

THE UNIVERSAL PRAYER

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

STEPS TO GOD-REALISATION

Shake the bonds of Karma through discrimination, rules of conduct, Tapas, Dharma and discipline of mind. Know the secret of true bliss through concentration and meditation. Root out passion; embrace peace; enjoy the glory of Self-bliss; delight in the Self within.

Serve the sick; console the distressed; live in God; preach the gospel of love; lead a life of self-sacrifice and service. Be pious and pure. This will lead to the attainment of God-consciousness.

Swami Sivananda



THE DIVINE LIFE

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PRASNOPANISHAD

SHASHTHA PRASNA (QUESTION VI)

SUKESA AND PIPPALADA

स ईक्षांचक्रे कस्मिन्नहमुत्क्रान्त उत्क्रान्तो
भविष्यामि कस्मिन्वा प्रतिष्ठिते प्रतिष्ठास्यामीति ॥३॥

He (the Purusha) reflected: What is it by whose departure I shall depart, and by whose staying I shall stay?

करुणानिधिः KARUNANIDHI (शिखरिणीसप्तकम्)

Jnana Bhaskara Mahamahopadhyaya Sri S. Gopala Sastri

“जनाः स्युः क्षेमाढ्या” इति हि करुणासम्भृतमनाः
जगन्मान्यां जीवोद्धरणसमितिं देवनिलयान् ।
भिषक्शालां योगाभ्यसनपरविद्यालयमपि
प्रतिष्ठाप्याद्वैतप्रचरणपरो भाति गुरुराट् ॥५॥

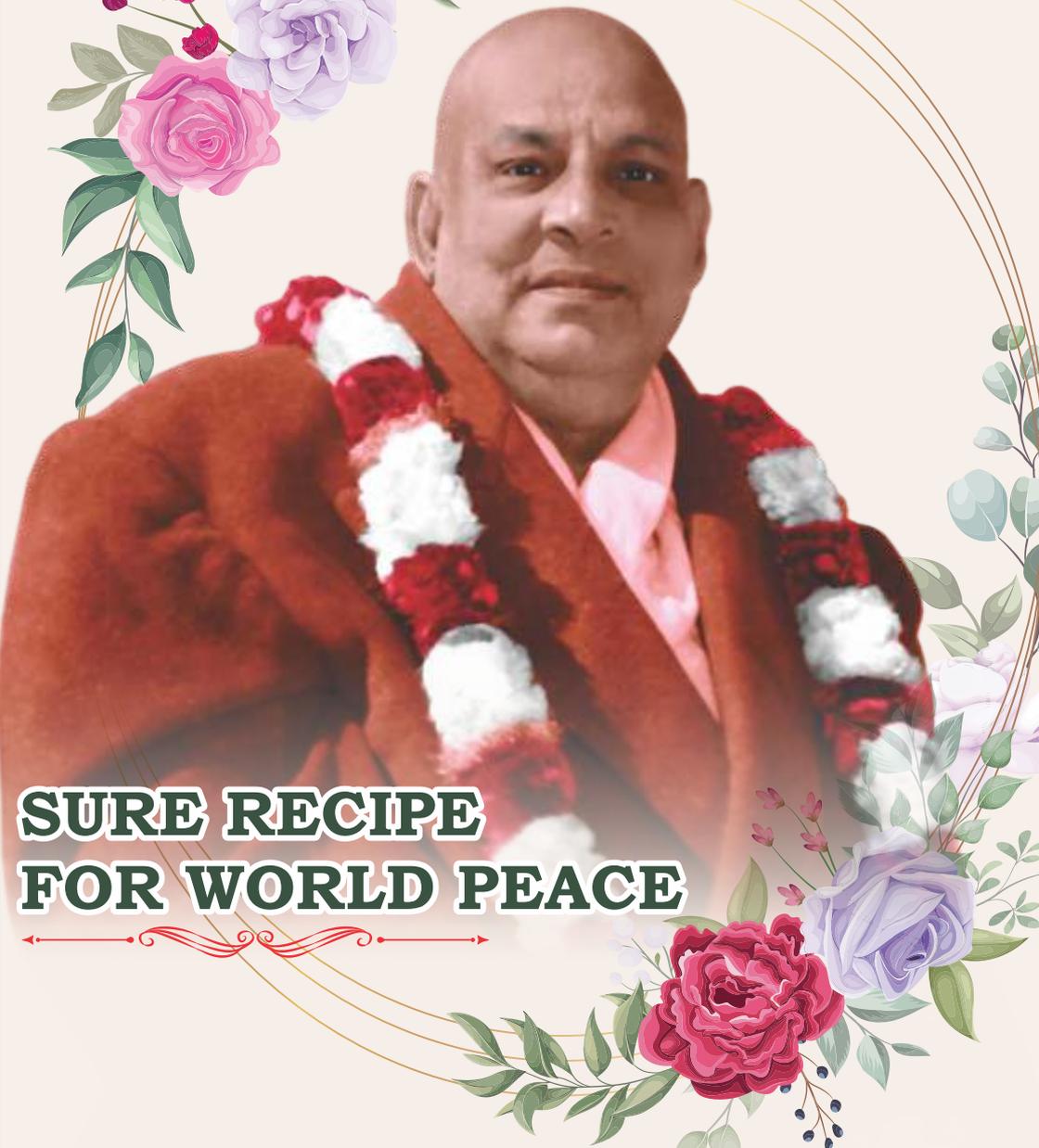
'May all attain prosperity and happiness' – with this sacred aim, compassion-incarnate Sri Gurudev, establishing the Jeevodharana Samiti (the Divine Life Society), temples, hospital and Yoga University, is constantly engaged in propagating Advaita philosophy.

मनश्शान्त्यै तुष्ट्यै महितपदलब्ध्यै च भुवने
विविक्ते वस्तव्यं नृभिरिति हितं शिक्षितुमिव ।
मुनिश्रेष्ठावासे मुषितकलुषे मुक्तिनिलये
दयासिन्धुभ्राजत्यमलहिमरम्ये शिखरिणि ॥६॥

The holy Himalayas, adorned with pure snow and filled with divine vibrations, is the land of salvation and the dwelling place of great saints. Sri Gurudev, an ocean of mercy, is living at the foothills of this sacred mountain so that people may be inspired to live in solitude in order to attain peace of mind, contentment and supreme goal of life.

(To be continued)

New Year Message



**SURE RECIPE
FOR WORLD PEACE**

There seems to be nowadays everywhere a cry for peace and abundance, for union and brotherhood, for cultural revival, social welfare and world-uplift.

The world has experienced several crises, tried many a method of peace, used the best resources of its intelligence, but has not yet succeeded in achieving its ends. The reason must obviously be either it is itself not clear about the nature of its aims or their implementation, or its instruments of action are not strong enough and capable of action, or its methods of procedure are not very wisely chosen. And above all, there is that conspicuous absence of the pivot of all endeavours, which is God.

Our young men and women are led away by the veneer of a spurious civilisation and blinded by the glamour of material prosperity. They are unable to understand what actually is meant by God and religion. God is the never-dying and the never-diseased Being. That is the support of this ever-dying and ever-diseased shallow world! How can this constantly changing universe have ever any value except on the presupposition of a permanent, unchanging Substance? How do you account for this ceaseless aspiration in Man for perfection, if that perfection does not exist? Why do you cry for perpetual peace in a world which is ever-changing and dying? The transient nature of the world and all bodies and the unceasing inner aspiration for perfection and peace show that

there must be that unending Perfection which is Peace and Joy and which must be underlying this perishable objective world. This Eternal Conscious Perfection is God, and the method of reaching Him is Religion. Hatred for God and Religion is, therefore, nothing but pure puerility rooted in ignorance and lack of proper sense.

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

errors of life and show the method of bringing peace to the world, of making humanity perfect.

That art of approaching this perfected condition does not lie in talking or acting through the body. It lies in self-purification, earnest aspiration, faith, sincerity, never-failing perseverance, broad tolerance, moral power, truth, renunciation of selfishness and subjugation of the inner passions. Without these requisites, all endeavours for peace and perfection shall be miserably frustrated.

The aim of the nations should, therefore, be to direct their power towards the transformation of the hearts of the people from the sub-human and the weak human nature into the rightly human and divine natures through right government, right education and insistence on right living, based on perfect Truth, not merely relative but absolute.

This shall effect the great renaissance for the healthy and peaceful life of all on earth, and also for the Eternal Life transcending the earthly life. This is the Message of this fresh New Year which expects the dawn of the New Era of cultural and spiritual renaissance.

May the New Year usher in all that is Good to you. May there be peace, prosperity and amity all over the world.

Swami Sivananda

IDEAL YOGA

Sri Swami Sivananda

Some Yogic students think that only he who can fly in the air, walk on the water, and do such other miracles, can be called a Yogi. It is a sad mistake. To be peaceful, to be calm, to radiate joy, to have an intense aspiration to realise God, to have the spirit of service, and devotion, to be self-controlled—this is the real Yoga. Flying in the air is not Yoga. Why should one aspire to fly like a bird after attaining the human birth? You must have a willing heart to serve everybody and a desire to possess all divine virtues. This is Yoga.

Your ideal should be to be good, and to do good. Be ever willing to share what you have with others. You should have a knowledge of the scriptures, devotion to your preceptor, saints and sages. Even Nirvikalpa Samadhi is not necessary. Why do you want to get yourself merged in the Absolute? Have a small veil of

individuality and serve here as Nitya-siddhas. Possess divine qualities, and move as a divine being on this earth. Aspire not for powers. Powers will come by themselves. Possess all noble virtues. Be free from hatred and malice. Elevate others by your own example.

Spread the message of the Rishis. Lead a righteous life. Speak the truth. Worship mother as God, father as God, teacher as God, guest as God. Give, but give with modesty. Give with goodwill. Give with love.

There is one, eternal Atma, one universal Consciousness that dwells in the hearts of all. Realise this through aspiration, renunciation, concentration, purification.

Control anger. Do not get irritated through misunderstanding. Try to understand everybody. Understand the

feelings of others. Bear insult. Bear injury. Love that man who persecutes you. Be ever intent on the welfare of all—*Sarvabhutahiteratah*. You should practise these—not merely study the Brahmasutras and the Upanishads. The Upanishads should come from your heart through purification, through service.

Selfless service is the highest thing of this earth. Service will make you divine. Service is divine life. Service is eternal life in God. Service will give you Cosmic-Consciousness—service that is selfless, without attachment. But nobody wants to serve. Everybody wants to be served by others. You will have to kill the ego. You will have to pulverize it, make it a powder. You will have to extract oil from your bones and burn it for six months. Such is the toil, as it were, to progress in the path of Self-realisation.

Be good, do good— This is the essence of the teachings of all scriptures and prophets of

the world.

Those who want inner life are very few. All are thirsting for happiness, but they do not know wherefrom they can get happiness. They search for it in wealth and material possession. Maya is clever. She never allows people to taste the bliss of an inner life in the Atman. Deluded by her power, man thinks that there is no transcendental realm, that there is nothing beyond the senses. "Eat, drink, and be merry"— This has become the motto of life. The path to the realm of God is open only to those who have got the Divine Grace.

May you all know the true import of Yoga, and base your life on selfless service to humanity with Atma Bhava, and on the development of all divine virtues. May you all have sustained aspiration; May you all practise deep meditation, and attain Self-realisation. May you all shine as Nitya-siddhas, radiating joy and peace all around.

