-
   Membership Fee .... ₹ 100/-
2. Membership Renewal Fee (Yearly) ₹ 100/-
3. New Branch Opening Fee** ₹ 1,000/-
   Admission Fee ..... ₹ 500/-
   Affiliation Fee .... ₹ 500/-
4. Branch Affiliation (Renewal) Fee (Yearly) ₹ 500/-

* Application for Membership should be sent with Photo Identity and Residential proof of the Applicant.
** Prior written permission has to be obtained from the Headquarters for opening a New Branch.

- Kindly send Membership Fee and Branch Affiliation Fee by Cheque or by DD payable at any Bank in Rishikesh.

IMPORTANT GUIDELINES FOR “REMITTANCE”

All remittances to the D.L.S shall be by cheque/ D.D. drawn in favour of “The Divine Life Society” Shivanandanagar, Uttarakhand, payable at Rishikesh. A covering letter with Post Mail address, Phone No, Email Id and PAN should accompany the remittance.

In case of remittances through Electronic Money Order, please send us a letter indicating purpose of remittance and EMO number and date.

Remittance directly into our Bank Account without our consent are not accepted by the Society due to Management and accounting reasons.
REPORTS FROM THE D.L.S. BRANCHES

INLAND BRANCHES

Angul (Odisha): The Branch continued daily Puja, Paduka Puja and Satsang on Sundays, in the months of August and September, 2019. Sri Krishna Jayanti and Punya Tithi of Swami Chidanandaji Maharaj were celebrated in August. In September, Swami Sivananda Jayanti and Chidananda Jayanti were also celebrated on 8th and 24th respectively, with various spiritual activities.

Ankoli (Odisha): In the month of August, the Branch conducted weekly Satsang on Thursdays and children Satsang on Sundays, besides 108 times chanting of Hanuman Chalisa on Sankranti day. Sri Krishna janmashtami and Nandotsav were also celebrated.

Babanpur (Odisha): During the month of August, the Branch continued daily Satsang, collective chanting of Maha Mantra for one hour and Paduka Puja on Thursdays. On Sankranti day, ladies chanted Hanuman chalisa thrice. On 28th, the Punyatithi of Swami Chidanandaji Maharaj was observed with various spiritual activities and distribution of cloth and sweets to leprosy patients at the hospital followed by night Satsang.

Bangalore (Karnataka): Weekly Satsang on Thursday with Paduka Puja and fourth Sunday Swadhyaya continued. The Branch celebrated birth anniversary of Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj and Swami Chidanandaji Maharaj on 8th and 24th September respectively with various spiritual activities. Akhanda Maha Mrityunjaya Mantra Japa in the forenoon on 15th was followed by chanting of Guru Gita and Mangalarati. Seva to leprosy patients with Bhajans and distribution of linen and towels etc. was arranged.

Bargarh (Odisha): The Branch had daily Swadhyaya, Pranayama and Meditation, Rudrabhishek on Mondays, Guru Paduka Puja on Thursdays, weekly Satsang every Saturday, and recitation of Bhagavad Gita and discussion on Sundays. The Oriya Magazine “Mahat Vani” was published for free distribution. Homeopathic treatment for poor patients continued. Swami Sivananda Jayanti and Swami Chidananda Jayanti were celebrated on 8th and 24th September respectively with various spiritual activities. A special Bhagavata Saptaha was also arranged from 8th to 14th.

Bhanjanagar (Odisha): Weekly Satsang on Sunday, Narayan Seva and Paduka Puja on 28th August on
the occasion of Punyatithi of Sri Swami Chidanandaji Maharaj, besides a Bhagavat Saptaha which commenced on 27th and concluded on 2nd September were the activities of the Branch.

**Bhismagiri (Odisha):** The Branch arranged a Sadhana Sibir on 15th September at Sri Ramji Temple, participated by about 300 devotees. After worship, a Nagar Sankitan Parikrama took place which was followed by Satsang with saints and scholars. Narayana Seva for devotees and villagers was provided.

