

GANGA DUSSERA AND GANGA SAPTAMI

(H.H. Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj)

Salutations and adorations to Holy Mother Ganga, Mateshwari, the beloved of Hara, the nourisher of all beings, the bestower of immortality!

Ganga Dussera falls on the 10th day of the bright half of Jeth and celebrates the flowing of the holy Ganga at the request of Raja Bhagiratha. This is an important bathing day. A big Mela is held in Hardwar from this day until the full moon, 15th of Jeth. This is attended by a large number of people from the Punjab and Northern India.

Ganga is worshipped as the most sacred river by all nations and communities in the whole world. She takes her origin in the snowy regions of Himalayas, the seat of Lord Siva, Kailaspathi, beyond Gangotri and Gomukh, at an altitude of 10,020 ft. After an almost lonely flow of 116 miles through zigzag mountainous tracks, she joins with Alakananda at Devaprayag. She reaches the plains at Hardwar. Here a dip in the Ganga is the most refreshing one. In the plains, Jumna mixes with her at Prayag or Allahabad and Brahmaputra (again one of the longest rivers in the world) near Faridpur in Bengal. Finally she splits up into innumerable estuaries embracing a vast stretch of thick woods called Sundarbans. She is a river of perennial flow. The water is extremely pure and sanctifying. No germs can flourish in it. This has been tested by various scientists in the laboratory; rich in minerals, this water cures almost all kinds of diseases.

The origin of the Ganga is ascribed to celestial glory. In the days of yore there lived a great king, Sagara. He was one of the mighty monarchs of the Solar race. The incarnation of Lord Rama was in this race. The monarch per-

formed one hundred Aswamedha sacrifices aspiring Indrahood (king of the devas). In the hundredth sacrifice, the sacrificial horse was stolen away by Indra for fear of being dethroned by the aspirant. The horse was left within the premises of Rishi Kapila's Ashram, tied to a post.

All the sons of Sagara, sixty thousand in number, set out in search of the horse. When they found the horse in front of the sage's Ashram, they took the sage unhesitatingly for the thief and began to wage war with him. The innocent sage, aroused by their thoughtless actions, cursed them all and burnt them to ashes.

Time rolled on. Kings after Kings ruled and died. Long after this lamentable incident, there arose another illustrious king, Bhagiratha in the same family. He shuddered at the pitiable fate of his forefathers and was extremely anxious to perform the necessary obsequies and religious rites levied by the Scriptures. He consulted great Rishis and was advised to invoke Mother Ganga who only could wash off the powerful curse of Rishi Kapila and satisfactorily fulfil his desire. Bhagiratha did great Tapas with all severities. Pleased with his penance, Mother Ganga appeared before him and directed him to seek the help of somebody who could check her flow as otherwise the whole earth would be submerged in her waters.

Again Bhagiratha sat doing rigorous penance for a full hundred years. It is needless to say that Lord Siva, the protector of all his devotees, was immensely pleased with the king and readily accepted to check and control Ganga through His matted locks. With surge, fury and foam Ganga began to descend from celestial regions. Flashes of lightning, thunders from

clouds and the uncontrollable flow seemed as if a deluge was about to drown the whole world. But Lord Siva coolly received Her in His matted locks and let her drip over him. This is the Ganga Saptami day.

Taking her course into the interior of the Himalayas, she was about to wash away Rishi Janhu's Ashram. Sage Janhu was naturally more powerful than her and simply sipped the water. Bhagiratha was much disappointed. He did again severe penance to please Rishi Janhu. At last the sage let the Ganga out through his ears. Flowing from this outlet Ganga flowed with entire modesty and all-embracing filial love and motherly affection. By her divine grace, she uplifted all the sixty thousand princes to the highest abode of immortal bliss. This day is celebrated as the most sanctifying Ganga Dussera.

Ganga Saptami and Ganga Dussera are observed in Northern India. The former falls generally during the last week of April and the latter during the first week of June.

The Ganga is known by various names as Bhagirathi (brought by Bhagiratha), Janhavi (let out by Janhu) etc. Sri Sankara, in his praise of Mother Ganga accounts for her origin thus: In the beginning Ganga occupied the vessel (Kamandal) with which Lord Brahma performed his daily ablution; then she flowed down washing the feet of Lord Vishnu and adorning the head of Lord Siva and finally came down to earth as the daughter of Janhu.

Thousands of pilgrims visit Hardwar and Rishikesh every year and take a dip in the sacred river. They have immense faith in the glory of Mother Ganga. They believe that their sins are washed away. Really they are washed off. No doubt in this. Even confirmed atheists and rationalists come to Hardwar for a refreshing bath in the Ganga.

Mother Ganga bestows seen and unseen powers on those who crave her grace. Sit lonely

on the banks of Ganga. Concentrate, meditate. Realize how spiritual vibrations accelerate your inner heart even over-riding a guilty conscience. Where has the supreme joy that fills you now all over, come from all of a sudden? How does she instantaneously withdraw your mind and conscience from the physical world to the regions of immortality, only to suckle you with bliss and blessedness?

Mother Ganga pours out all that she has in a continuous flow to humanity. She loves all. She has equal vision. She is quite indiscriminate. A peasant or a king, a sinner or a saint, a Mohammedan or a Hindu, whoever or whatever God's creation be, derives immense benefit from Her.

O friend! Follow the lines of Mother Ganga. Be pure. Be adaptable. Be tolerant. Be forgiving. Be sweet. Pour out your love on all. Share what you have—physical, moral, mental and spiritual—with the whole of humanity. The more you give, the more you get. Give without any selfish motive, without expecting any reward. Embrace all. Cultivate equal vision.

All glory be unto Mother Ganga, the giver of life, light and love. Worship her with faith, devotion and piety. Adore her with the flowers of purity, love, self-restraint and equal vision. Sing her names. Attain Brahman through Her grace. May Her blessings be upon you all.

*Jaya Gange Jaya Gange Rani Jaya
Gange Jaya Hara Gange,*

*Gouri Gouri Gange Rajeshwari Gouri
Gouri Gange Bhuvaneshwari*

*Gouri Gouri Gange Maheshwari, Gouri
Gouri Gange Mateshwari.*

*Gouri Gouri Gange Mahakali, Gouri Gouri
Gange Mahalakshmi*

*Gouri Gouri Gange Parvati, Gouri Gouri
Gange Saraswati*

Om Namo Bhagavati Gangarani

Om Namo Bhagavati Bhagirathi.

MAKE RENUNCIATION THE BASIS OF YOUR LIFE AND ACTIONS

(Sri Swami Chidananda's Letter of 1st June 1964)

Blessed Atmaswaroop :

Om Namō Narayanaya : Namaskars.

Greetings to you from this Holy Abode of Sri Sadguru Bhagawan Sivananda Maharaj. May this letter from this sacred Ashram find you all in good health, peace and joy. Let Gurukripa bring into your life the light of discrimination, the strength of self-control, the joy of selflessness and the loftiness of loving service and the spontaneous goodness or *paropakara*.

This month holds for us a message of significance and importance. It brings to memory a momentous event that resulted in immeasurable good and blessedness to countless souls in this troubled century. In the June of the year 1924, Gurudev Swami Sivanandaji renounced his secular career to embrace a life of Sannyasa. He entered into the glorious path of *nivritti*, plunged into a period of asceticism, seclusion, intense *sadhana* and deep meditation. Thus he attained realisation and launched his great mission of spiritual awakening to inspire mankind and guide the seekers along the path of Divine Life and God attainment.

His renunciation resulted in world welfare. Verily *tyaga* is for *loka hita*: We celebrate the auspicious and holy anniversary of Gurudev's renunciation and Sannyasa this month. I would urge you all to reflect a while upon this great ideal of *tyaga*. What is the role of *tyaga* in your life? Is renunciation a negative movement? Does renunciation imply de-

nial of the world and your relation to it? Is *tyaga* a virtue for Sannyasins alone? What is the true inner significance of *tyaga*?