WORSHIP THAT IS DEAR TO THE LORD

Sri Swami Chidananda

Worshipful homage unto the eternal Reality—the one beginningless, endless, changeless, infinite, eternal, all-pervading, immanent and indwelling Reality—that is the source, support and ultimate fulfilment of all existence! Infinite and all-pervading; therefore, everywhere present! Dwelling within you; therefore, nearer to you than yourself! That Being, in whom you live, move and have your being, indwells the heart-shrine of your body-temple; and therefore, your every movement is a divine activity.

In this inner shrine of your heart in the temple of your body, worship Him with the flower of truthfulness, with the flower of verity, with the flower of honesty, with the flower of loyalty to your vows, with the flower of a guileless heart — a frank and simple-hearted disposition.

Worship Him with a life devoid of all crookedness, deceit and double-dealing. Worship Him with the flowers of straight-forwardness, simplicity, purity and compassion. Worship Him with the flowers of a self-controlled life, with control of your senses.

These are the flowers that are dear to that Being who is the indweller of your heart, the *sanctum sanctorum* of this body-temple of yours. He does not desire costly ingredients for His worship. He is the overlord of countless worlds; He owns everything. What can you give Him? There is nothing that doesn't belong to Him.

But your ego belongs to you, your heart belongs to you, your life belongs to you. If you offer your heart, your ego, your life as a flower at His feet, then indeed His grace will flow into you. For He delights, rejoices and finds intense pleasure

when He is offered the flowers of truthfulness, forgiveness, compassion, simplicity and guilelessness, where there is no deviousness, no double-talk, no concealment, no human cleverness.

These are all despicable from the point of view of the spiritual ideal of a saint or a man of wisdom. These are the devices of the cunning and crooked, the dishonest and cheat. Therefore, these despicable devices do not become the dignity of a spiritual personality. They do not become a Sannyasin, a Sadhaka and a devotee of God who have chosen God as their highest value.

When these prevail, when these are not eradicated through introspection, self-examination and prayer, they act as a brake in your spiritual life. You stop proceeding further. You may be living a spiritual life for ten, twenty, thirty, forty or fifty years, but you will be where you are, because you are shackled to your earthly imperfections, to your human

defects and foibles—you are not seeking to progress in divinity. That is the tragedy of spiritual life—to miss the way.

In our Vedic way of life, our entire life style is pervaded by the concept of Dharma. Whatever you are, in whatever context, you have a certain Dharma to fulfil. And for you who have become aware through the teachings of the Guru that your real identity is divinity, to be true to what you really are and to manifest your real identity by living a divine life, by thinking divinely, speaking divinely, acting divinely, living divinely—that is your Dharma! Because you are meant to express outside what you are inside.

And if you know that you are part of Paramatma—you are Jivatma, part of Paramatma—that you are divine, that divinity is your real identity, then it becomes your Dharma, your Svadharma to live to manifest what you are. To be what you are is your Svadharma, to be contrary to it is to move away from truth.

To be true to the teachings of your Guru is truthfulness. To deviate from the teachings of your Guru is falsehood. To be true to the solemn vows you have taken is truthfulness. To give up such vows is to live a life of falsehood.

Truth pervades every activity of our life within and without. Therefore, ponder deeply the all-

pervasive presence of the principle of truth in your own life—inner and outer, subjective and objective, individual and collective. Worship that great Being that shines with the strength of a million suns in your heart-shrine with the flower of truth! That is the highest worship, and that is your greatest duty!

Hari Om Tat Sat!

Bhakti is resting on God. Bhakti is flow of devotion like the flow of a river. Bhakti is continuity of devotion, just as there is continuity in the flow of oil from one vessel to another vessel. Bhakti is attraction of the Jiva to the Lord, just as there is attraction of the needle to the magnet.

Bhakti is love for love's sake. The devotee wants God and God alone. There is no selfish expectation here. There is no fear also. Is the son afraid of his father who is Sessions Judge? Is the wife afraid of her husband? So also, a devotee entertains the least fear of God. The fear of retribution vanishes in him. He feels, believes, conceives and imagines that his Ishtam is an ocean of love or Prema.

Bhakti transmutes man into Divinity. It intoxicates the devotee with divine Prema. It gives him eternal satisfaction. It makes him perfect. It weans the mind from the sensual objects. It makes him rejoice in God.

Emotional excitement is not devotion to God. Devotion is pure love. Fanaticism is not devotion. It is frenzy. It is mere excitement.

Bhakti is not emotionalism, but is the tuning of the will as well as the intellect towards the Divine. It is supreme love of God. It blossoms afterwards into Jnana. It leads to immortality or God-realisation.

Swami Sivananda

Blessed Atmaswarupa!

Om Namo Narayanaya.

Om Namo Bhagavate Sivanandaya.

Loving Pranamas.

Invoking the Grace of the Lord and Worshipful Gurudev, we wish every one of you a beautiful New Year 2022. Throughout the world, people have suffered due to Covid-19 pandemic for the last two years. Now is the time to emerge out of such setback in life and reaffirm our aspirations together with decisive positive steps towards the goal of life. It is the way of nature to expose us to the seemingly opposite phases of life, like day after night and night after day, for the evolution of Spirit to realise its own freedom in its own way. One day we may, deep within us, feel that whatever happens by the will of the Lord, is always for our own benefit. Such hope and faith may give us strength and confidence to march on boldly.

During the last quarter of 2021, the Ashram conducted important events like Navaratri-Worship of the Divine Mother, Deepavali, Dattatreya Jayanti, Geeta Jayanti, 78th Anniversary of Mahamantra Kirtan and Sri Vishwanath Mandir and Christmas online retreat, in the physical absence of you here with prayers for the good health and spiritual progress of Worshipful Gurudev's devotees all over the world and welfare of the entire mankind.

Let us collectively welcome this New Year as the gift of God and let us show our sincere gratitude, by responding to His Love and Care in living our lives in such a way so as to make it worthy of offering at His Lotus Feet.

God Bless You.

With Prem and Om,



Swami Yogaswarupananda
President

THE IDEAL OF HUMANITY

Sri Swami Krishnananda

The Ideal of humanity is spiritual, and it can be nothing but spiritual; it cannot be anything else. Even where it appears to be the opposite for all practical observations, even in crass materialistic approaches of life, the movements are not really bereft of the spiritual sense, if we are to be psycho-analytically observant of the motive forces behind attitudes to life. Even the worst of men has a spiritual element hiddenly present and the so-called vicious movements which we observe in humanity in many a circle may sometimes confound us into a doubt as to whether the Spirit which is held to be Omnipresent can be the motive force behind these perpetrations. Yes, is the answer. Even the worst of events has a hidden purpose and motive transcending itself, though not visible outside but covertly present,—the motive, which, rightly or wrongly, by various types of meanderings in the desert of life, directs itself towards an awakening into the consciousness of what it is really seeking. The errors of mankind are really the products of ignorance, and an ignorance of a fact cannot be equated with a denial of that fact. So the absence of a palpable consciousness of the ideal of human life cannot be regarded as a violation of it, root and branch, or a complete absence of it, essentially.

The movements of human nature in the world of space and time, and in the society of people, are motivated by subtle, deep impulses, and the target which they generally aim at may be physical, material, economic or social, quite the other side of what one regards as Spirit, or the spiritual. But this apparent contradiction does not defeat the purpose. There is only a winding intricate process of human nature in its struggle to awaken itself to a consciousness of what its real needs are, and these processes of the various forms of struggle are the

history of mankind right from creation upto today. Whatever you have heard about mankind's efforts and moves, whatever you regard as desirable or otherwise, whatever has caused you joy or pain,—everything, excluding nothing, can be comprehended within the motivation which is a Single Universal Impulse.

The Universal Impulse is really the Spiritual Impulse, and you need not use the word 'spiritual' to designate it if you so wish. But an all-consuming impulse towards a common aim is what may be regarded as the spiritual aspiration or the basic urge of the individual nature. It may not be visible in the proper intensity or proportion at certain given levels of experience. But that an expected percentage of it is not visible on the surface is not a reason why one should not give it the benefit of doubt. All that we are inside does not come to the surface of our conscious life, as we all very well know; yet we are that which is there ready to come to the surface of the mind, one day or the other, as the motivating force of our lives, whether in this life or in the lives to

come. The urges of human nature are really universal in their comprehension; they are not individual, they are not even social in the sense in which we try to define society. Whatever be the urges of mankind, they are universal in their sweep; because they are present in every being,—in me, in you and even in the inorganic levels of manifestation.

There is a struggle of every individual structure or pattern to communicate itself to other such centres of force, and it is this tendency within the individual patterns or structures to melt into the being of others that is the beginning of all spiritual aspiration. What is gravitation if not a spiritual urge? What is this force that pulls the earth round the sun if it is not spiritual? You may wonder how the pull of gravitation can be spiritual, because it is known to be a physical phenomenon. But, it is all a question of nomenclature. You may call it physical, psychological, social, ethical, moral, or spiritual. The point is, what it is essentially? Why is there any pull at all,—the pull of moral force, the pull of

psychic contents, the pull of love and affection? What is it that pulls one thing towards another? And why is it that anything gravitates towards some centre? What is the intention, what is the purpose, what is the motive and what is the secret behind this urge? If we dispassionately and scientifically analyse the urges behind human nature, and the tendencies of anything and everything in the world, even in inorganic levels, we will find that there is a 'feeling', sometimes consciously manifest and at other times unconsciously present, for coming in contact with that which lies outside oneself and to appreciate the feelings and points of view of others, so that there is a desire for the commingling of points of view, and this urge, aspiration or feeling will not cease unless the universal point of view is reached. Whether this is known today or not, it is a different matter; because all human beings are not in the same stage of evolution. It is, therefore, unfair and pointless to expect everyone to be on the same level of understanding. If certain sections of humanity do not appear to be

spiritual, it does not mean that they do not want spirituality. They are just unable to grasp the meaning behind their own aspirations, activities and motives in life. That they cannot understand what is the motive behind their activity is a point which need not be equated with what is regarded as the opposite of the spiritual need. There cannot be two ideals for mankind, ultimately. Whether one is in China or Peru, the basic ingredients of human nature do not change or differ. The ideal of mankind, the ideal of all beings, even subhuman and superhuman, cannot be other than one, and it is the restlessness characterised by the presence of this urge that is the cause for all enterprises in life. The factory-goer, the worker, the officer, whatever he is, people who sweat and toil for various apparently diversified motives in life, are all labouring for a common purpose,— a purpose which is not clear to their minds, either because they are not sufficiently educated or their knowledge has not gone adequately deep. When we come to a level of understanding which is adequate to

the purpose, we will be able to visualise the commonness that is present behind every attitude of every human being, even an apparent disparity of purposes.

Human nature is variegated. It is not all men and women that are fully human beings. We have animal nature in human nature mixed up sometimes, or oftentimes, and it gets rarefied as evolution rises higher and higher. So we may safely say that even among human beings we have animalmen, even as we have selfish men, ordinary men, good men, saintly men and God-men. We cannot say that all are of the same type and therefore it is impossible for every human being to entertain the same attitude towards life or put forth the same kind of effort. What is the ideal of life of a cat, or a mouse, or a buffalo? Well, one may think they have no aims. It is just munching food and chewing the cud, and they have no other aim except to yield to the instincts which preponderate in them. But, nevertheless, the Spirit is not absent there in its essentiality—it is a sleeping condition of the Spirit. Often you have heard it said that the

Spirit sleeps in matter, dreams in plants, thinks in animals and understands in human beings. But it has not fully awakened itself to a comprehensive self-awareness even in the human nature. There is a gamut of ascent further up from the human level, about which we are told much in such scriptures as the Upanishads. There is no end to the aspiration of a human being and no one can rest peacefully, whatever be the wealth one has and the power one wields in life, until the universal-point-of-view becomes a part and parcel of one's practical life. This point-of-view is called the spiritual-point-of-view.