**Chandapur (Odisha):** The Branch had weekly Satsang on Saturdays, Guru Paduka Puja on Thursdays and mobile Satsang on 8th and 24th of every month. Sivananda Jayanti and Chidananda Jayanti were celebrated on 8th and 24th September respectively, with various spiritual activities. Odiya Bhagavata Purana Saptah Parayan commenced on 8th and concluded on 14th, with celebrations. Sundara Kand Parayan held on 17th was dedicated for world peace.

**Chhatrapur (Odisha):** In the month of August, the Branch continued daily Puja and study of Srimad Bhagavata, besides weekly Satsang on Thursdays. Monthly Jayanti ceremonies were held on 8th and 24th with Paduka Puja. Tulasidas Jayanti on 7th and Sri Krishna Janmashtami on 23rd were celebrated befittingly. Mahasamadhi day of Sri Swami chidanandaji Maharaj was observed on 28th with Prabhat Pheri, Paduka Puja, Bhajan, Kirtan, recitations, poor feeding, etc. Sundarakanda Parayan took place on 27th at Swadhyaya Kendra.

**Dalabhanapur (Odisha):** In the month of August, daily Yoga, Satsang on Tuesday with recitation of Geeta, Bhagavata, Hanuman Chalisa, Bhajan etc and Sadhana day on 18th were observed. Punyatithi of Sri Swami Chidanandaji observed in a grand way on 28th and a mobile Satsang on 23rd were the other activities.

**Gandhinagar (Gujarat):** The Branch had daily two Yogasana classes and a special session for office staff of Health & Family Welfare department. Besides this, financial aid and medicines were given to poor and needy patients. Prayers and Satsang were arranged on Punyatithi day of Sri Swami Chidanandaji Maharaj, on 28th August.

**Gopinathpur (Odisha):** Daily Puja and evening satsang continued in the month of August. Ekadasi was observed with Sri Ram Naam Ramayan Sankirtan and recitation of Vishnu Sahasranama. Sri Krishna Janmashtami was observed and 11th Punyatithi Aradhana of Swami Chidanandaji Maharaj was celebrated
with Guru Paduka Pooja, video show and readings.

**Jamshedpur (Jharkhand):** The Branch continued its weekly Satsang on Fridays, and organised free drawing classes for poor children of the 'Antyodaya Bastee' on every Sunday. Chidananda Jayanti was celebrated with Paduka Puja and evening Satsang on 24th September.

**Jeypore (Odisha):** The Branch had daily Puja and weekly Satsang on Sundays and Thursdays in the month of August. Geeta Yajna was performed on 23rd at the house of a devotee with collective offering of oblation to sacred fire. Sri Krishna Jayanti was celebrated on 23rd upto midnight with Satsang, Puja, chantings and recitations. On 28th, Punyatithi Aradhana of H.H. Sri Swami Chidanandaji Maharaj was celebrated with various spiritual activities. Homoeo dispensary treated about 300 patients.

**Kanpur (U.P.):** Daily chanting of Maha Mrityunjaya Mantra and Durga Saptashati was continued during September. Under Birth Centenary Celebration of H.H. Sri Swami Premanandji Maharaj, Narayan Seva on 1st, and Sundarakanda Path and Paduka Puja on 7th September, were performed. Birth Anniversaries of H.H. Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj and H.H. Sri Swami Chidanandaji maharaj were celebrated on 8th and 24th respectively. On 29th the monthly Satsang was conducted and there was commencement of Navaratri.

**Kakinada (Andhra Pradesh):** In the month of August, the Branch continued with routine activities of Meditation and Pravachan on Mondays and Wednesdays, Parayan and Bhajans on Fridays. On Sundays, 'Kishora Bharati' for students and Narayana Seva for the poor and needy were the other activities.

**Kantabanji (Odisha):** In the months of August & September, besides Sunday Puja and Satsang, worship of God and Gurudev followed by Om chanting, parayan of Geeta, Guru Stotram, Universal Prayer, etc were conducted.