Dispassion and renunciation comprise the key to inner peace. Such peace alone makes happiness possible. Without peace, there is no happiness. Thus, it is clear that anyone who wants peace and happiness must cultivate *vairagya* and *tyaga*. Attachment and selfishness constitute terrible bondage. *Vairagya* eradicates attachment. *Tyaga* cuts at the root of selfishness. They make you free and bring you peace and joy.

Life is a great and sublime *yajna*. *Yajna* means self-offering, a noble giving of oneself for the good and the benefit of others. *Paropakara* is the overall governing principle of man's life. You can engage yourself in doing good to others, in bringing happiness into the lives of others, only when you shed your selfishness. This is real renunciation. The secret of renunciation is the renunciation of selfishness, egoism and personal desires. Renounce personal selfishness and live in the world, enjoying what providence brings to you as your due. This is an admonition of the Seer of the Isopanishad.

We now see that renunciation is a virtue and a noble quality to be cultivated by every individual in human society. By this alone will the principles of *yajna* and *paropakara* be fulfilled. *Tyaga* is not the monopoly or the exclusive duty of the Sannyasins. It is a pervasive virtue that is to permeate and penetrate every

moment of your daily life. Then alone will your entire life flower forth into a thing of countless blessings unto your neighbour and the society.

The loving mother is a true *tyagi*. She renounces personal comfort, conveniences and happiness for the sake of her children and their welfare. The father of a family denies himself and renounces many a personal pleasure and profit to serve his family and children. The devout wife renounces all personal considerations to serve and to care for her Lord and Master. The faithful servant renounces personal happiness and comfort to serve his master and carry out his behest in loyalty and devotion. The doctors and nurses renounce sleep, rest and comfort and even forego food at times to look after the sick and the suffering. A brave patriot and soldier stands ready even to renounce his very life for the sake of his country's safety and welfare. A true social worker and leader of the people renounces everything to dedicate his life for his people's welfare. A true teacher renounces all personal ambitions and desires in life and dedicates himself to bring the light of learning, knowledge and wisdom to the young people who pass under his care. A saint renounces the whole world and everything in it to worship God and to serve mankind. It is this quality alone that ennoble human nature and makes life beautiful. Renunciation in the individual renders sweet all relationship he has with the rest of mankind. Yes, renunciation is to be understood as a pervasive virtue which rises *vyavahar* to pure heights and adds the joy, welfare and unity among mankind.

Beloved seeker, reflect well over this universal aspect of *tyaga*. Renunciation alone enables you to become selfless. Selflessness is the soul of life. Selfishness is the

bane of mankind and the root of all conflicts, problems and unhappiness. By renunciation, root out selfishness and become a blessing unto others. Diligently cultivate renunciation in your everyday life.

Practise renunciation day after day at home, in your family, with your neighbours, plying your profession, walking the streets, in the market place, everywhere act with renunciation. Grow in this great quality day by day; never allow selfishness to make your life ugly. Permit not pernicious desire and personal avarice to poison your life. Shine resplendent with the radiance of true renunciation. Be rooted in true *tyaga*. In thought, word and deed, be egoless and selfless. Renounce desire and be filled with peace. Renounce petty selfishness. Become a personification of *paropakara*. Renounce egoism; become an embodiment of egoless simplicity, humility and purity. Such a life is even greater than the life of a more external Sannyasa, which may not be filled with this spirit of real renunciation.

Thus has Sri Sadgurudev taught this servant of His. Even so do I speak this unto you in the name of Sri Gurudev, through these pages that bring the Light of His Wisdom to you, who are dear to Him. Beloved Brother in the Spirit: Live to uphold this noble ideal of our great culture. Become a *tyagamurti* in all walks of life. Even the care that you bestow upon yourself and your personal welfare, let it be based upon *tyaga*. Look after yourself that you may preserve and keep fit this body to make it an effective instrument for service unto others and to achieve their maximum good and bring happiness into the lives of all. May your life be a witness to this great virtue and let all that you do, be a demonstration of what this noble principle of *tyaga* truly means.

MEDITATION AND KUNDALINI

(Sri Swami Krishnananda)

[Continued from the previous issue]

Now we are thinking—this bodily personality, the consciousness locked up in the body—is saying, “I am in hell, but let me create a heaven.” How does it create a heaven? It manifests sense organs. The five sense organs are there. Seeing and contacting something by sight, hearing and contacting by sound, smelling by odor, touching by skin, tasting by tongue—these are the sensations this consciousness manufactures by intense thinking of the necessity to remove this finitude consciousness, because if it is always conscious that it is finite, it is like hell. It is not possible.

Every human being knows that he is finite, but he creates circumstances in society to remove the consciousness of finitude by somehow or other creating an atmosphere of bigness, importance. “I am a socially recognised person; the whole world knows me.” If this idea enters the head, you somehow feel that the finitude has expanded into the area of the world. It has not really expanded; it has only expanded conceptually. Therefore, a socially great man is not really a great man. He is only a small man, though people say “Very good! Very good!” But one day they say “Down!”, and put him down. You know the history of great people. They are great only in the imagination, but still the foolishness of the mind is such that it is working to obtain it. It does not want only social importance; it also wants inner satisfaction.

How will it get satisfaction? One way to get satisfaction is to spread the consciousness of social contact, as I mentioned. The other way is that the sense organs want to come in contact with something outside. What happens is, a pe-

culiar psychological drama takes place inside. The mind is inside, within the personality. It is suffering due to the fact that it is only inside. It is like a prison. It wants to get out from this prison. Every human individual is not made in the same way, psychologically. The mental structure is different. What I want is different from what you want. They are all different things. So a particular want, or longing of the mind, arisen out of that particular type of finitude, wants its counterpart in the world outside. This counterpart is of a particular type only, so that only certain things will satisfy you, only certain things will satisfy me, and nobody can be satisfied by all things. A particular sense object is chosen by the mind. It wants a beautiful thing; and what is beautiful to me will not be beautiful to other people, because the finitude is structurally different in different individuals. Similarly, it wants to contact certain sounds, and by that also you feel satisfied. It may be music, it may be some good word, or whatever it is. Similarly, this also applies to taste.

Now, these methods of the mind, adopted by the mind to overcome its limitations and expand the energy that is locked up in the body, are futile in nature. Therefore, anybody who is sensual and is too interested in sense contacts cannot practice this yoga, because he is doing something opposite of what is required. An artificial heaven is no heaven; it must be a real heaven. Conceptually, you can imagine, “I am the emperor of the whole world; I have got everything in me; I am a very big man.” What is the use of thinking like that? Really, it is not so. The Universal consciousness has cut off this individual consciousness by a fall, as they call it.

Then, what is the method? The method is to prevent the senses from going outward, from not thinking something that is outside. We started by saying energy is everywhere. If it is everywhere, it is not outside. This is a very subtle point. You cannot say anything in the world is outside, because outsideness is different from being everywhere. Do you understand the point? Thus, the Ultimate Reality is that which is everywhere. Therefore, the consciousness of the fact of something being outside should be stopped, withdrawn. This is what is called sense control. It is called by various names, such as *brahmacharya*, ethical discipline, morality, goodness, and charitableness. Many names are given, which all finally mean the method of sense control. What is sense control? It is the withdrawal of the consciousness from contemplating anything outside.

Now I am touching the point of kundalini. This energy is located under certain pressure points in the body, and you feel different sensations in different parts of the body. If I touch your nose, you will feel something; if I touch your ears, you will feel another thing; if I tickle your arms, you feel a third thing; if I tickle the stomach, something else, and so on. The different parts of the body generate different sensations. In this gross human personality, energy has descended to the lowest physical level. The *hatha yogins* or the *kundalini yogins* say it is in the lowest level, the *muladhara*.