Now, the universal-point-of-view that we are concerned with here need not necessarily be God's point-of-view, because the highest Cosmic Spirit may not manifest itself immediately in an individual's life, but the ideal cannot be ignored. The essence of spiritual life, or spirituality, is the ability on the part of a person to keep before one's mind's eye the ideal of universal harmony and universal existence, though it has not become a part of one's life now. We may not be God-

men, God-realisation might not have come as yet, but the ideal cannot be missed. The judgment of lower values and the meaning of practical existence in terms of the requirements of the higher spiritual ideals can be regarded also as spiritual life.

A spiritual ideal is that conduct or way of living and mode of thinking and understanding which enables one to interpret every situation in life,—physical, social, ethical, political or psychological,—from the point of view of the ideal that has yet to be reached, notwithstanding the fact that it is still a remote ideal in the future. The inability to interpret the practical affairs of life and the present state of existence in terms of the higher ideal immediately succeeding would make us incomplete human beings and keep us unhappy. It is only the animal nature that is incapacitated in this respect. The animals and even human beings who have the animal nature preponderating in them cannot interpret present situations from the point of view of the ideal that is above. And once we are awakened to the capacity of

being able to understand and interpret the lower in the light of the higher, then it is that we can be called real humans, for the superiority of humans over animals lies just in this special endowment. Merely because one walks with two legs, one cannot be regarded as truly human. Unless there is the 'human' nature, 'human' character manifest in a person, there cannot be any meaning in holding that person as entirely human. Such persons may have the physical characters of humanity and one may include them, thus, in humanity, but psychologically they are animals. It is these people who cause frictions, tensions, battles and wars in the human world. The psychological awakening of the individual into what is called humanity or human nature is really the beginning of spiritual aspiration.

To conclude, I would like to point out that there cannot be anything wholly unspiritual anywhere and there are no unspiritual beings in this world, and even those who hold apparently the opposite of the spiritual ideal, and work for the contrary of it, are

wrongly working for the very same ideal. They are like blind men searching for light in the blaze of the sun. Everyone, fundamentally, struggles towards the same goal, the same purpose, which today you call the spiritual ideal, though everyone might not have awakened himself or herself to the status of real, aspiring humanity, and one's mind might not have reached up to the purified condition of the ability to grasp the meaningfulness of the internal relationship and the interconnectedness of all objects in creation, which fact, fortunately for us today, even physical science is trying to demonstrate, and master-physicists and scientists at present seem to be stumbling upon the philosophical and spiritual levels by sheer force of logic and observation, which is indeed to be regarded as a ray of hope for the future of mankind. It is possible that a day may come when people will try to understand the real meaning behind even their errors, attachments and aversions, and the reason behind the restlessness and the unhappiness that seeps into the vitals of men sometime or the other,

a phenomenon which no one can escape experiencing in life.

Thus, the coming to an awareness of what people regard as international existence, unity of mankind, or the brotherhood of humanity, which everyone speaks of and aspires for in various walks of life, through social service, philanthropic activity, cultural conferences, and the like, should be a practicable aim, without doubt. I am sure, God is not dead, and if He is alive, it is impossible for mankind to go wrong always, though in the beginning, it may appear that there is perhaps an erroneous movement of feelings on account of the insufficiency of the awakening of the Spirit which is the ideal, which has already manifested itself fully in some, and is trying to impose itself upon others like a healing recipe, in many ways, in everyone's life. What you call the spiritual ideal is the inward urge and tendency and capacity of the psychological pattern which is able to comprehend in its compass the universal reference and relevance that is perforce present even in the least of motives and the lowest of actions.

A DIVINE MESSENGER

Sri Swami Shankarananda, Durban, South Africa

On the 9th of April, 1970 at about 9 a.m. the taxi which was parked near the Yoga Museum, was ready to leave for Haridwar from where I was to leave for New Delhi and begin my journey back to South Africa after nearly four-and-a-half years stay in the holy Ashram of our Beloved Gurudev Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj. At this moment, I stood with head lowered and my eyes probing into the holy sands which bore my weight and sustained me. Most of the Senior monks of the Ashram had assembled to offer a prayer for me on my departure. When I took my seat in the car, H.H. Sri Swami Krishnanandaji Maharaj came forward, and held my two hands in Swamiji's. Nothing was said and silence prevailed. But I understood Swamiji's feeling for me, a stray seeker. Yes, Swamiji was my mother, father, friend, guide and above all a wisdom personified preceptor at whose feet I had the rare blessed privilege of staying and learning.

During my first stay in the Ashram in 1959, which came to a sudden termination within four

months of stay, due to circumstances beyond my control, my contact with Swamiji was rather restricted to a few rare occasions. During this period though Swamiji was engaged in administrative work, Swamiji was far from being easily accessible due to Swamiji's love for a strict disciplined life, study and constant contemplation. I heard much about Swamiji's inexhaustible appetite for studies into the profound scriptures— the Upanishads, the Epics, the Puranas and the six schools of Indian Philosophy, Western philosophy and scriptures of different religions of the world. When I returned to South Africa in 1960, thereafter, some stray thoughts did perch upon the surface of my mind recalling those few rare occasions of meeting Swamiji. Swamiji's thirst for Realization and the tremendous gusto, with which Swamiji approached this, made me feel a most insignificant and lost in the forest-like hairy mane of a lion. This feeling always had the better of me and did approach Swamiji in thought from a great distance.

Taken from Sri Swami Krishnanandaji Maharaj's 50th Birthday Souvenir

BIRTH CENTENARY YEAR OF SRI SWAMI KRISHNANANDAJI MAHARAJ

It was during my second stay in the Ashram that I gravitated close to Swamiji. The pull became greater and greater in intensity during Swamiji's lectures on Gita twice a week and a weekly talk on subjects of general spiritual instructions. In course of time, the latter was replaced with a third talk on the Gita each week. The profundity and depth, with which Swamiji's discourse on the Gita transported me to great heights, left a lasting and indelible impression upon my mind. As a neophyte, this was absolutely necessary to cement my feet deeper and deeper into the quest for the Spirit. As the days, weeks and months uncovered themselves gradually, I soon realized that Swamiji was to be secretly installed in the bosom of my heart for all times to come. THAT irresistible yearning by the Gopis to be constantly in the company of Bhagavan Sri Krishna began to have a deeper implication and connotation, differentiating the carnal demands from that of the Spiritual, being fully aware that my love and the compulsion to be in Swamiji's company as much as possible, were of the degrees of the lowest strata in my aspiration. Whenever I had the blessed fortune of being in Swamiji's company, I was

struck with awe and wonder with Swamiji's simplicity in spite of Swamiji's eloquent command over the oration and presentation of any metaphysical or philosophical Truth. Whenever Swamiji discussed any topic from the scriptures, it was like an ocean being created with its cooling properties on the sands in the torrid heat of a desert. I was engulfed in a sea of wonderment to learn from my own experience that the human mind could have such a capacity to raise an undeveloped mind such as mine to celestial heights of peace and calm, though it may be for a very short while, by a lucid and simple elucidation of instructions on meditation and its vital benefits to the seeker, as a result of its practise. No moment spent in Swamiji's company is other than spiritual whether it be work or otherwise.

On many occasions, I had been with a group of visitors and sometimes alone to Swamiji's office which occupies the floor of a veranda or any room for that matter, though Swamiji would be deeply absorbed in administrative work and attending to the minutest of details with Heads of different departments of the Ashram, there always was a welcoming warmth radiating from Swamiji's whole being. Within a matter of

minutes, Swamiji would switch on the power-house of Eternal Wisdom instantaneously focussing the flood-lights on the purpose of human life. A grand treat, to those earnest seekers, would be presented in all its glory and grandeur. This connotes in no uncertain terms the Realization of our Master's genius child. In Swamiji's company, there is no sorrow, anguish or suffering. Everything is full and complete. In such company can there be want other than spiritual?

As a preceptor which is not Swamiji's claim, Swamiji represents our ancient system of Guru-Shishya relationship; every word whether written or said has the current of Upanishadic thought permeating and flowing most distinguishedly, every bit of work is a worship of the Divine; giving us an idea, a touch of King Janaka's spiritual attainments.

The love and worshipfulness with which I esteemed Swamiji for all the spiritual nourishment and sustenance, I was being conferred, as my days at the Ashram increased, reached great heights towards the last few months of my stay when a special Yoga Class for foreigners was conducted from the middle of January to the middle of March, 1970. The Ashram had about forty

students hailing from different parts of the world coming from many walks of life. There was not one student who could have returned untouched.

Swamiji spared nothing to see to their comforts in details both physically and spiritually. After welcoming and comforting them in the true Indian tradition, the treatment in the realm of the Spirit, administered, would I am sure, be envied, even by the gods. This flowed unabatedly for two timeless months. As the number of days advanced, the lecture hall was nothing but a flood of Divinity inundating every student physically, vitally, mentally and intellectually. Many personal conversations with the students revealed to me the same experiences I had during the early part of my stay. The students were overwhelmed. Their love and affection for Swamiji as a great divinity began to be exposed without any reservation. In the meantime, the worshipfulness with which I regarded Swamiji rose to colossal heights in this period and to this day it continues unabatedly. I can't recall one student who could have returned without being touched to the very depths of his being. The wisdom flowed from the deepest recesses of Swamiji's heart accompanied by the usual superbly-

styled oration. When the time came for the termination of the special class and to make way for the usual summer onrush of pilgrims who invade Rishikesh and most holy places in Uttarakhand, many students wished that they could continue their stay. Some stayed on and the others had to move on; for, they had commitments in their respective countries. The spiritual treatment which they had, I am sure will be meaningful and applicable wherever they may be and whatever avocation they establish themselves in. The outpourings of Swamiji were really great.

Nothing could be more glorious than to wish that I could have the privilege once again to be at Swamiji's feet in Sri Gurudev's Ashram on the holy banks of the Ganges River at the foothills of the Himalayan Mountains in Rishikesh.

If Swamiji could offer so much invaluable spiritual guidance and instructions to all those who came into contact with Swamiji in spite of the heavy pressure of administrative work and poor health, it makes me wonder to what extent Swamiji will go to in order to serve the spiritual needs of sincere aspirants, should the responsibility of administrative work be withdrawn and good health prevails.

Swamiji will be completing fifty years of earthly sojourn in April this year. May I be permitted this privilege of wishing Swamiji on this most happy and auspicious occasion a very very happy birthday. May Swamiji live many many more years on this earthly plane to guide and lead us all to a more glorious life in the spirit. To Swamiji, this day will be like all other days. To us, it is of special significance, a day of great rejoicing and happiness. In all humility let us offer our worshipful prayers to God for sending us such a messenger, and Gurudev for installing such a rare and conspicuous jewel in the Crown of the Divine Life Mission. In this age, we are very blessed to have such spiritual personalities such as Swamiji. Let us also offer prayer to God and Gurudev to nourish and sustain all our Gurubhais in the Ashram for so gloriously continuing our Master's Mission on this holy day. May we also remember H.H. Sri Swami Chidanandaji Maharaj, Madhavanandaji Maharaj, Dayanandaji Maharaj and Paramanandaji Maharaj for their contribution to the Master's Mission for so many years on this most holy day.