**Kendrapara (Odisha):** The Branch had daily morning meditation, Paduka Puja and Satsang. From Sivananda Jayanti to Chidananda Jayanti, a 'Sadhana fortnight' consisting of Yoga class, discussion on Srimad Bhagavata and Bhagavad Gita, competition for students on various items, health awareness camp, planting of medicinal plants etc. were organized. A mobile Satsang was also arranged on 28th September.

**Khatiguda (Odisha):** During September, the Branch continued its daily Puja and weekly Satsang on
Thursdays. Sadhana day was observed on 1st with Paduka Puja and Swadhyaya etc. Holy Sivananda Jayanti and Chidananda Jayanti were celebrated on 8th and 24th respectively with various spiritual activities. Vishnu Sahasra Nama recitation on Ekadasi days and commencing of Navaratri Puja on 29th were the other events.

**Konisi (Odisha):** On 8th and 24th September, the Branch conducted competitions in Art and debate respectively, for students and awarded prizes to winners. Five hours Akhanda Maha Mantra sankirtan was also performed.

**Lanjipalli Ladies Branch (Odisha):** The Branch continued regular daily Puja, weekly Satsang on Sundays, Paduka Puja and mobile Satsang on Thursdays. Besides this, Ekadasi days were observed with chanting of Bhagavata Mahapuran and Srimad Bhagavad Gita, and recitation of Hanuman Chalisa and Sundarakanda Parayan on Sankranti day. Sacred Birthdays of Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj and Sri Swami Chidanandaji Maharaj were celebrated on 8th and 24th September respectively. 1200 patients at M.K.C.G Medical college Hospital, Brahmapur, were gifted with fruits, biscuits and Mantra Cards. Narayan Seva and dresses were arranged for the inmates at the Orphanage at Gandhinagar.

**Lucknow (U.P.):** The Branch celebrated Sivananda Jayanti and Chidananda Jayanti on 8th and 24th September respectively, at Lekhraj Homes, with Paduka Puja, Bhajan, Mantra Japa, prayer and Arati.

**Mysore (Karnataka):** The Branch celebrated Sivananda Jayanti on 8th September with Paduka Puja, Bhajan and Arati. Lord Venugopala was also worshipped with Abhishekam.

**Nandininagar (Chattisgarh):** In the month of July the Branch had daily morning prayers and evening Satsang, daily Yoga class, mobile Satsang on Thursdays and Matri Satsang on Saturdays with recitation of Sundarakanda and Hanuman Chalisa. There was Mahamantra Kirtan on 3rd and celebration of Sri Krishna Janmashtami on 23rd with Mantra Japa, Satsang, Bhajan etc.

**Nayagarh (Odisha):** In the month of August, the Branch conducted Satsang on Wednesdays, Sadhana Day on 11th, Sankranti Day activities, and celebrated Sri Krishna Janmashtami with prayer, meditation, Archana, Bhajan, Kirtan and midnight milk abhisheka. Sacred Aradhana Day of Sri Swami Chidanandaji Maharaj
was observed on 28th.

**Panchkula (Haryana):** The Branch continued daily Satsang and Swadhyaya except on Sunday when there was Satsang at the residence of devotees. On 8th September, it celebrated Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj’s birth anniversary with the patients and their attendants by feeding them as Narayan Seva, at Civil Hospital, Sector 6, Panchkula and Sri Swami Chidanandaji Maharaj’s birth anniversary on 24th, at Gaushala, near Mata Mansa Devi Mandir, Panchakula by feeding cows with green fodder, besides a special combined Satsang at DLS Chandigarh Branch.

**Rajkot (Gujarat):** During the quarter ending September, prayers, discourses and video shows were arranged on all Sundays. On every Saturday, at Nilkanth Mahadev Mandir, Satsang, recitation of Bhagavad Geeta, Sunderkand and video show were organized. Sri Swami Sivanandaji’s and Sri Swami Chidanandaji’s birth anniversaries were celebrated with Paduka puja. Daily morning and evening Yogasan classes for females continued. 630 patients got treated free at the Homeopathic clinic. In three eye camps, out of 433 patients, 81 were operated free. Dental camps treated 153 patients. Financial assistance was provided to a few patients.