'Muladhara' is a Sanskrit word. It is like an unconscious level, and therefore we are often in a state of unconsciousness. We do not think at all. We sleep. We seem like stones, like inanimate beings. In fact, we have descended to that level also. It is said by philosophers of evolution that there is evolution from matter to life, life to animal, animal to human. We have come to the human level from the lower level—that is, from the rock itself. Therefore, that rock consciousness is also present in us little bit. We can sleep like a rock; we can breathe like a plant; we can behave like an animal. Every human being has

the animal quality also, and he can manifest it if he wants; and he can feel hunger and thirst like the plant; and he has the human qualities, as I mentioned. The lowest level is the total unconscious level.

In the next higher level, the consciousness is involved in different layers of nerve centres. It has to be roused by concentration on different parts of the body, intensely concentrating. There are seven centres, from the lowest up to the crown of the head. It is not concentration merely on that which is inside the body; it also has a corresponding location outside in the universe. There are seven nerve plexuses here. Correspondingly, there are seven planes of existence. In the scriptures, they are all mentioned. The physical, the astral, the mental, the intellectual, and the spiritual—these are the levels of being. They are cosmically existing levels; and we are to set ourselves in a state of harmony at each level between ourselves and that.

Thus, in each type of meditation you must conceive, "Physically I am one with the physical cosmos, vitally I am one with the cosmic energy, mentally I am one with the cosmic mind, intellectually I am one with the cosmic intellect, and I am, as a positive principle, one with the creative energy of the cosmos. As a spiritual light inside me, I am one with the Absolute Spirit. This is how you have to meditate—gradually, through the levels. Then the rise of the kundalini will take place. Actually, the rise of the kundalini is the rise of the mind from the lower level to the higher level of dimension—expansion until it reaches the Absolute stage.

The experience will be exactly as I told you just now. You will gradually feel united with cosmical levels, stage by stage. In the beginning, it will be a little circle, then it will become a wider circle—they are like concentric circles—until you reach the final circle, in which all the lower circles are included, so that the circle here includes all the lower. This is briefly the soul of the subject. (Concluded)

A HIGHER DIMENSION

(Sri Swami Atmaswarupananda)

One time, when Gurudev was asked if he had ever seen God, he didn't answer yes or no. He replied from an entirely different level. He said, "I see nothing except God." The questioner was asking Gurudev whether he saw God as an experience, something that comes and goes. Gurudev's answer implied that God was his permanent experience, a different dimension altogether.

Implicit in all his teachings is Gurudev's attempt to raise us from one dimension to a higher one. We would like to see God as an experience, something that we achieve. Gurudev wanted us to be part of that experience, experiencing nothing else except That—to be permanently lost in that experience. And subtly hidden throughout his teachings is the path.

For example, in one of his best known aphorisms, the second line is, Be good, Do good, Be kind, Be compassionate. These are instructions that put us in a position so that ultimately we can see nothing except God. In what way do they do this? How do they lead us towards a different dimension?

If we want to just see God, we don't have to change. We achieve an experience, but we remain the same. However, if, for example, we practise compassion, compassion means to suffer with. It means that we have to go out of ourselves, so to speak, and suffer with the other person. The other person is no longer an object to us. We have transferred our subjectivity into the other person, so that we suffer with them.

And so it is with God. God can never be an object finally. We must enter into Him, suffer with Him in all the sattva, rajas and tamas and pairs of opposites of this universe. Nothing can be rejected. Everything must be seen as part of that One alone. We lose our separate subjectivity into the totality.

Thus Gurudev's answer to the question, Have you seen God? led the questioner to an entirely different dimension. It is the dimension that Gurudev is trying to lead us all to, where we are no longer interested in just seeing God, but want to lose ourselves—so that forever we see nothing except God.

If we really want the highest blessedness, if we really want that supreme, indescribable experience Absolute that at once grants you indescribable peace, joy and bliss, then may we live the life as the great ones have lived and taught us. Walk in the footsteps of the great ones, *maha-jana yena gatah sa panthah* (the path trodden by the great ones). Live even as they have lived, and you will attain the same state of blessedness and divine perfection, illumination and liberation. Thus we have been told.

—Swami Chidananda

BRAHMACHARYA SADHANA

(H.H. Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj)

[Continued from the previous issue]

Be careful in destroying passion. Even Brahma, the Creator, does not know the exact seat wherein lies the passion. In the Gita you will find that senses, mind and Buddhi (lower) are seats of passion. Pranamaya Kosha or vital sheath is another seat. Desire is all-pervading in the body, mind and Indriyas. Every cell, every atom, every molecule, every electron, is surcharged with passion. There are under-currents, cross-currents and inter-currents in the mighty ocean of passion wherein the crocodiles of Trishna are swimming. You must completely destroy the passion in all places.

The ignorant man is an instrument in the hands of his Samskaras and Karmas. He slowly gains strength by understanding his real essential nature by doing spiritual Sadhana, by removing desires and egoism.

Brahmacharya means control but not suppression of the sex-desire or sex-force. If the mind is filled with sublime divine thoughts by meditation, Japa, prayer, study of holy scriptures, enquiry of "Who am I" or sexless pure Atman, the sex-desire will be de-vitalized or de-energised by the withdrawal of the mind. The mind also will be thinned out. Suppressed sex-desire will attack you again and again and will produce wet dreams, irritability and restlessness of the mind. The mind should be rendered pure by meditation, Japa, Kirtan and prayer. Mind should be controlled first. Self-discipline must begin with the mind first. Then it will be easy for you to control the mind; then comes Dama or the restraint of the senses. The senses cannot operate without Manas or mind.

So the effective remedy for Brahmacharya is to control mind first but not the senses.

To control the mind is difficult for neophytes or beginners. It will be extremely difficult to control the mind first when the senses are allowed to run riot. That is the reason why in the Gita Lord Krishna says, "Therefore, O best of the Bharatas, mastering first the senses, do thou slay this thing of sin (desire) destructive of wisdom and knowledge." (III-41)

The theory or doctrine to control the mind first is quite correct. This practice is intended for first class type of aspirants. Mediocre students should control the senses first. The senses or Indriyas have always an outgoing tendency. Mind operates through the senses. Control of the one goes hand in hand with the control of the other. Control of the senses is also control of the mind, because the mind is a bundle of senses only; there is no mind without the senses.

To say, "Control the mind first, you can control the senses easily (one view); control the senses first, you can control the mind easily (another view)" is simply arguing in a vicious circle like "Which came first, the tree or the seed?" or "You will get knowledge of the Self if you control the desires,—you can control the desires only if you have knowledge of the Self."

Intense musing on the objects of senses does more harm to the inner spiritual life than actual sense-gratification. If the mind is not rendered pure by Sadhana, mere mortification of the external senses will not produce the desired effect. Although the external senses are mortified, their internal counterparts, which are still

energetic and vigorous, revenge upon the mind and produce intense mental disturbance and wild imagination.

Vasanas grow from lustful look. You have no lustful look when you see your mother and sister although they are beautiful, well-dressed and decorated with ornaments and flowers. You look at them with affection and pure love. This is Suddha Bhavana. There are no lustful ideas. You will have to develop such a pure love or Bhavana when you look at other women also. Looking at a woman with a lustful heart is tantamount to sexual enjoyment. It is one form of Maithuna (sex-enjoyment). That is the reason why Lord Jesus says, "If you look a woman with a lustful heart, you have already committed adultery in your heart."