Glory unto God! Glory unto
Gurudev! Glory unto Swamiji
Maharaj!!!

VENKATESANANDA – THE SUPERWONDERFUL

Sri Swami Chidananda

Many great spiritual luminaries have appeared on the scene in the last century, and their advent brought about a tremendous spiritual revival and stir. Sri Ramakrishna passed away in 1886. But in that same decade were born Aurobindo Ghose, Ramana Maharshi, Swami Sivananda and Swami Ramdas, who are now household words all over the world in the spiritual realm. At about the same time also the Guru of Swami Muktananda Paramahansa, Swami Nityananda, was born. It is not a coincidence that they were all born in the last quarter of the previous century.

There is a definite unbroken continuity in this spiritual upsurge which started in the first half of the last century. This manifested itself right from the very beginning of the present 20th century, which witnessed this tremendous spiritual stir. Yes, the great wonder-sage Shirdi Sai Baba was also born in the same period, maybe a little earlier, as

he passed on at a fairly advanced age in 1918. Anandamayi Ma also belongs to the last quarter of the previous century. Thus, this spiritual revival, this renaissance struggled astride the two centuries, the latter half of the 19th century and the first half of the 20th century with its nuclear era and space age.

One of the great personalities in this unfolding phenomenon was our own spiritual Master, Gurudev Sri Swami Sivanandaji, born in 1887. Gurudev worked vigorously throughout the first half of this present century and into the first decade of the second half, and wound up his mission in 1963.

As in bygone years with the advent of Buddha, there followed in his wake certain outstanding spiritual personalities who were his disciples. His followers served him and then received the Light from him and became his messengers, his torch-bearers. Similarly, with the advent of Jesus of Nazareth, there came some exceptional souls who had the

A speech given at the memorial service in Rishikesh Ashram in December 1982

BIRTH CENTENARY YEAR OF SRI SWAMI VENKATESANANDAJI MAHARAJ

receptivity to receive his message and to respond to it. They dedicated their lives to walking in his footsteps, serving him, and after his time becoming torch-bearers of his teachings.

We see this pattern in the life of all these great outstanding personalities. Swami Venkatesanandaji Maharaj was a man of destiny, who had a direct link and relationship with the phenomenal personality of Gurudev, whose advent brought about a wide spiritual awakening, especially in the West. Why especially in the West? Because of a very extraordinary fact about Gurudev. It was peculiar and almost funny that Gurudev, born in an orthodox Brahmin family in the stronghold of orthodox Hinduism, was only able to give his message in English. It was unbelievable. This was an era which was filled with great stir of nationalism and independence, where everything foreign was thrown into the flames, and everyone wanted to learn Hindi.

Gurudev went to the north of India; performed austerities and Sadhana, and attained illumination on the banks of the Ganges. He did not write or speak in any of the Indian vernacular languages. Here was a

phenomenon: a Sadhu, a Sannyasin and a Yogi arising out of his deep meditation and delivering his message in English! He had an English/Hindi speaking Swami for his companion to translate these lectures into Hindi. He had to take Swami Venkatesananda with him. Even his Bhajans and songs were composed in English. This is significant, because he was chosen to proclaim spirituality to the West, to those beyond the shores of India.

It is a little wonder, therefore, that Gurudev's writings first brought the message of Yoga to the whole of Europe. People started practising Yoga, studying his books and translating them into Latvian, Estonian, French and then into German and Spanish. Even before his teachings began to be known within India, they were well-known in European countries and the States. Had his writings been in Tamil or Hindi or some other language, God knows what would be the story today. Those were the days of the British Government when we learned all our subjects in English. Therefore, a man like Swami Venkatesanandaji, born and brought up in Madras, was a product of this system of education.

Perhaps Swamiji would not have

been here, nor Swami Chidananda, Paramananda or Krishnananda, but for the fact that we were all products of Anglicised Indian society; and we had started our education by learning the A, B, C, D in kindergarten. Chidananda and Swami Venkatesanandaji came into contact with Gurudev's teachings through the English writings of Gurudev.

Swamiji was an indispensable Personal Assistant to one of the top Central Government officials in Delhi. To Gurudev, he was indispensable in more ways than one. Gurudev took him along whenever he went on tour. There was a remarkable rapport between them. Swami Venkatesananda was destined to be Gurudev's mouthpiece and right-hand man in propagating his message throughout the world.

There was a previous Karmic connection between them, and therefore, when the call came, Swami Venkatesananda resigned his post and came to Rishikesh. His boss however refused to consider the resignation. He said, "No, I'm not going to give up this priceless assistant of mine." He kept the letter of resignation pending for more than a year, and started sending people from the office in Delhi to "Go and get back this man."

God knows how many people came to the Ashram to put pressure upon him and to try to persuade him, but the previous Karmic connection was so strong and so absolutely definite, that he did not budge. He refused.

Oh... his father hurled curses upon Gurudev saying, "This man has stolen my son and ruined his future career!" Gurudev just smiled. He knew what was what.

Swami Venkatesananda was absolutely dedicated to Gurudev. He didn't mind working for 12, 16, 18, maybe sometimes 24 hours. I'm not joking. There have been days when Swami Venkatesanandaji decided to work round the clock for 24 hours. One day he did a marvel. He completed a manuscript, put it before Gurudev and then brought it to the press in the evening. They worked the whole night, and the next morning they put the finished book, bound and everything before Swamiji. It had been completed in 24 hours. Gurudev had paid them a visit when this work was going on, after the night Satsang and Aarati was over and Prasad had been distributed. He went out of the Bhajan Hall and said, "I'm going out." Because all the lights were on and the

press was working, the cat was out of the bag. He was simply overjoyed. "Oh, marvellous, wonderful!", he said. And then immediately he sent someone out, "Oji, go and run and make some hot tea (it was winter), bring it in a big kettle, and give it to everyone!" He spent half an hour in that printing room, going all over the place like a child suddenly rejoicing in a new toy. He went round and round the printing department, the composing department (then it was all hand-composing), and the binding department—and the next day the book was out. This was a wonderful dedication.

Venkatesanandaji had come on a visit to Rishikesh with a colleague of his who worked for the same Central Government. They were very close friends, and both lived in the same place. They came on a visit to Gurudev and stayed for a couple of days, saw the work going on and felt the impact of Gurudev's personality. His ideas, his teachings, his work were so tremendous, that already a revolution was starting in their minds. They went back, came for a longer stay and then—finished—they were conquered! And so they went back, resigned and came to Rishikesh. But Gurudev sent the

friend back. There were certain circumstances. He was the eldest male member of a family of many children and the only earning member at that time. When his weeping old father and mother came, Gurudev said, "Oji, you must go and serve your parents. You are indispensably needed. I cannot keep you here. But keep coming. Spend your vacation with me!"

It was quite different with Swami Venkatesanandaji. He came early in 1945. Immediately his mother followed him. In December 1945, she came and planted herself here, weeping her eyes out. "This Sivananda has taken away my son. I'm going to get him back!" She didn't know what stuff her own son was made of. She saw only the outer Sannyasi—she didn't know that the soul that resided inside was a well-baked brick and she also didn't know Swami Sivananda. So she came here without any invitation, without any plan, and started weeping her eyes out. I was a witness to this drama—weeping, weeping, weeping, trying to persuade her son to change his mind—a mind that was made up to 110% and was given to Gurudev. He had no more mind to change. And it was worthwhile seeing Pukka Vairagya

and Tyaga (strong dispassion and renunciation).

For a whole year she wept and tried to change his mind. Venkatesanandaji was just poker-faced, impassive. And he never spoke to her. "She's imagining that I am her son. For me, I've neither mother nor father. I was never born." He was so established in his Tyaga and Vairagya that he never wavered. She used to send person after person to him. He never looked at her face, never stepped near her, nor even spoke to her. You could say, "Hardhearted, cruel", but this is a different dimension. The monastic life has different values. You'll understand then the saying, 'A spiritual man's heart is softer than butter, harder than diamond'—softer than flower but harder than diamond where it is necessary. So he was harder than diamond, yet he was one of the most softhearted persons I have ever seen. He was so sensitive to others. He wouldn't hurt even an insect or any creature. He couldn't bear to see a tear in the eyes of someone else, but in the case of his mother, this feeling was absent, because that was necessary.

No amount of persuasion by others would sway him. He would

say, "Om, Om Tat Sat", look at the sky and would not discuss the matter further. He would turn and go away. "If you have any other thing to discuss, speak to me. If you want to speak of this, Hari Om. Namah Sivaya." That was the end of it. That was the stuff he was made of. And then they told Gurudev, "Oh, she's adamant, she's weeping, she's a wonderful nuisance, Swamiji, we must do something about it."

"Achha, alright. Call her!"

They called her. He made both of them sit before him.

"What do you want? You want your son back?"

"Ah, yes, yes. I have come to take him."

"All right, take him." And, "Venkatesanandaji, you want to go with her?" Gurudev told her, "I don't hold back your son. I am not tying him up here. He is at perfect liberty to go. You want to leave, you can take him. Oji, get tickets for them and let them leave, let them go." And then he looked at her, "But mind you, you are taking him. I'm not saying no. You can take him— but after you take him, if some situation arises, then neither have I got him, nor have you got him. If you are prepared to see that situation,

O.K., then go." He plainly told her, "You think you can catch hold of this free bird? But if such a situation comes, don't blame me." He said, "You can take him and go."

Then the fear of God entered into her, "Oh yes, yes. If he comes with me and flies off and leaves me, then where will I go and weep? Where will I go and knock my head when I don't even know where he is? At least here I know he has got a place to stay. I know he has got food to eat. I know he has got someone if something happens to him. But being neither here nor there, what will happen to me?" Ah then, after much thought she said, "O.K." and kept quiet. Afterwards she did not go to Gurudev. She did not rant at him, she did not further broach this topic. She settled down, and from then on she's been here.

That is the stuff Venkatesanandaji was made of, and as I told you, that was because there was some very close, intimate Karmic connection between the great soul, Gurudev Swami Sivanandaji and this equally great soul, Sri Swami Venkatesanandaji Maharaj. They were made for each other. Gurudev had to fulfil his destiny as awakener of the 20th

century world. He had to fulfil his destiny through the dedicated and devoted service of Swami Venkatesananda. There is no gainsaying the fact that he was one of the key personalities in Gurudev's work of spiritual propagation. Gurudev's mission was many-faceted, and his disciples fulfilled different roles, all important and all very, very significant.

In spreading Gurudev's teachings to the remotest corner of the modern world, the lion's share of the work was done by this extraordinary disciple. He lived next door to Gurudev and there was a period when the moment Gurudev stepped out of his Kutir to start the day's work, he went straight to Swami Venkatesanandaji's Kutir and sat there—so his day's work started with a camp in Venkatesananda's Kutir. It might have been anything from 10 minutes to 45 minutes. All the other people would be waiting for him to come to the office and start his work, but he had so many things to discuss—correspondence, manuscripts, some editing or some article for the magazine. So Swami Venkatesanandaji had the good fortune of having Gurudev coming to him day after day.