**Rajpura (Chattisgarh):** In the month of Septmber, The Branch continued weekly Satsang on Sundays and recitation of Vishnu Sahasranam on Ekadasis. It celebrated the sacred Birthday of Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj and re-opened Yoga Vidya Prasikshan Centre on 8th. Bhagavata Saptaha was also conducted from 8th to 15th, ending with a concluding Havan.

**Rourkela (Odisha):** Daily Yoga class, weekly Satsang on Thursdays and mobile Satsang on Sundays continued with Paduka Puja, Archana and chanting of Vishnusahasranam etc. On 8th Sept and 24th Sept, Birthdays of worshipful Gurudev Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj and Sri Swami Chidanandaji Maharaj were respectively celebrated with a special Satsang. As usual free acupressure treatment and medicines were provided to needy people.

**Sambalpur (Odisha):** Daily Puja, weekly Satsang on Sundays, Narayan Seva on Mondays, Sundarakanda Parayan on second Saturday, Paduka Puja on 8th and 24th of every month were the regular programmes of the Branch. Sacred Birthdays of Sri Swami Sivanandaji and Sri Swami Chidanandaji were celebrated on 8th and 24th September respectively with various spiritual
activities. From 25th to 01st October, Swadhyaya and Pravachan were conducted on Bhagavad Gita, besides study of Upadesa Sara of Sri Ramana Maharshi.

**South Balanda (Odisha):** Daily Puja, weekly Satsang on Fridays, and Guru Paduka Puja on 8th and 24th of every month were the regular programmes of the Branch. Gita Path, recitation of Vishnu Sahasranam and Hanuman Chalisa were observed on Ekadasi days. Paduka Puja, Gita Path, Pravachan and Sadhana Saptah were arranged from 18th to 24th. A three-hour long Satsang on Sankranti Day and Akhanda Maha Mantra Sankirtan and evening Satsang on 24th September were the other special events.

**Sunabeda (Odisha):** In the month of September, the Branch had daily Maha Mantra Sankirtan, and weekly Satsang on Sundays and Tuesdays with Narayan Seva. Besides this, Ekadasi days were observed with recitation of Vishnu Sahasranam, and Gita Path. Sankranti day was observed with recitation of Sundarakanda Parayan. Birthdays of worshipful Gurudev Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj and Sri Swami Chidanandaji Maharaj were celebrated. Annual Bhagavata Masa Parayan was from 8th August to 8th September. Bal Vikas programme on Sunday afternoon continued as usual.

**Sivananda School of Yoga, Johannesburg (South Africa):** The Branch celebrated Sri Krishna Janmashtami with Bhajan, Kirtan and readings from Bhagavatam. On 8th September, it celebrated the birth anniversary of Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj. On 30th and 31st August, Sri Swami Muktanandaji Maharaj of Ananda Ashram, Kerala, visited the Branch and gave Satsang and discourses on universal love and service. Regular Satsang, group meditation, Hatha Yoga classes and spiritual discussions were continued as usual.
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<td>Practice of Brahmacharya</td>
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<td>वोङ्गासन</td>
<td>स्वामी शिवानंद</td>
<td>₹ 115/-</td>
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<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>मन : रहस्य और निग्रह</td>
<td>स्वामी शिवानंद</td>
<td>₹ 205/-</td>
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<tr>
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<td>सत्संग और स्वाभाव</td>
<td>स्वामी शिवानंद</td>
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<td>Stories From Yoga Vasishtha</td>
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TWENTY IMPORTANT SPIRITUAL INSTRUCTIONS
By H.H. Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj

1. **BRAHMA-MUHURTA**: Get up at 4 a.m. daily. This is Brahmamuhurta which is extremely favourable for meditation on God.

2. **ASANA**: Sit on Padma, Siddha or Sukha Asana for Japa and meditation for half an hour, facing the east or the north. Increase the period gradually to three hours. Do Sirshasana and Sarvangasana for keeping up Brahmacharya and health. Take light physical exercises as walking, etc., regularly. Do twenty Pranayamas.