Vairagya or Dispassion

In the presence of light you cannot have darkness. In the presence of sensual pleasures, Atmic Bliss cannot exist. Worldlings want sensual pleasures and Atmic Bliss at the same time. This is an absolute impossibility. They cannot renounce worldly sensual pleasures. They cannot have real Vairagya in their heart. They will talk a lot. Worldly men imagine that they are happy because they get a few ginger biscuits, some money and women. More beggars are brought forth into the world through lust. All worldly pleasures appear as nectar in the beginning, but become virulent poison in the end. When one gets entangled in married life, he can hardly break the different ties of Moha (infatuation). A bachelor full of passion imagines that he is miserable because he is unmarried. Give up clinging to this illusory life. Be fearless. Control the Indriyas and the mind. You will develop Vairagya. You will be perfectly established in Brahmacharya.

Are not created objects coated over with the varnish of destruction? You enact in your daily life with your body dire sinful acts, painful deeds and illimitable vices. In youth you are enveloped with Ajnana (ignorance), in adult age

you are entangled in the meshes of women, in old age you groan under the burden of Samsara and debility. You eventually have a miserable death. Being thus always occupied, when will you find time to devote yourself to the commission of virtuous deeds? The ghost of your mind dances in the theatre of this universe to the music of the organs.

Wealth, which only makes hosts of thoughts to whirl in the wind, will not confer on you bliss. This wealth, which the mind covets and is very ephemeral in its nature, is utterly useless like a flower-bud in a creeper growing in a well and encircled by a serpent. This life is ephemeral like autumnal clouds or a gheeless lamp or ocean waves. There is nothing so baneful as this life which is perishable in its nature and fleeting in the bestowal of pleasures. This body, which is composed of muscles, intestines, urine, faecal matter and subject to changes, being at one time fat and at another time lean, shines in this mundane existence simply to undergo pains.

Young graduates and young doctors come to Rishikesh with earthen pots in orange robes to search for caves in Uttarkashi and Gangotri for deep meditation and practice of Yoga. Rajkumars and some young research students in science go to the Punjab in silken suits with collars and ties in search of girls. Is there pain or pleasure in this world? If there is pleasure, why do young educated men retire into forests? If there is pain, why do young men run after wealth, position and woman? Mysterious is Maya! Try to understand the riddle of life and the riddle of the universe.

Sensual enjoyment is attended with various defects. It is attended with various sorts of sins, pains, weaknesses, attachments, slave mentality, weak will, severe exertion and struggle, craving and mental restlessness. Worldly persons never come to their proper senses, although they get severe knocks, kicks and blows from different corners. The strolling street dog

never stops from visiting the houses even though it is pelted with stones every time.

Even the most virulent poison is no poison when compared with lust; the former defiles one body only, whereas the latter adulterates many bodies in successive births. There are scorpion stings on one side of the world. Serpents are on the other side. Flies, fleas, bugs, mosquitoes and thorns, trouble you from one corner. Sun scorches you in summer. Cold stings in winter. Influenza, plague, small-pox, earthquakes and other troubles are ever waiting to devour you. Fear, delusion, grief, sorrow and misery kill you at every moment.

There are tongues and telegraphic instruments in the eyes of young passionate ladies. They send their love shafts and love messages through their smiling glances to passionate young men and thereby allure and bewitch them. Those young men who have no discrimination, are excited by their love messages and become a prey to lust. They become pleasure-deers or sporting lap-dogs of ladies, though they possess academic education and hold high position and title. What a shame! Reason, will and intellect vanish altogether. O aspirants! Do not be very familiar with any woman. You should not sacrifice a noble ideal of life for the sake of pleasing a bewitching woman. Think of the composition of the body. Keep the mental image of the dead body of a woman or skeleton whenever passion troubles you. You will slowly gain strength to subdue the passion. Vairagya will slowly dawn. The cause for attraction towards women is the presence of Vasanas in the mind. Wipe them out. There will be no attraction. Those who have renounced sex (Kamini) and wealth (Kanchana), have really renounced the world.

The Indriyas and mind delude you at every moment. They are your real enemies. Beauty is of mental creation or of the imagination. An ugly woman appears very beautiful only in the eyes of her husband. Where is the beauty, my dear friends, in the wrinkled skin of an old woman?

Where is the beauty when your wife is bed-ridden? Where is the beauty in the dead body of a woman? Where is the beauty when your wife gets angry? The beauty in the face is mere reflection. The real undecaying Beauty of beauties—the Fountain of beauties can be found in the Atman only. You have ignored the substance and caught hold of a broken piece of glass. What a serious blunder you have committed by your impure thoughts, impure mind, impure Buddhi and impure way of living? Have you realised your mistake? Will you at least open your eyes now? Perfect control of the Indriyas and mind is possible only through a life of perfect Brahmacharya.

Ladies should not be offended when they read these lines. I have only reproduced the teachings of Sankaracharya and Dattatreya. I only want to impress upon both the sexes, the force and glory of Brahmacharya and the evil effects of lust. I have great regard and admiration for women. Women who are chaste can be called as Brahmacharinis.

Brahmacharya should be practised by both men and women. Women also can keep a mental picture of the component parts of the body of a male in order to create disgust for the physical body of a male and to develop Vairagya.

Lust is a potent force, very difficult to be got rid of. The minds of the young people are saturated with impure Samskaras and Vasanas owing to the vicious company and false modern civilisation. Even the company or talk of a woman is quite sufficient to drag the mind into vicious thoughts. So, I have to place before the minds of the vast majority that the very company of women will do havoc. When I say that a woman is only a leather bag, I do not hate women in any way. It is only to produce disgust and develop Vairagya. Hate lust but not hate women in any way. Really a woman should be adored as Mother Sakti. She is the Creatrix and Nourisher of the Universe. In the beginning, till you acquire Vairagya and Viveka, you must

treat the company of women as poison. When you obtain Viveka and Vairagya, then lust cannot take hold of you. You will see and realise, *Sarvam khalvidam brahma*—All is Brahman only. If you read the para “Change the Angle of Vision” in this book, you will clearly understand this point.

Remembrance of the skeleton and dead body of a woman will induce Vairagya in your mind. The body has come out of the filthy discharge. It is full of impurities. In the end it is reduced into ashes. If you remember this, Vairagya will dawn in your mind. Attraction for women will gradually vanish. If you place before your mind the sickly figure of a woman, or the picture of a very old woman, you will develop Vairagya. Remember pains of Samsara, the unreality of objects and the bondage that comes from attachment to wife and children. Try any method that suits you best.

In these days of modern culture and new civilisation and the era of scientific advancement, these lines may not be relished by some people. They may remark that some of the terms are jarring, revolting, offending and indecent and will not suit the people of refined tastes and culture. They are entirely mistaken. These lines will produce a very deep impression in the minds of thirsting aspirants who are longing for liberation. Their minds will be entirely changed. There is no real spiritual culture amongst people of modern societies. Etiquette is mere show. There are much show, hypocrisy, pretended politeness, meaningless formalities and conventions. Nothing emanates from the core of the heart. People lack in sincerity and integrity. The utterances of the Mahavakyas of the sages, the valuable teachings of the scriptures will not produce any impression in the minds of passionate, worldly-minded persons. They are like

seeds thrown in a rocky soil. They are like pearls thrown before a swine.

One student writes to me, “The impure flesh and skin appear to me as very pure and good. I am very lustful. I try to develop the Bhava of ‘Mother’. I prostrate before a lady mentally, thinking that she is an image of Goddess of Kaali and yet my mind is extremely lustful. What shall I do now? I want to have a glimpse of a beautiful lady.” Vairagya and discrimination have not dawned in his mind. The old vicious Samskaras and Vasanas are very powerful.