The relationship was not only

that of disciple and Guru, not only that of a humble and loving servant and the master, but also sometimes of son and father and sometimes of friends. The familiarity Gurudev showed to Venkatesanandaji he perhaps showed to very, very few. And the informality that existed between them, possibly existed with no-one else, because we were all a little inhibited in the presence of Gurudev. We had a certain traditional conditioning of our minds. Swami Venkatesanandaji was very free of those inhibitions because he had moved away from his home in South India and worked in the North. He had worked in Calcutta for some time, and then in Delhi and, you know, these are all progressive places, which had an influence on him.

S o m e b o d y s a i d , "Venkatesanandaji was like an innocent child to the very last", and another said, "I couldn't believe that he was 61", such was his ebullient spirit of youthfulness. In many ways, Gurudev was also a child to the very last. He was like a young boy, and I remember once that he suddenly began talking about his Malaysian experiences. He said there had been a Yoga teacher, who knew how to whistle. Gurudev had said, "Oh, you think only you can do it?" Then Gurudev gave a piercing whistle as

these street urchins do, sitting amidst all his disciples and visitors!

One day the idea struck him, "Look here— people have all gross, castor oil faces! I don't like it. I want people to be cheerful! They should be laughing. There is enough sorrow in the world, why should we add to it? You must radiate sunshine." He called a disciple who was an ace photographer to come down. "Tomorrow, we must have a laughing competition. Call Venkatesanandaji and ask him to come here." So after office work, he went down to the Ghat and said, "Get some chairs! Get a table!" He had put on his big winter overcoat. He said, "He must also have a coat." So both Venkatesanandaji and himself put on their overcoats and sat in their chairs. "And now take a photograph and a little movie also. Alright, let us laugh!" He wanted Swami Venkatesanandaji to laugh with him. How to start laughing? He cracked a joke and immediately began to laugh and Venkatesananda went "Ha-haha-ha-ha-ha." So both were laughing like anything, and I wondered what people coming in the boat were thinking. Here was this big man and this youngster both simply shaking with laughter. Photographs were taken of this laughing match, and I think somewhere there must also be a movie.

To Be Continued

LOVE THAT IS GOD

Sri Swami Venkatesananda

The thing that gave Swamiji the greatest joy was distributing Prasad. In 1947, Swamiji's Birthday Diamond Jubilee was celebrated. I don't know how it happened, but they had a surplus of Laddus. About three to four thousand people ate to their fill on the birthday, the day before and the day after. After having distributed Laddus to all these people, one of the rooms downstairs in the post office line was half full of them. Laddus were lying on the floor right up to the ceiling. From then on (from the 10th September for about 10 days) he was in bliss, he was in the sixteenth heaven. Everyone who went there was given two handfuls of Laddus. Nothing gave him greater joy than to distribute food, fruits, Prasad.

In those days, we were only about thirty people here. When there were a number of visitors, we used to sit on the post office veranda to eat, and when there were not too many visitors, we ate in the kitchen itself.

One day Swamiji was sitting on one of those cement benches. He said, "You think the Ashram is small. You'll see one day the queue for food will extend from the Ashram to Lakshmanjhula." (If you put all the people who are fed now, forming one line, the line will probably reach Lakshmanjhula already.) On the same day he said, "You think we are going from one financial crisis to another." (Every six months we had a financial crisis. Either we went bankrupt, or we couldn't pay any debts, or there was nothing to eat.) "Money will come. So much money will pour in, that you won't have time to count it." Whatever he said has come true. Why? He did not want anything, he did not ask for anything. Even after the Ashram had grown, he was still living in that miserable Kutir on the Ganga bank. It was the most unhealthy place, it was damp, cold, dark and miserable, but he was quite content with that and did not want to move from there. On the other hand,

Taken from 'Sivananda Yoga'

BIRTH CENTENARY YEAR OF SRI SWAMI VENKATESANANDAJI MAHARAJ

he was even then extremely concerned about our comfort. "Do you have enough blankets? Do you have all that you need? Would you like to have a coat, would you like to have a cap?" This solicitude for the physical welfare of everybody was extraordinary. But that was not all. He created the Ashram for the spiritual evolution of all of us. Every brick here sings his glory.

Second only to the distribution of Prasad, he delighted in the distribution of spiritual literature, books. He was sending them free to hundreds of people round the world. The parcels had to be registered, and

each one had to be touched and blessed by him and the address checked by him. He used to say, "This is how I am handing the book over to the recipient, though that recipient is thousands of miles away." Giving, giving, giving, giving – and the giving sprang not from vanity, not from expectation of a return, but from his pure divine love. His love took the form of service, of giving food, giving knowledge and of giving himself in every aspect. Such was the glorious nature of the divine being at whose feet we are all seated today.

Hari Om Tat Sat!

Love is the Law of life. To love is to fulfil the Law. And to fulfil the Law means eternal peace and everlasting happiness.

This world has come out of love. It exists in love. It finally dissolves in love. Love is the motive-power of the universe.

Love is life. Love is joy. Love is warmth. Love is the golden tie which binds heart to heart, soul to soul.

Love is constructive and creative. Love binds and builds. Love is the principle of regeneration. Love is an actual substance you can use with confidence. Love is a positive, concrete thing. He who applies the law of love with scientific precision can work wonders. The law of love is a far greater science than any modern science. The law of love prevails among saints and good men.

Swami Sivananda

DIVERSE INSTRUCTIONS TO DIVERSE PEOPLE

Sri Swami Gurusharanananda

24th JANUARY, 1955

One Sri Keshav Gopal, a boy aged twenty-three, came to Sivananda Ashram with the intention of embracing Sannyas. He had not taken permission from his relatives, nor had he informed them of his intention to visit the Ashram. "What is your qualification?" enquired Swamiji. "Intermediate", replied Sri Keshav Gopal. "You want to take Sannyas?" asked Swamiji. "Yes" replied Sri Keshav Gopal. "Do you know typing?" was Swamiji's next question. "I don't know, Swamiji", answered Sri K.G. Swamiji presented a book or two to Keshav Gopal, who receiving the gift, prostrated before Swamiji. "Jai Ho", blessed Swamiji, and enquired Swamiji among the office workers, "Anybody wants an assistant?" Sri Venkataraman said, "Yes", and Keshav Gopal began to assist Sri Venkataraman.

After some days, the brother-in-law of Sri Keshav Gopal wrote a

letter to Swamiji enquiring if Keshav Gopal had come to the Ashram, as he was suddenly missing. A photo of Keshav Gopal was also received with the letter. Swamiji sent for Sri Keshav Gopal. "Your name is Keshav Gopal?" asked Swamiji. "Yes", replied K.G. "Is this your photo?" "Yes" answered K. G. "You have got a warrant now", remarked Swamiji humorously, and read the letter aloud. The letter did not mention that Sri Keshav Gopal was wanted back. It only sought information whether he had arrived in the Ashram, in which case, his people also might come to the Ashram to have the blessed Darshan of Swamiji Maharaj. "So, they don't want you back", remarked Swamiji, after reading the letter. "Let them come to see you, but don't go." Sri Keshav Gopal was delighted at this command of Swamiji and immediately prostrated himself before Swamiji. Again Swamiji said, "You can wait before taking

Sannyas, but don't go."

Instructions were also issued by Swamiji to the office to reply to the letter stating that Sri Keshav Gopal had arrived in the Ashram.

On another occasion, two boys studying for B.A. came to Swamiji and expressed their desire to stay in some Ashram and practise Yoga. Swamiji replied: "Practise Yoga at home side-by-side with your studies. During holidays you can come here and stay." The boys said that examination was a botheration for them, and was not useful for achieving their life's aim. They also added that they had been permitted by their parents to practise Yoga, provided they succeeded in getting a Guru. They were in search of a Guru. "Find out a Guru", advised Swamiji. "We have to continue our search for a Guru in these parts?" enquired one of the boys. "Yes", replied Swamiji.

The above conversation took place on Swamiji's way back to his Kutir from the office, and Swamiji had by this time come near his Kutir. Swamiji descended the footsteps leading to his Kutir, and the two boys also went away, a little disappointed.

Swamiji does not give stereotyped instructions to all. To one he would say, "Stay here in the Ashram. Promise not to step outside the Ashram. You can become a saint." To another, Swamiji would say, "practise Yoga at home". It should not however be supposed that those who are allowed to stay on in the Ashram are necessarily superior in spiritual merit to those whom Swamiji advises to go back home and do Sadhana there. For Swamiji says, "An aspirant living in the Himalayas may excel another living in the plains in respect of Vairagya and Titiksha, but the latter may possess virtues like compassion which the recluse in the Himalayas may be lacking." "If I keep one rogue in the Ashram, it means one rogue is less to the world" is also Swamiji's attitude! No doubts, blessed indeed are those who enjoy the physical proximity of Swamiji; but all are most blessed who carry out Swamiji's instructions, wherever they may be geographically. For, obedience is a virtue that Swamiji prices most. "Obedience is greater than reverence", said Swamiji the other day at the Satsang.

THE SPIRITUAL PARADOX

Swami Atmaswarupananda

During the first half of the last century, India was blessed with an unusual number of great saints. Among those great saints, one who is universally admired is Ramana Maharshi. Perhaps it was the simplicity of his life and teaching. No elaboration, he just spoke the simple, direct truth.

The teachings may have been simple and direct, but they were not necessarily easy to grasp. For example, he would say to people in front of him, "You are all realized." They, of course, would protest: "You are Bhagavan, but not us." And he would simply answer, "That's your problem. You don't believe it."

Why don't we believe Ramana Maharshi or the scriptures when they unequivocally declare: That thou art? We don't believe them because we are convinced that our present situation is unsatisfactory, and that we require something new. However, Ramana Maharshi would also say that whatever is new has a beginning and it will have an end. Therefore, it cannot be the Eternal. The Eternal must be here and now.

And so we search for something that is here and now, but it keeps eluding us. New experiences happen, but they have a beginning and they have an end. We admit that the Eternal is unknowable, but we are determined to know the unknowable. We can't accept the truth that unknowable

means unknowable.

Our problem is in the mind. The mind is convinced that we are the body and mind. The mind needs to change its mind. It needs to recognize that it has caused the problem, and that it has to solve the problem: "Mind is the cause of both bondage and liberation in the human being," declare the scriptures.

This is the paradox of God-realization. The Eternal cannot change. It has always been the fact. It always will be the fact, and It is the fact at this moment. It is the mind that has caused the problem. It is the mind that can solve the problem. Therefore, all our *Sadhana* is not to change the truth that we are already what we are seeking, but for the mind to realise, or make real that truth.

This is the challenge in front of each one of us. We have to stop seeking something new. We are already the truth, but we must strenuously seek to change, by whatever way we can, the error in our mind. We must put all our blood, toil, sweat and tears into this effort, and yet at the same time recognize that what we are going to discover is that we have always been free. We have always been That. It has ever been here and now.

This is our challenge. This is the way out—the way to deal with the paradox. Stop seeking anything new, but constantly strive, strive, strive to purify the mind of its wrong ideas.

CHILDREN'S WORLD



Glorious Students! Salutations.

You are the hope and the glory of this land. Build your body and character. Awaken in you the religious spirit. Study the Holy Scriptures. Respect all saints. Serve holy men, the sick and the poor. Purify the mind and regain the lost Divinity. Be sincere. Be just. Be true.

I will tell you the real aim of education. Education should teach you to love God and serve man. Education should instruct you to be truthful, moral, fearless, humble and merciful. You should develop right thinking and right living.