3. **JAPA**: Repeat any Mantra as pure Om or Om Namo Narayanaya, Om Namah Sivaya, Om Namo Bhagavate Vasudevaya, Om Saranabhadvaya Namah, Sita Ram, Sri Ram, Hari Om, or Gayatri, according to your taste or inclination, from 108 to 21,600 times daily.

4. **DIETETIC DISCIPLINE**: Take Sattvic food, Suddha Ahara. Give up chillies, tamarind, garlic, onion, sour articles, oil, mustard, asafoetida. Observe moderation in diet (Mitahara). Do not overload the stomach. Give up those things which the mind likes best for a fortnight in a year. Eat simple food. Milk and fruits help concentration. Take food as medicine to keep the life going. Eating for enjoyment is sin. Give up salt and sugar for a month. You must be able to live on rice, Dhal and bread without any Chutni. Do not ask for extra salt for Dhal and sugar for tea, coffee or milk.

5. **MEDITATION-ROOM**: Have a separate meditation-room under lock and key.

6. **CHARITY**: Do charity regularly, every month, or even daily according to your means, say six Paisa per rupee.

7. **SVADHYAYA**: Study systematically the Gita, the Ramayana, the Bhagavata, Sri Vishnu-Sahasranama, Lalita-Sahasranama, Aditya Hridaya, the Upanishads or the Yoga Vasishtha, the Bible, the Zend Avesta, the Koran, the Tripitakas, the Granth Sahib, etc., from half an hour to one hour daily and have Suddha Vichara.

8. **BRAHMACHARYA**: Preserve the vital force (Veerya) very, very carefully. Veerya is God in motion or manifestation—Vibhuti. Veerya is all power. Veerya is all money. Veerya is the essence of life, though and intelligence.

9. **PRAYER SLOKAS**: Get by heart some prayer Slokas, Stotras and repeat them as soon as you sit in the Asana before starting Japa or meditation. This will elevate the mind quickly.

10. **SATSANGA**: Have Satsanga. Give up bad company, smoking, meat and alcoholic liquors entirely. Do not develop any evil habits.

11. **FAST ON EKADASI**: Fast on Ekadasi or live on milk and fruits only.

12. **JAPA MALA**: Have a Japa Mala (rosary) round your neck or in your pocket or underneath your pillow at night.

13. **MOUNA**: Observe Mouna (vow of silence) for a couple of hours daily.

14. **SPEAK THE TRUTH**: Speak the truth at all cost. Speak a little. Speak sweetly.

15. **PLAIN LIVING**: Reduce your wants. If you have four shirts, reduce the number to three or two. Lead a happy, contented life. Avoid unnecessary worry. Have plain living and high thinking.

16. **NEVER HURT ANYBODY**: Never hurt anybody (Ahimsa Paramo Dharmah). Control anger by love, Kshama (forgiveness) and Daya (compassion).

17. **DO NOT DEPEND UPON SERVANTS**: Do not depend upon servants. Self-reliance is the highest of all virtues.

18. **SELF-ANALYSIS**: Think of the mistakes you have committed during the course of the day, just before retiring to bed (self-analysis). Keep daily diary and self-correction register. Do not brood over past mistakes.

19. **FULFIL DUTIES**: Remember that death is awaiting you at every moment. Never fail to fulfil your duties. Have pure conduct (Sadachara).

20. **SURRENDER TO GOD**: Think of God as soon as you wake up and just before you go to sleep. Surrender yourself completely to God (Sharanagati).

Om Santih Santih Santih!

This is the essence of all spiritual Sadhanas. This will lead you to Moksha. All these Niyamas or spiritual canons must be rigidly observed. You must not give leniency to the mind.
DECEPTION FROM SELF-IGNORANCE

The musk-deer does not know that the fragrance of musk is emanating from its own navel. It wanders about here and there to find out the source of this smell. Even so, the deluded ignorant man is not aware that the fountain of bliss is within himself, in his own inner Self. He is running after external perishable objects to get happiness. Each time you search for happiness outside yourself, you wander away from its real source. Turn inwards. The highest happiness can be had through Self-realisation. Pleasure depends on nerves, mind and objects; happiness is independent and self-existent; it is in yourself.

Swami Sivananda