Vairagya is indifference to sensual enjoyments. The Vairagya that comes momentarily after such accidents as the loss of some relatives or wealth or disappointment in life, is known as Karana Vairagya. It will not help much in one’s spiritual progress. The mind will be simply waiting to catch hold of the sensual objects when an opportunity comes. In some rare cases those who have common-sense and will-power will get real Vairagya in due course of time.

Constantly remember: **“Through the grace of God, I am becoming purer and purer, every day. Pleasures come but not to stay. Mortal flesh is only clay. Everything will pass away. Brahmacharya is the only way.”** Develop Viveka and Vairagya.

Nothing can tempt you in this world, if you develop Vairagya, if you subdue your Indriyas and if you shun the unreal impermanent sensual enjoyments and pleasures of this fleeting world as dung, poison. You will have no attraction for women and other earthly objects. Lust cannot take hold of you. You will have Eternal Peace and Infinite Bliss.

The light and energy in the sun, the refreshing coolness of water, the delightful fragrance of flowers, the majesty of mountains, the vitamins in foodstuffs, the colours in plants and animals, the Prana in the air are all God’s manifestations.

—Swami Sivananda

Sivananda's Gospel of Divine Life

THE WORLD AND YOU

USEFUL INSTRUCTIONS :

The Master was attending to the despatch of free books. He suddenly stopped and looked up.

"From the time I got out of the morning class, I have been going on thinking of writing a few poems, but I do not have time. I am doing this work but my mind is still working on the poems. Even when I was taking my milk, I was busy sifting the points of the poems. Only when I finish them will my mind know rest.

"Are you all keeping a notebook to record all your thoughts?" the Master asked the disciples in the office. "First of all, you should note down in a book all the new points that you learn in the class. Then there are parallel ideas that might strike you, or ideas arising out of those expressed by others in the class. These may be new, novel and unknown to others. They should at once be noted down. Are you keeping such notes?"

Some of the aspirants nodded assent, others preferred to maintain a Vedantic silence!

"There is one special advantage in this. First, you will hear some good points. Then you will go on reflecting upon them. This will give rise to other good points. When you start noting them down, they will begin to expand. This will eventually become a habit and you will always dwell on sublime thoughts. The mind will then refuse to come down even if invited to. This is real Vedantic Sravana-Manana-Nididhyasana (hearing, reflection, meditation).

"Side by side with this you should keep another notebook for introspection. That is intended to eradicate the negative qualities in you. Killing the evil on the one hand, and giving

birth to divine thoughts and feelings on the other—rapid progress is possible in this way.

"When any sublime thought arises in the mind—for example, the importance of truth—you should dwell on the glory of truth and on the lives of great men who adhered to it; on the nature of truth; on the pitfalls and snares on the path of truth; the obstacles that have to be overcome; and the subtle way in which the mind deceives you and takes you along a side-track to falsehood. Then you should dive deep and find out in what form falsehood lurks in your mind, whether in a gross or in a subtle form. Drive it out from there. Record the evil tendencies that you note in yourself.

"If a man does this, he will soon find it an easy road to constant introspection. He will ever live an inner life. There will be no time for his mind to externalise itself. He will never think of others. He will have no evil thoughts. Lust, anger and greed will die a natural death. He will not care if anyone speaks ill of him, if someone refuses to give him milk or food, or if anyone criticises him. There will be no time for his mind to think of all these things."

This led the Master to his favourite topic.

"Evil should not have time to dwell in your mind. What if someone refused to give you milk, to give you food? What if someone scolded you? Always repeat, 'I am not this body, I am not this mind; I am the eternal, all-pervading, immortal Atma.'

"Bear insult and injury. If someone slaps you on your cheeks, you should not even mind it. You should not even be aware of it, so to say. This is very difficult but it is most important. While a man is abusing you, your mind should

be engaged in enquiry. After a while he will realise, 'What is this, I have been abusing him several times, yet he is not getting irritated, he is not retorting! There must be something in him which I should learn.' Then he would fall at your feet and apologise; you would have conquered him."

OVERCOMING ONESELF

"R. went away today because someone ill-treated him. Who is the loser? Surely it is R. himself.

"These people have a peculiar idea of independence," the Master continued. "True independence is an inner life free from the sovereignty of anger, lust and greed, under whose sway most men labour. What does he gain when he runs away? Here, his egoism, arrogance and vanity were one cubit long. After a few years of this independence they will be several cubits long. There will be no one to point out his mistakes, no one to enable him to practise patience, endurance and adaptability. All of you should read daily my articles, 'Most Important Sadhana' and 'Adaptability'. How can divine qualities be cultivated without adaptability, without you becoming aware of your own defects and trying to eradicate them?"

"You should identify yourself with the Society and the mission. You should work heart and soul for the cause. Then only will your heart get purified quickly. Here you work, and the work you did in your previous vocation was also work. But there is a vast difference between the two. There it was for remuneration. You always watched the clock. Here the only remuneration is knowledge and liberation. The highest reward presupposes the greatest exertion as well. Ever introspect and try to eradicate your egoism.

"Some people foolishly think, 'I renounced wealth and resigned a good job. I had plenty of

land and property. These people here are treating me like a servant.' When you have renounced the world, when you have embraced the path of renunciation, where are property, job and position anymore? The sole and greatest property and position you have is renunciation. Do not boast. This will only fatten your egoism. Be humble. You should astound everyone by your humility.

"Some aspirants are humble and obedient for a few years. My nature is to train every aspirant to develop all his faculties and thus become a dynamic worker. I teach aspirants every kind of work and try to mould them into perfect leaders. But they take undue advantage of this. When they have learnt a little of the Gita and Upanishads, when they can deliver some lectures, when they know how to manage an Ashram, they run away and wish to start independent Ashrams.

"What is the big idea? They wish to be garlanded. They wish to be respected. They do not like anyone pointing out their defects. They wish to be treated like Mahants. Now think for awhile. Here is an institution which has been created out of the hard labour of many over a long period. Work for it, then you will be respected everywhere, in all the branches of the Society. There is always a ready field for work. You can do tremendous service. If you start off independently, you will have to do all the organising work yourself and commence from the beginning.

"Even till the very end of one's life one should be vigilant against this egoism. It raises its head in various forms. Man is often deceived and side-tracked. Every aspirant should be vigilant. Every aspirant should welcome insult and injury. Every aspirant should learn to adapt himself, to humble himself, learn to introspect constantly and thus evolve rapidly.

Yoga in Daily Life

BHAKTI YOGA

(H.H. Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj)

[Continued from the previous issue]

ADVICE TO HOUSEHOLDERS

Start that pure life of a Yogi the very day on which you read these lines. No leniency to mind. Self-reliance is indispensably requisite. You can get suggestions from outside. But you will have to tread the path yourself, to place each step yourself in the spiritual ladder.

You will have to train your wife also. She also will have to do rigid Sadhana. Mere gossiping will not do. If she serves the husband nicely and takes care of his body with the right mental attitude and gives him the wants of the flesh, food and drinks as soon as he comes down from meditation, she can have Self-realisation in and through the form of her husband alone, like Laila in Majnu, Savitri in Satyavan, Anasuya in Atri.

That house is a miserable place, veritable hell on earth wherein the husband moves up in spirituality and the wife pulls him down in sensual grooves and vice versa. They should be harmoniously blended or joined by the thread of the knowledge of the Self, each aspiring eagerly for attaining God-consciousness. That house is really a Vaikuntha where the husband and wife lead an ideal Divine Life, singing Hari's Name, repeating His Mantra 200 Malas daily, studying the Ramayana and the Bhagavata, controlling the Indriyas and serving Bhaktas and Sannyasins.