You should be the messengers of a new hope, a new vision and a new culture. Play your part nobly and well. You are full of energy, noble impulses and ambitions. You alone can uplift the country and the world. The future of the country and the world depend on you. You are the leaders of tomorrow. You must try to possess all divine attributes. Remember that



you are children of God and manifest this divinity in daily actions.

May you prosper gloriously. May success attend on you for ever.

May God bless you.

Thy own Atma,

Swami Sivananda

CULTIVATION OF VIRTUES

GENEROSITY

Generosity is a disposition to give liberally or to bestow favours heartily. It is the act or practice of giving freely and kindly.

A generous man has a large or magnanimous heart. His charity is overflowing.

A generous man always gives and gives. His heart is filled with sympathy. Sympathy and benevolence are the attendants of generosity.

A generous man is endowed with a noble disposition. He is most pliant and courteous in his behaviour to his inferiors.

Ignoble, illiberal, mean, miserly, parsimonious, petty, stingy nature is the opposite of generous nature.

Swami Sivananda

ERADICATION OF VICES

FICKLENESS

Fickleness is unsteadiness of the mind. It is inconsistency or irresoluteness.

A fickle mind oscillates and changes every second. It is never steady. It ever wanders.

A fickle-minded man now promises and breaks his promises the next second. You cannot rely on him.

A fickle-minded man is unduly changeable in feeling, judgment or purpose.

A fickle-minded man always fails in any attempt. Success is



unknown to him. He weeps and regrets.

As soon as you have made a firm resolve, you must carry it out promptly at any cost. This will remove fickleness of mind and develop your will power.

Swami Sivananda

GLORY OF SELF-SURRENDER

There lived a virtuous and simple-hearted Brahmin with his wife at Puri, where the famous shrine of Sri Jagannatha, the 'Lord of the Universe', is situated. He was a great lover of the Gita, and used day and night to study and meditate on the verses of the Gita. Although he had not yet developed the spirit of disinterestedness, he had nevertheless a great faith on God. One day, he wanted to examine the meaning of each word of the Gita from the practical point of view. While going through the Gita with this object, he came upon the words “वहाम्यहम्” (I Myself bear the burden) of verse 22 of Chapter IX. The thought came across his mind—Does this mean that God Himself carries all necessary provisions to the devotee? No, this cannot be the meaning: God must be supplying these things to the devotee through other agencies. He, therefore, thought that the expression “वहाम्यहम्” failed to convey the intended meaning; so, he scratched through the word and wrote “करोम्यहम्” (I Myself arrange) above it.

Inscrutable are the ways of God. The Brahmin used to live on alms. It began to rain heavily one day. As he would not go out for begging that day, the Brahmin and his wife had to starve for the whole day. The next day when it stopped raining, the Brahmin went out to beg. Not long after he left the house, a lovely boy whose body was besmeared all over with blood called at his house, and addressed the wife of the Brahmin thus: “This consecrated food has been sent by the Panditji (the Brahmin).” The Brahmin lady was charmed to see his lovely face and to



hear his sweet, enchanting words; at the same time, she was very much pained at the sight of blood coming out of his body. With tears in her eyes, she asked—“Who has been cruel as to hurt you, my child?” The boy replied that it was her husband, the Brahmin, who had hurt him. The lady was taken aback at this reply. She said, “My husband is a very simple and good-tempered man and a great devotee too; why should he hurt a lovely child like you?” The boy replied: “I tell you the bare truth, mother: it was your husband who pierced my body with the point of a dart. Why should he have done this, is known to him alone.”

Saying so and keeping the load of provisions (consecrated food) before her, the boy disappeared. The Brahmin lady who was brooding over the sad incident, failed to notice when the boy disappeared. Being at a loss to understand the rhyme or reason of her husband's strange behaviour, she awaited his return with an aching heart. The Brahmin returned home at the usual hour. The lady related to him the whole story in words which though respectful, betrayed grief and resentment. The poor Brahmin was dumbfounded to hear the strange tale from his wife. He was deeply moved when he recalled his having scored through a word of the Gita with his pen. Tears began to stream forth his eyes. He now realized that it was literally true that God Himself carried provisions to the devotee who believed in Him and relied on Him. The Gita is a verbal image of God. Scoring through a word of the Gita, was therefore, equivalent to piercing the body of the Lord. Full of remorse for his crime, the Brahmin fainted and fell down senseless on the ground. The Lord then appeared before His devotee and blessed him with His beatific vision. The Brahmin now rose from the ground and craved forgiveness for his crime and through an exuberance of emotion, began to write the words “वहाम्यहम्” on every inch of blank space in his copy of the Gita.

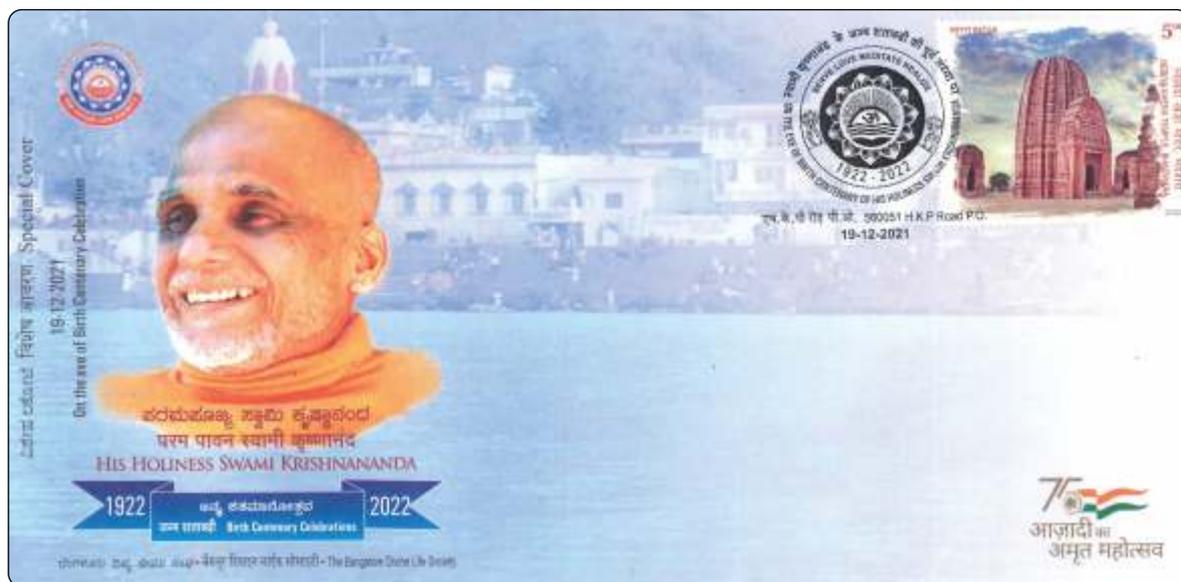
Swami Sivananda



The Divine Life Society Bangalore Branch Celebrates the Birth Centenary of Worshipful Sri Swami Krishnanandaji Maharaj

The Divine Life Society Bangalore Branch celebrated the Birth Centenary of Worshipful Sri Swami Krishnanandaji Maharaj by releasing the Special Cover of Pujya Sri Swamiji Maharaj on 19th December 2021.

H.H. Sri Swami Padmanabhanandaji Maharaj graced the Centenary Programme with his presence. The programme commenced with Bhajans and Paduka Puja. Thereafter, Sri Shivaprasadaji, President of the DLS Bangalore Branch, extended hearty welcome to Swamiji, dignitaries and the devotees. He apprised the gathering briefly of life and teachings of Param Pujya Sri Swami Krishnanandaji Maharaj and the Centenary Projects that the Branch has undertaken.



Then, Sri Mahindra Gajbhiye, Director Postal Services (HQ) Karnataka, released the Special Cover on Param Pujya Sri Swami Krishnanandaji Maharaj and handed over the Album containing the Cover to Swami Padmanabhanandaji Maharaj and Dr. Venkatsubramanian, Director, ICAR, Bangalore. Sri Mahindra Gajbhiye in his address expressed his great delight to be part of this sacred programme. Swami Padmanabhanandaji Maharaj in his talk paid his reverential tribute to Param Pujya Sri Swami Krishnanandaji Maharaj by



sharing his loving and inspiring interactions with Pujya Swamiji Maharaj.

Swamiji Maharaj also inaugurated 'Swami Krishnananda Birth Centenary Memorial Hall' with the chanting of Veda Mantras and further unveiled the photos of Sadgurudev Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj, Worshipful Sri Swami Chidanandaji Maharaj and Worshipful Sri Swami

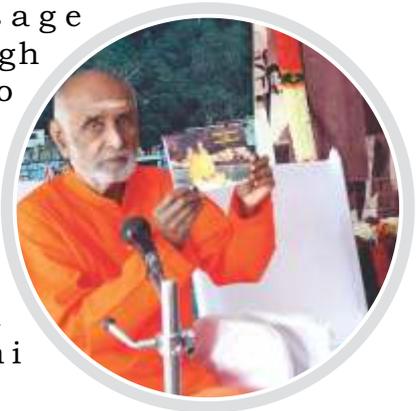
Krishnanandaji Maharaj. Swamiji released two booklets of Pujya Sri Swami Krishnanandaji Maharaj for free distribution as well.



The gathering got the blessed opportunity to have Darshan of Param Pujya Sri Swami Krishnanandaji Maharaj and listen to his soul-stirring message through a video clip of his

discourse on 'Love of God'. The programme concluded with Bhajans, Arati and Prasad.

May the choicest blessings of the Lord Almighty, Sadgurudev Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj and Worshipful Sri Swami Krishnanandaji Maharaj be upon all.



Celebration of the Seventy Eighth Anniversary of Mahamantra Sankirtan Yajna



**ध्यायन् कृते यजन् यज्ञैस्त्रेतायां द्वापरेऽर्चयन् ।
यदाप्नोति तदाप्नोति कलौ संकीर्त्य केशवम् ॥**

That Supreme Being who is attained through meditation in Krita-yuga, through performance of sacrifice in Treta-yuga, through devout worship in Dwapara-yuga, is attained in Kali-yuga through mere chanting and singing of the Divine Name.

With the pious aim of welfare of humanity, and with the sacred desire to provide the devotees and inmates of the Ashram the blessed opportunity to sing the Divine Name, Sadgurudev Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj commenced Mahamantra Sankirtan Yajna at Bhajan Hall on 3rd December 1943. The auspicious day of the Seventy Eighth Anniversary of this holy Yajna was celebrated with great spiritual éclat at the Headquarters Ashram on 3rd December 2021.

From 27th November to 2nd December 2021, special collective chanting of the Mahamantra for three hours was organised. On 3rd December, the inmates of



the Ashram gathered together at 3.00 p.m. in the Bhajan Hall to participate in the Sacred Celebration. Sannyasis and Brahmacharis ecstatically sang Mahamantra in varied melodious tunes for one hour, and thereafter carrying the beautiful portraits of Lord Sri Rama, Lord Sri Krishna and Sri Gurudev and also joyously chanting the Divine Mantra, first went to Sri Vishwanath Mandir and Sri Samadhi Mandir, and then circumambulated the Bhajan Hall. To mark this blessed day, two booklets glorifying the Divine Name were also released. The celebration concluded with the floral Archana of Lord Sri Rama and Lord Sri Krishna, Arati and distribution of Prasad.

May Lord Sri Rama, Lord Sri Krishna and Sadgurudev shower their abundant blessings upon all.

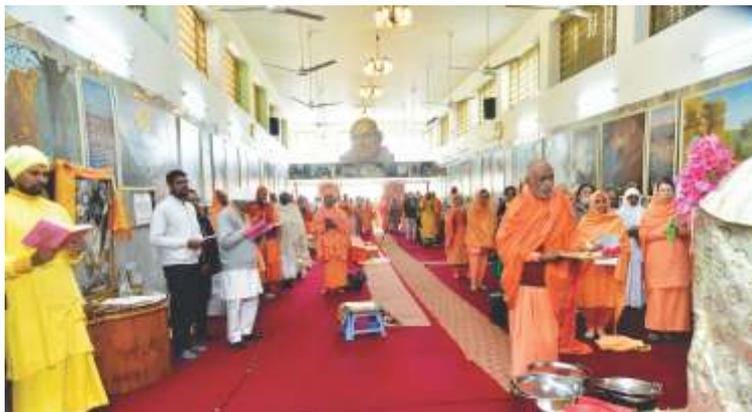


Sri Gita Jayanti Celebration at the Headquarters Ashram

Every one of you should study very carefully the Gita, a sublime and soul-stirring book that can bestow on you supreme peace, immortality and eternal bliss.

Sadgurudev Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj

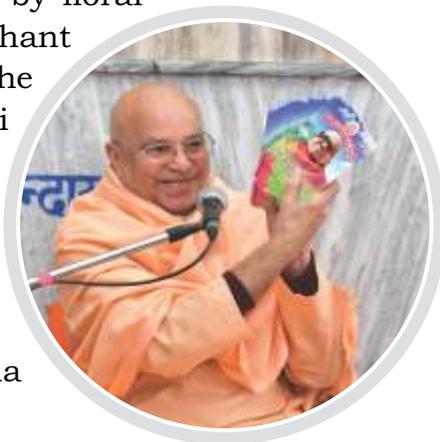
The blessed day of Sri Gita Jayanti was celebrated with great devotion on 14th December 2021 at the holy Ashram. A Jnana Yajna, in the form of recitation of all the eighteen



chapters of the Divine Scripture, was organised from 9 a.m. to 11.30 a.m. in the sacred presence of Sri Gurudev at Samadhi Hall wherein all the Sannyasis, Brahmacharis and devotees of the

Ashram devoutly participated. It was followed by floral Archana to Jagadguru Lord Sri Krishna to the chant of Ashtottarashatanamavali. To commemorate the auspicious day, two booklets of 'Swami Krishnananda Birth Centenary Series' – 'The Gospel of the Bhagavad Gita' and 'The Doctrine of the Bhagavad Gita' were released. The Yajna concluded with Arati and distribution of Jnana Prasad and Prasad.

May the divine grace of Lord Sri Krishna and Sadgurudev be upon all.



Sri Dattatreya Jayanti Celebration at the Headquarters Ashram



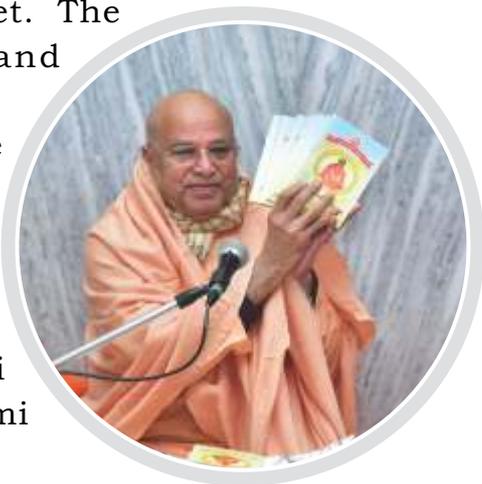
Lord Sri Dattatreya is a unique manifestation of the Divinity establishing the ultimate oneness of the Divine Trinity i.e. Brahma, Vishnu and Siva. The sacred day of Lord Sri Dattatreya's advent on earth plane was celebrated with great devotion on 18th December 2021 at the Headquarters Ashram.

The celebration commenced at 9 a.m. with Jaya Ganesha prayers followed by a special worship of Lord Sri Dattatreya enshrined in Sri Dattatreya Temple. The Sannyasis and Brahmacharis of the Ashram devoutly participated in the Abhisheka and Archana of the Lord and also offered Bhajans and Kirtans

as their Pushpanjali at His lotus feet. The celebration concluded with Arati and distribution of Prasad.

To mark the auspicious day, one booklet of 'Swami Krishnananda Birth Centenary Series' – 'Lord Dattatreya – Master Par Excellence' was released during the night Satsanga.

May the divine grace of Lord Sri Dattatreya and Sadgurudev Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj be upon all.



78th Pratishtha Mahotsava of Sri Vishwanatha Mandir



With devout rejoicing, the auspicious day of the 78th anniversary of the Pratishtha (consecration) of Sri Vishwanatha Mandir was celebrated at the Headquarters Ashram on 31st December 2021.

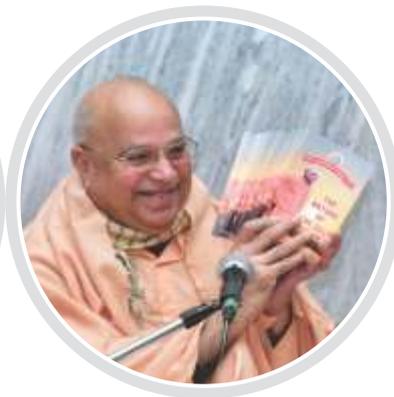
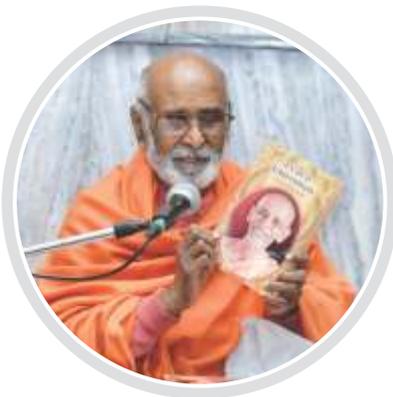
As a prelude to the celebration, the inmates of the Ashram chanted the holy Panchakshari Mantra in Sri Vishwanatha Mandir for two hours on 30th December 2021. On the sacred day of 31st December, a grand Abhisheka was offered to Lord Sri Vishwanatha enshrined in the sanctum- sanctorum of Sri Vishwanatha Mandir with the sonorous chanting of Vedic Mantras. It was followed by the Archana to the chant of Vedasarasahasra Namavali and soulful singing of Bhajans and Kirtans. With joyful hearts, all the inmates and devotees participated in the Abhisheka-Archana of the Lord and in singing His names and glories. The celebration concluded with the Mangalarati and distribution of Prasad at Annapurna Bhawan.



During the night Satsanga, it being New Year Eve, H.H. Sri Swami Yogaswarupanandaji Maharaj extended his heartiest wishes for blissful New Year and also invoked the grace of Sadgurudev Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj upon all. To mark the occasion, four booklets of Pujya Sri Swami Krishnanandaji

Maharaj's Birth Centenary Series 'What is Religion', 'The Nature of the Self', 'Christ-Consciousness' and 'The Spirit of Sadhana' were released. The year 2021 being the Birth Centenary Year of Pujya Sri Swami Venkatesanandaji Maharaj, one of his inspiring chronicles 'Siva's Doon Lectures' was also released. Apart from these, three books of Sri Gurudev 'Essays in Philosophy', 'Yoga Asanas', 'Life and Teachings of Lord Jesus', and one book and booklet of Worshipful Sri Swami Chidanandaji Maharaj 'A Call to Liberation' and 'Bliss alone Exists' got released commemorating the blessed day. The Satsanga came to close with Arati, distribution of Jnana Prasad and Prasad.

May the abundant benedictions of Lord Sri Vishwanatha and Sri Gurudev be upon all.



In Memoriam

With profound sorrow, we report the sad demise of Sri B. Ravi Ganesh on 24th November 2021 at Delhi.

Sri Ravi Ganeshji was born on 14th February 1947. His parents were ardent devotees of Sadgurudev Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj. Therefore, he got the blessed opportunity to have Sri Gurudev's Darshan at a very early age. He often used to visit the holy Ashram with his parents. Sri Gurudev also blessed him by performing his Upanayana Samskara with his holy hands.



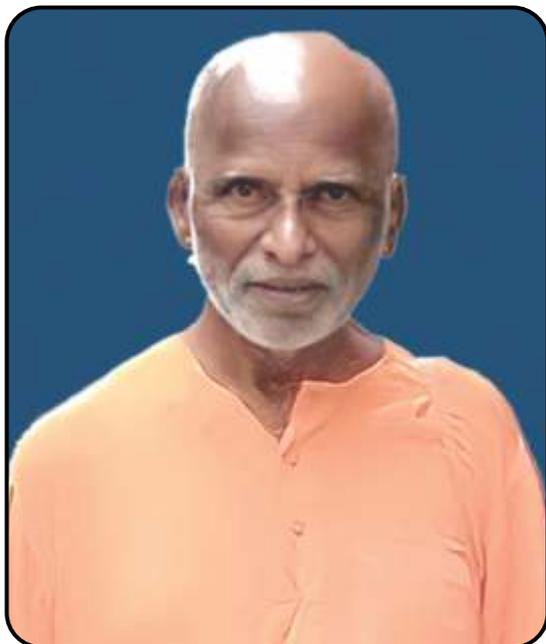
After completing his studies, Sri Ravi Ganeshji started his career with Reuters and then moved into the airline industry by joining PANAM. He also held various other jobs with Lufthansa, Jet Airways and Indigo. While working in the airline industries, he rendered his loving services to Worshipful Sri Swami Chidanandaji Maharaj whenever Swamiji Maharaj was on a tour. He also offered his services in the Ashram Reception Office for some time. Sri Ravi Ganeshji endeared himself to all by his loving and kind nature. He took his last breath on 24th November 2021 at his residence in Delhi.

We pray to the Lord Almighty to bless the departed soul with Supreme Peace and Divine Beatitude.

In Memoriam

With a deep sense of loss, we report that Sri Swami Paramapriyananda Saraswati, Ex. President, DLS Jeypore Branch Odisha, left his mortal coil on 22nd November 2021 at Jeypore.

Sri Gumma Ranga Rao, as he was known pre-monastically, was born at Chittayivalasa village of Gajapatinagaram Mandal, Vizianagaram District, Andhra Pradesh in 1947. After completing his education in Odisha, he served in different schools and colleges of Odisha and retired as the Professor of English from Vikram Deb College, Jeypore in 2006.



Sri Ranga Raoji was an active member of the Divine Life Society Jeypore Branch, Odisha since 1989 and served it as its President for a long time. He was blessed with Sannyasa Diksha in 2010 at the Headquarters Ashram and given the name 'Swami Paramapriyananda Saraswati'. Sri Swami Paramapriyanandaji rendered his dedicated services in the Yoga Vedanta Forest Academy of the Ashram as one of its faculty-members. He was well conversant in Telugu, Odia, English, Hindi and Sanskrit. He has also authored some poems and articles in different languages. Sri Swamiji breathed his last on 22nd November, 2021 at Jeypore at the age of 74.

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

In Memoriam

With great sorrow, we report that Sri Choudhury Gourahari Mishra, a direct disciple of Sadgurudev Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj and member of Board of Management, the Divine Life Society (Headquarters), passed away on 26th November 2021.