Renunciation is mental. Renunciation brings peace. There is no loss in renunciation. You renounce the illusory sense plea-

sure to get the Supreme, Eternal Bliss and Immortality. Bear this in mind. Do not be guided and influenced by public opinion. March boldly and cheerfully in the path of Truth, consulting your inner conscience and hearing the inner, small, shrill, sweet voice of the soul. Do not be hasty in doing any outward renunciation. The world is the best teacher. Unfold the Divinity by remaining in the world alone. Nivritti Marga is extremely difficult. Ninety per cent fail in this path.

Save as much money as possible. Do 200 Malas of Japa. Cut off society. Keep company with one Sattvic man. Spend every second profitably. Serve sick people. Share what you have a small portion with poor people.

May the Divine Glory shine in your face!

NIL DESPERANDUM

(Cheer up yourself—never despair)

Sin is a mistake committed by the ignorant Jiva during his journey towards Sat-Chit-Ananda abode. Once you make up your mind to tread the path of truth all sins will be destroyed. Lord Krishna gives His assurance: "Even if the most sinful worship Me, with undivided heart, he too must be accounted righteous for he hath rightly resolved. Speedily he becometh dutiful and goeth to eternal peace. Know thou for

(Continued on page no. 16)

Children's Page

A PALACE OF DECEIT

(Sri Swami Ramarajyam)

Once a king said to the most accomplished artisan of his kingdom, "Build a very beautiful palace for me. There is no shortage of funds. You will get as much as you ask for."

The artisan busied himself with the construction of the palace. While at work, it crossed his mind that he should use building materials of inferior quality but make the palace look beautiful externally. And that was what he did. The walls were raised with low-grade material. Outside they were plastered with fine cement. When the palace with hollow walls but glittering exterior finish was ready, the artisan presented himself before the king and said, "Your Majesty, the palace is ready."

The king went to inspect the palace. The palace looked very beautiful. He was lavish with his praise for the artisan and said, "I am

really pleased with you. I am thinking what I should give you in reward for your excellent work."

After a little while he said, "Alright, this palace itself is your reward."

The king went away. The artisan began to cry stealthily.

Why did he cry? That hollow and unstable palace was to be his lot. If you think ill of others, you yourself will fall victim to the disharmonious atmosphere, created by your ill will. If one builds a palace of deceit, he himself is condemned to that.

Dear children, if ever the thought of doing wrong occurs to you, think of the story of that artisan.

—Based on a story by Rabindranath Tagore

(Continued from page no. 15)

certain that My devotee never perisheth." The repetition of even *ulta-nam* (reverse name) of Rama Mantra, transmuted rogue Ratnakar into a sage Valmiki. When such is the power of the inverse name (Mara, Mara), what to speak of the glory of repeating Rama, Rama with Bhava from the bottom of the heart! Ajamila who was in a degraded and abject state on account of his bad character attained Mukti by repeating 'Narayana' once in his death-bed by calling his son by his

name Narayana. Licentious Vemanna of Andhra Desa became a full-blown Yogi by his devotion to mother Kali. Grieve not, my dear friends. Fear not. Stand up. Gird up the loins. Fight with the Indriyas and Vasanas. Become a Yogi. Forget the past. A glorious, brilliant future is awaiting you. Cheer up yourself. Purify. Concentrate. Do Japa and Kirtan. Meditate. Realise the Sat-Chit- Ananda Atman!

NEWS AND REPORTS

NEWS FROM THE HEADQUARTERS

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 them.' (Swami Chidananda). Swamiji Maharaj himself initiated this Seva by his living example of unparalleled, undivided and unconditional Love in Action.

It was told that once when Swamiji Maharaj returned from Delhi by train, around December 2002, and upon reaching Haridwar Railway Station, on his way to Rishikesh, while crossing the bridge, under immense noise of traffic, construction works, etc., Swamiji suddenly declared: "I am hearing a sound of crying!"—It was waved away— "Swamiji! So much noise is here around, bulldozers, repairing works, etc., Swamiji must be wrong, how could a sound of crying ever be heard?"

But Swamiji persisted and went straight looking under the bridge. And alas! There she was lying down: a woman, almost in her eighties, half dressed, shivering, trembling and intense hailing, as a deer "pants for the water brooks, so pants my soul for You, O God." (Psalm 42).

As she was half undressed, Swamiji without hesitation removed one of his two shawls and draped it around her carefully. It was a cold winter day, and seeing this mother in so much distress, tears were flowing from Swamiji's eyes spontaneously. She was paralysed on both her legs, and huge wounds had come and eaten the flesh away. But the Almighty Lord had

mercy on her and Swamiji Maharaj spoke softly to her, kind consoling words: "Don't worry, Mataji, you will be all right, your prayers are answered" and upon imbibing his words, the mother was deeply touched and silently whispered her thankfulness and gratitude. Swamiji arranged for her admission in a Hospital, where she was accommodated with all facilities and the needful care, and prayers were offered for her relief and tranquility.

Om Namo Bhagawate Chidanandaya.
Symbol of Hope. Apostle of Peace. Mother of humanity. Glory to Thee. Jai Gurudev!

*"O, Lord, make me an instrument of
Thy peace. Where there is hatred, let
me sow love.*

Where there is injury, pardon.

Where there is doubt, faith.

Where there is despair, hope.

Where there is darkness, light.

Where there is sadness, joy.

*O, Divine Master, grant that I may not
so much seek*

To be consoled, as to console

To be understood, as to understand

To be loved, as to love.

For it is in giving that we receive

It is in pardoning that we are pardoned

*And it is in dying that we are born to
eternal life".*

(St Francis of Assisi)

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

IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT

As a need of the time and as required by the Government Agencies we are compelled to adopt certain measures in respect of receiving Guests and Visitors to Sivananda Ashram, The Divine Life Society Headquarters at Rishikesh.

Sivananda Ashram is basically a monastic set-up where inmates are Sanyasis, Brahmacharies and Sadhaks pursuing their spiritual practices. They do selfless service and try to maintain the serenity of the Ashram and a spiritually vibrant environment by their Sadhana and collective participation in day-to-day programmes.

Guests and Visitors of the Ashram who stay for a few days are expected to spiritualize their days of stay by tuning themselves to the Ashram's atmosphere. Tourists, week-end holidayers and fun seekers are not expected to seek accommodation in the Ashram. They may stay elsewhere and visit the Ashram for prayer, Yoga and meditation, etc.

GUIDELINES TO GUESTS AND VISITORS

1. Guests/visitors must write to the General Secretary by letter, E-mail, etc, seeking permission for accommodation, well in advance so that the permission reply letter can be sent. Request for accommodation should be in the following format:

- i. Name:
- ii. Gender and Age:
- iii. Nationality:
- iv. Full Residential Address:
- v. E-mail Address:
- vi. Telephone/Cell No. with Code:
- vii. Passport/Photo Id type and number * :
- viii. Reference of your known person in the Ashram:
- ix. Profession and Brief Spiritual Background:
- x. Are you Associated with Divine Life Society? and How?:
- xi. Purpose of Visit:

* The Passport or any Photo Identity must be presented at our Reception Desk on your arrival at Reception. This is a requirement as per Government Rules.

xi. No. of Persons Accompanying
(Indicate Name, Gender and Age of each):

xiii. Date of Arrival:

xv. Date of Departure:

2. Request for accommodation over phone will not be accepted.

3. Guests and visitors are expected to co-operate and adjust with the available accommodation allotted by Reception Office.

4. Guests are expected to attend all the programmes of the Ashram during their stay, especially the Morning Prayer and Night Satsang.

5. Guests and visitors are expected to take care of their valuables and belongings. The Ashram Management will not be responsible for any loss.

6. Working hours of the Reception Office will be from 6:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m.. The Reception Office will remain closed from 10:00 p.m. to 6:00 a.m.. Therefore guests and visitors are requested to plan their travel accordingly to reach the Ashram during the working hours.

7. Guests/visitors seeking accommodation in the Ashram without prior intimation and permission will not be entertained.

INFORMATION TO THE DIVINE LIFE SOCIETY BRANCHES

Branches recommending guests and visitors to Sivananda Ashram, The Divine Life Society Headquarters, Rishikesh for accommodation are requested to comply with the above guidelines.

The Branches can always recommend the members/devotees to Headquarters for accommodation but they should ensure that the intimation is sent well in advance and confirmation obtained.

Members, devotees, guests and visitors approaching Headquarters for accommodation with recommendation letters from Branches without prior intimation and permission will not be entertained.

— *The Divine Life Society*

**SRI ADI SANKARACHARYA JAYANTI CELEBRATION
AT THE HEADQUARTERS ASHRAM**

The Jayanti of the Advaita Acharya Sri Adi Sankaracharya was celebrated with due solemnity and sacredness at the Ashram on 18th May 2010. The entire programme was conducted in front of the beautifully decorated marble statue of the Acharya installed at Sri Vishwanath mandir. The programme commenced at 9 a.m., with the singing of Jaya Ganesh prayer and Kirtans by H.H. Sri Swami Vimalanandaji Maharaj, President, D.L.S. Headquarters. Sri Swami Advaitanandaji Maharaj, Sri Swami Brahmatmanandaji Maharaj and Sri Hariharji spoke on the life and teachings of Sri Adi Sankaracharya and his glorious contribution to the spiritual world.

The floral Archana to the chanting of Ashtottarashatanamavali was offered to the Jagadguru Sankaracharya. The programme concluded at 11-00 a.m., with Arati and deistribution of holy Prasad.

In the evening Satsanga, Sri Swami Radhakrishnanandaji Maharaj gave a brief exposition of some verses of Sri Sankaracharya's Bhaja Govindam.

May the benedictions of Adi Sankaracharya be upon one and all to elevate us to the lofty heights of Divine Consciousness.

VALEDICTORY FUNCTION OF THE 64TH BASIC YOGA-VEDANTA COURSE

The Valedictory function of the 64th Basic Yoga-Vedanta Course was held on Thursday, 29th April, 2010 in the Lecture hall of the yoga-Vedanta forest Academy. After the invocatory prayers, Sri Swami Yogavedantanandaji Maharaj, Registrar of the Academy, welcomed all those present on the occasion. H.H. Sri Swami Vimalanandaji Maharaj, President of the Divine Life Society Headquarters and H.H. Sri Swami Yogaswarupanandaji Maharaj, Vice-President, graced the function.

Professor Rajinder Kumar Bhardwaj Ji, Assistant Registrar of the Academy, read the report of the course. Thereafter, some of the students expressed their impressions about the course which they had undergone in the Academy.

H.H. Sri Swamiji Yogaswarupanandaji Maharaj, in his blessings address, said to the students, "Two months time spent here is a grace of Gurudev and mother Ganga. This

place is filled with strong, spiritual vibrations as Gurudev and many great ones lived and breathed this atmosphere. Your return from here shall not be like an ordinary person. Now you go back from here as a representative of Gurudev." Quoting Gurudev, "Teach by being, learn by doing". Swamiji advised the students to continue the practice of getting up at 4 a.m., as this by itself is a powerful spiritual exercise. He told that ten minutes practice of Yogasana and Pranayama helps a man to keep the doctor away. Swamiji advised the students to practise Gurudev's dictum—"Be Good-Do Good" in right earnest. They should base their lives upon Dharma (righteousness), remain established in truth, have positive thinking and repeat God's Name always. Swamiji told that the strength of Sita and Draupadi was God's Name. In concluding his talk, Swamiji told the students to remember always that God's protecting hands are always around them.

H.H. Sri Swami Vimalanandaji Maharaj in his Valedictory address told that a study course like this is obtained by the grace of God only. It is He who planted the idea in their mind to join this course. Swamiji explained that man is a rational being. In the entire creation, this gift of rationality has been bestowed upon man. That is why being born as a man is a great privilege. One gets this human status after undergoing births in 84 lakh species. Therefore, it is precious. Using this gift of rationality, man can subdue this lower (animal) nature and is capable of attaining perfection.

Swamiji further told that in order to attain perfection it is not necessary to leave their

homes and embrace Sannyasa. Wherever they are they should spiritualise and divinize their activities and this will bring a change in their angle of vision. They should think of God on getting up from bed, commune with Him and offer everything, every activity to God. Swamiji further said that the students were fortunate that they were here during the very very auspicious period of Maha Kumbha. Swamiji concluded his address by invoking the blessings of God and Gurudev upon all those who were present on the occasion.

The function came to a close after Saraswati Puja and Prasad distribution.

INAUGURAL FUNCTION OF THE 65TH BASIC YOGA-VEDANTA COURSE

The 65th Basic Yoga-Vedanta Course of the Yoga-Vedanta Forest Academy was inaugurated on Monday, the 3rd of May, 2010. 40 students from 12 states have joined the course.

After pooja at Durga and Dattatreya Mandir and chanting of Jaya ganesha prayer and Guru Stotras in the Academy Lecture Hall, Sri Swami Yogavedantanandaji Maharaj, Registrar of the Academy welcomed revered Swamijis, faculty members, guests, students and all those present on the occasion. H.H. "Sri Swami Vimalanandaji Maharaj, President of the Divine Life Society Headquarters and H.H. Sri Swami Yogaswarupanandaji Maharaj, Vice-President, graced the function. H.H. Sri Swami Vimalanandaji Maharaj lighted the Deepa in token of the auspicious commencement of the course. Thereafter, Prof. Rajinder Kumar Bhardwaj Ji, Asst. Registrar of the Academy, introduced the students to the audience.

H.H. Sri Swami Yogaswarupanandaji Maharaj in his blessings address welcomed the students to the holy abode of worshipful Gurudev and said, "Your joining the course is a Grace of the Divine. Even the aspiration to join the course, by itself, is a Grace. Gurudev clearly told that goal of human life is God-realisation and in this Ashram he created an atmosphere so that every activity leads one towards God. You know many things already but here you will know them in depth and with much more clarity. You will shed many wrong notions here and come to know how to put into practice what you know." Swamiji told "the first lesson of Gurudev is to get up at 4.00 a.m. This habit is very useful and you will have lot of time for spiritual pursuits." Swamiji explained the importance of Yoga-ASANAS, Pranayama and Suryanamaskar in keeping the body and mind healthy and flexible. Swamiji advised the students to attend the classes regularly, note down what is being told in the class, uti-

lize the time properly and repeat God's Name as much as they can.

H.H. Sri Swami Vimalanandaji Maharaj in the very beginning of his inaugural address, with utter humility, told the students that he has no formal education and his only qualification is that he sat at the feet of two great masters, Gurudev Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj and Revered Sri Swami Chidanandaji Maharaj for more than fifty years. Swamiji told the students that everything in this phenomenal world is subject to change and the so-called happiness through the material objects is also temporary.

Swamiji explained that thoughts constantly go on arising. And with imagination added to them they become desires. And as long as desire is there, there is no peace of

mind. Non-fulfillment of desire makes a person angry and its fulfillment causes attachment. Then they fear that they may lose the object of their desire. Swamiji told that the objects do not want us to cling to them. It is we, who, because of our attachment, cling to the objects. He advised the students to minimize their desires and to develop a spirit of detachment.

Swamiji advised the students to enrich their lives by making the optimum use of the precious period of their stay in the Academy and go back as transformed human beings. Swamiji invoked the blessings of God and Gurudev upon the students.

After Saraswati Puja and Prasad distribution, the function came to a close.