Sri Gourahari Mishraji was born in Village Pankapala on the sacred day of Sri Ganesh Chaturthi in 1939. After getting Bachelor's degree in Science, he joined Indian Forest Service. During his tenure, Mishraji pioneered several initiatives for wildlife conservation and ecological restoration which are still active today. He also shared his passion for environmental awareness through a diverse set of writings. He got retired as PCCF, Odisha in the year 1997.

In addition to his active professional life, Mishraji was a sincere spiritual aspirant since his young days. He was blessed with Mantra-Diksha by Sri Gurudev himself on Sri Durgashtami in

1958. Since then, he dedicated himself to the service of his Guru and his Divine Mission. He used to visit the Ashram regularly from October 1960 till September 1962, during his tenure as an IFS trainee officer in Dehradun. Sri Mishraji worked hard to propagate the ideology of the Divine Life Society in Odisha, India, and abroad. He emerged as a leader of the Divine Life Society in Odisha state, and successfully organised various Sadhana Camps and State-Level Conferences along with the other organisers. He served as the President of the Divine Life Society Cuttack Branch for many years and then President of the Central Committee of Odisha. He also devoutly served as a member of Board of Management of the Divine Life Society Headquarters. Sri Mishraji breathed his last on 26th November 2021 at the age of 82 years.

May the Almighty Lord and Sadgurudev bless the departed soul with Eternal Peace and Divine Beatitude.



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)

Immensely small they are, but great harm can be caused by them. A few lice in the hair won't matter, and can be easily washed out and sanitized. But the Baba who was admitted this month had a completely different experience. So much infested was his hair and scalp, that the lice had infested the skin too and caused wounds near the eyes and in the neck. These wounds were not treated and they began to become infected, till maggots appeared which entered the subcutaneous tissue. Even though someone in Triveni Ghat so kindly had given him a head shave, his neck, eyes and sinuses were swollen up, with pus just drooping and oozing out. This was the condition in which the patient was brought from the Ashram Headquarters for admission in Sivananda Home. He could hardly open his eyes, his nose a big lump, the mouth stiff, only able to swallow semi liquids. As per the ongoing standard procedure for any new patient, a Covid PCR test was taken, and it was reported to be negative. Gradually, with daily cleaning and dressing, treatment for the eyes, as per the advice of the consulted eye surgeon, and high dose of antibiotics, improvement of his overall condition could be seen day by day. Thanks to the compassionate heart of this Brahmachari who arranged for his admission in time, this Sadhu had not completely lost his vision yet.

That was not the case of two other patients, who are admitted in Sivananda Home for a couple of years already. Theirs was the same condition, but their infection had affected both their eyes, so much so that they had completely lost their eye sight.

One is a lady in her forties and the other is a male patient who suffer from long bouts of depression and anxiety as well. He was treated too in Sivananda Home for a fracture of the hip, and for TB in his bones. So much pain in mind, heart and body that it becomes difficult for him to face life as it is for him, at any moment.

May God and Gurudev strengthen and console all who are in pain and continuously suffer from hardships in their day to day life.

Om Sri Satkarunaya Namah.

"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

IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT REGARDING DONATIONS

Due to administrative reasons, and also to simplify the existing complex accounting system, it has been decided in the 'Board of Management' Meeting held on 10th March 2021 and subsequently in the 'Board of Trustees' Meeting held on 11th March 2021 that any donations to The Divine Life Society will be received only under the following 'Heads of Accounts' with effect from 1st April 2021: –

General Donation

1. Ashram General Donation
2. Annakshetra
3. Medical Relief

Corpus Donation

Sivananda Ashram Corpus (Mooldhan) Fund

Therefore, devotees are requested to send donations to the above mentioned account heads only.

Further, it is hereby conveyed to all the devotees and well wishers of the Ashram that

- The income from the **ASHRAM GENERAL DONATION** shall cater to all the spiritual, religious as well as charitable activities of the Divine Life Society viz. care for the homeless and destitute through Sivananda Home, serving leprosy patients through Leprosy Relief Work, providing educational aid for poor students, running of Yoga Vedanta Forest Academy, printing of free literature, dissemination of spiritual knowledge, worship in Ashram temples, maintenance of the Ashram and Goshala, conducting regular religious and spiritual activities of the Ashram and also to any other spiritual, religious or charitable activities taken up by the Society from time to time.
- The donations for the **MEDICAL RELIEF** shall be utilised towards the treatment of sick and needy patients at Sivananda Charitable Hospital and also towards other medical relief works undertaken by the Society.
- Similarly, Interest income generated from **SIVANANDA ASHRAM CORPUS (MOOLDHAN) FUND** shall be utilised towards all the activities (spiritual, religious as well as charitable) of the Society.
- It is to be noted that the Society is not dispensing with any of its

activities; it will continue to conduct its regular Ashram activities and Charitable activities as usual, though the 'Heads of Accounts' to receive donations have been reduced.

- Donations towards the Divine Life Society may be made through 'Online Donation Facility' by accessing directly to the web address **<https://donations.sivanandaonline.org>** or by clicking the 'Online Donation' link provided in our website **[www. sivanandaonline.org](http://www.sivanandaonline.org)**.
- Donations can also be sent through cheque/D.D. /E.M.O. drawn in favour of '**The Divine Life Society', Shivanandanagar, Uttarakhand**, payable at Rishikesh. A covering letter mentioning the purpose of donation, Post Mail Address, Phone No., Email Id and PAN should accompany the same.
- Further, devotees are informed that Puja in Ashram temples shall be done free of cost for all those who would like to perform Puja in their name or in their family members' name. They may do so by sending a written request well in advance with requisite details either by email or letter addressed to the General Secretary or the President.
- There is no change in guidelines regarding Remittance towards Fee for Membership, Admission, Life Membership, Patronship, Branch Affiliation and SPL advances as well.

**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.

REPORTS FROM THE D.L.S. BRANCHES

INLAND BRANCHES

Bargarh (Odisha): The Branch conducted daily Puja, Rudrabhishek on Mondays, Guru Paduka Puja on Thursdays, and weekly Satsang every Saturday. Besides, Homeopathic treatment of poor patients continued.

Chandapur (Odisha): Daily Puja, weekly Satsang on Saturdays, Sundarakanda Parayan on Sankranti day and mobile Satsang on 8th and 24th of every month were the regular programmes of the Branch. Ramcharit Manas Parayan was conducted from 11th to 19th November, recitation of Hanuman Chalisa on 13th and Satsang on 15th at the residence of devotees.

Khatiguda (Odisha): The Branch had its daily Puja and weekly Satsang on Thursdays. Ekadasis were observed on 2nd and 16th October with recitation of Vishnu Sahasranam. Sadhana day was held on 3rd with Japa, Paduka Puja, Bhajan and Kirtan. Durga Navaratri was celebrated from 7th to 14th October with Swadhyaya of "God as Mother" and Bhajans. Kanya Puja was done on 14th.

Lucknow (U.P.): The Branch conducted special Satsang at Lekhraj Homes on 14th and 21st November with Prayer, Bhajan, Mantra Japa and Swadhyaya etc. Besides this, Mahamrityunjaya Mantra Japa was done for speedy recovery of Covid patients and world peace.

Nandininagar (Chattisgarh): The Branch had morning prayers with Gita Path, chanting of Hanuman Chalisa and Parayan of Vishnusahasranam, and Siva Abhisheka on Mondays. There was Mahamantra Kirtan on 3rd November. Besides this, weekly Satsang was held on

Thursdays, and Matri Satsang on Saturdays with recitation of Sundarakanda and Hanuman Chalisa. The Branch Foundation day was celebrated on 23rd.

Puri (Odisha): The Branch continued daily Satsang, weekly Satsang on Mondays and Thursdays, and Guru Paduka Puja on 8th and 24th. There were recitation of Hanuman Chalisa on Sankranti day, and Gita Path on Ekadasis. Durga Puja was celebrated from 7th to 15th October.

Rourkela (Odisha): Daily Yoga class and weekly Satsang on Thursdays and Sundays continued with Paduka Puja, Archana and chanting of Vishnusahasranam etc. As usual free Accupressure treatment and medicines were provided to needy people. Special Satsangs were arranged on 14th and 17th November with Paduka Puja and Rudrabhishek at Viswanath Mandir.

Steel Township - Rourkela (Odisha): The Branch continued free Yoga and Music classes on Mondays, Guru Paduka Puja on Thursdays, Swadhyaya on Saturdays and weekly Satsang on Sundays.

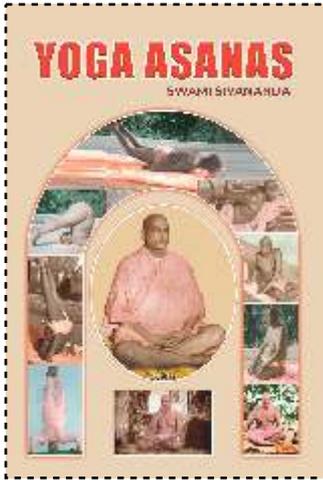
South Balanda (Odisha): Daily Puja, weekly Satsang on Fridays, and Guru Paduka Puja on 8th and 24th of every month were the regular programmes of the Branch. Gita Path and recitation of Vishnu Sahasranam and Hanuman Chalisa were done on Ekadasis. The Branch conducted Srimad Bhagavat Parayan and Pravachan from 13th to 19th November, and it was concluded with Narayan Seva. There was Akhanad Mahamantra Sankirtan on 27th for world peace.

Sureways for Success in Life	260/-	Swami Sivananda—Saint, Sage and Godman	205/-
Svara Yoga	75/-	The Quintessence of the Upanishads	50/-
*Sw. Sivananda - His Life in Pictures.....	75/-	The Role of Celibacy in the Spiritual Life	25/-
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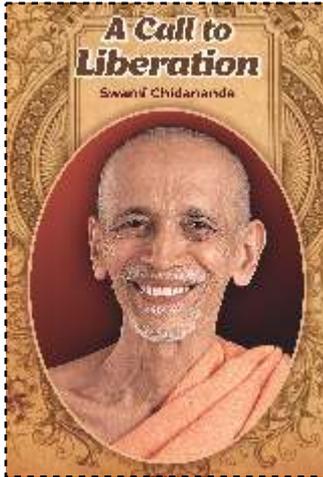
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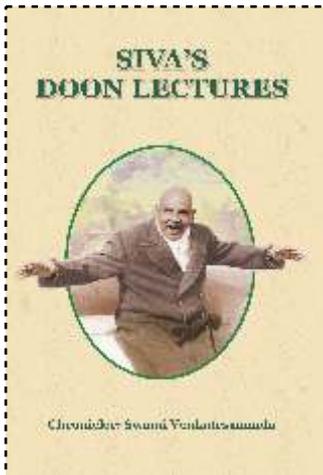
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TWENTY IMPORTANT SPIRITUAL INSTRUCTIONS

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 Saravanabhavaya 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, thought 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.

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AIDS TO CONCENTRATION

A man whose mind is filled with passion and all sorts of fantastic desires can hardly concentrate on any object even for a second. Celibacy, Pranayama, reduction of wants and activities, renunciation of sensual objects, solitude, silence, discipline of the senses, annihilation of lust, greed, anger, non-mixing with undesirable persons, giving up of news-paper reading and visiting exciting cinemas— all these increase the power of concentration. Concentration is possible and most successful only when you are free from all distractions. Concentrate on anything that appeals to you as good or anything which the mind likes best. Regularity in the practice is of paramount importance.

Swami Sivananda

To