Released on the Auspicious Buddha Purnima

Early Morning Meditation talks

By

H.H. Sri Swami Chidanandaji Maharaj

- ZDC-166 The Element–Earth (body is the place for Sadhana)
Go beyond the pairs of Opposites
- ZDC-167 The Element–Fire
The Element–Water (Moderation is the Key of Success)
- ZDC-168 The Element–Air
The Element–Space (air, space, and beyond)
- ZDC-169 The Spiritual Path
Keep constantly communion with God
- ZDC-170 'Company of Holy People', 'Life as Yoga', 'Real and Unreal'

CULTURAL TOUR OF H.H. SRI SWAMI NIRLIPTANANDAJI MAHARAJ

H.H. Sri Swami Nirliptanandaji Maharaj, Vicde-President, The Divine Life Society Headquarters, Shivanandanagar, attended some programmes during March-April, 2010, in Orissa in course of his cultural tour.

Upon earnest invitation of Kalinga Institute of Industrial technology (KIIT) Temple Trust, on 18th March, 2010 Swamiji attended the Consecration Ceremony of six new temples inside Sri Sri Jagannath temple premises, in Sri Vani Kshetra, Kalinga Institute of Social Sciences (KISS) under KIIT at Bhubaneswar. The six temples were newly constructed and dedicated to Lord Kasi Viswanath, Lord Ganesh, Lord Sri Ram, Laxman, and Sita, Lord Sri Radha Krishna, Goddesses Pancha Shakti (including Saraswati) and Lord Mahavir (Hanuman). In this connection there was also a public Satsanga or Dharma Sabha which was presided over by Swamiji Maharaj and he also gave a discourse. The function was also attended by Paramapujya Sri Dibya Singha Deb, Gajapati Maharaj of Puri, Babaji Chaitanya Charan Das Maharaj of Bhagavat Ashram, Puri, Honourable Justice A.S. Naidu of Orissa High Court, Sri Swami Sivachidanandaji Maharaj and many other saints and dignitaries. The whole ceremony was performed with great devotion in a holy atmosphere and attended by thousands of devotees. It was a grand function and was a grand success having a great impact on the participants and the entire area.

Swamiji Maharaj also visited the Sivananda Centenary Boys' High School, Khandagiri, Bhubaneswar of which he is the President of the Managing Committee. During his stay at Bhubaneswar, Swamiji looked into the important aspects Management of

the School and also addressed the students. On 5th April Swamiji also attended the Meeting of the Managing Committee.

During this tour, Swamiji also took the opportunity of visiting Chidananda Tapovan Shanti Ashram, Baliguali, of which he is the Vice-President and went into the management affairs of the Ashram.

On 24th March, which happened to be the holy Sri Rama Navami, Swamiji Maharaj, upon sincere request of Ramacharit Manas Parayana Parishad of Baliguali Village, paid a visit to the Baliguali village and inaugurated the nine-day Katha-Pravachan programme on Ramayana and Jagannath Tattva organized under the auspices of the Parishad. Swamiji also gave a discourse on the occasion.

There was the Annual Car Festival of Lord Lingaraj at Bhubaneswar from 23rd to 28th March. In this connection the Ekamra Samskritik Prakashani had organized a programme of daily cultural and spiritual public meeting in the evening. On the last day, 28th March, which was the Return Car Festival, Swamiji was invited. Swamiji attended the Satsanga Meeting and gave a discourse on Siva Tattva and how spiritual life can be led in the modern times. Gajapati Maharaja Sri Dibya Singha Debji had also attended the event on that day.

Bharat Vikas Parishad, Chandrasekharpur Branch, Bhubaneswar, had invited Swamiji Maharaj on 4th April to address their office-bearers and Members. Members of Chandrasekharpur Branch and other Branches of Bhubaneswar had participated in the Meeting. Bharat Vikas Parishad has the five maxims or noble objectives, namely,

Sampark (fellowship), Sahyog (co-operation), Sanskar (moral orientation), Seva (service) and Samarpan (commitment). Its Branches and members all over India have been doing lot of work for philanthropic service and moral regeneration. At their request Swamiji spoke on how the service to our country Bharat Mata which is being done by Bharat Vikas Parishad can be a spiritual Sadhana for Self-realisation. Swamiji also answered the questions asked by the audience.

On 13th April Swamiji attended the Meeting of the Board of Trustees of Swami Sivananda Memorial Institute, East Punjabi Bag, New Delhi.

Recently Sri Swami Sivananda Gurusevanandaji Maharaj who was staying in Orissa attained Mahasamadhi. He was a very great ardent devotee of Worshipful Gurudev Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj, from his early days. He was known in Purvashram as Durlabh Chandra Chowdhury, and he was given the title of Guru bhakti Ratna by Gurudev himself. He had been doing wonderful dedicated service to the Divine Life Society in Orissa and elsewhere all along. He

was also formerly Registrar of Yoga Vedanta Forest Academy at D.L.S. Headquarters, Rishikesh for some years. The Southern Regional Co-ordination Committee of D.L.S. Orissa, made an earnest appeal to Swamiji Maharaj to attend the Shodashi Mahotsava of Brahmaleen Swami Sivananda Gurusevanandaji Maharaj on 25th April. Swamiji attended the function at Bomokai in Ganjam District in Orissa. More than 30 Sannyasins from Orissa as well as outside the State, devotees from most of the D.L.S. Branches of Orissa, devotees and villagers from the local area and many important people participated in the programme. There was a Public Satsanga Meeting where thousands of devotees were present and paid their earnest and loving homage to Brahmaleen Swamiji Maharaj. Swamiji presided over the Satsanga and also guided the various activities. All those present were also fed to a sumptuous meal. The function was held in a very appropriate and befitting manner. It showed how great love and respect the people had for Sri Swami Sivananda Gurusevanandaji Maharaj.

INFORMATION ABOUT BOOKS

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UNDER PRINT

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| 5. Conquest of Mind | Swami Sivananda |
| 6. Pocket Prayer | Swami Sivananda |
| 7. Nector Drops | Swami Sivananda |
| 8. Satsanga and Svadhyaya | Swami Sivananda |

CULTURAL TOUR OF SRI SWAMI PADMANABHANANDAJI MAHARAJ

Sri Swami Padmanabhanandaji Maharaj, General Secretary of the Divine Life Society Headquarters, left India on 29th March 2010 for an eight weeks Cultural and Spiritual Tour in New Zealand, Australia and Malaysia. Sri Swamiji arrived in Auckland, New Zealand, after a brief halt at Sydney, Australia. On arrival at Auckland Airport on April 1st for a 5 day Cultural and Spiritual Programme, Sri Swamiji was received by Sri Kribba and Vasi Moodly, Gurudev's devotees from South Africa, who had settled in New Zealand in 1998. Swamiji was accompanied by Sri Gunvant Vaghelaji and Nanyaji, devotees from Sydney who have been very helpful in arranging Swamiji's tours to New Zealand and Australia.

On Friday, the 2nd April, Swamiji attended the weekly Evening Satsang at the home of Kribba and Vasi Moodly. Swamiji delivered a discourse on "Many Paths—One Truth"; the message was well received and some interesting questions followed. After satsang, Swamiji blessed the devotees with Prasad and books and spent time talking to them.

On Saturday, the 3rd April, Swamiji attended a satsang at the home of Sri Elizabeth and late Sri Vasudeva Venkatayaji, both long time devotees of Gurudev. Sri Vasudevaji, who has passed away in December 2009, was a resident at Sivananda Ashram in Rishikesh before settling in New Zealand. Swamiji spoke on 'Sivananda's Gospel of Be Good, Do Good'. Following the talk some questions came up and Swamiji replied in a simple and interesting manner to enable devotees to understand the core teaching of

Worshipful Gurudev. On Sunday, the 4th April, Swamiji attended the satsang at the Papatoetoe Yoga Centre and spoke on 'Spirituality for Happiness and Peace of Mind'.

On Monday, the 5th April evening, Swamiji attended the satsang at "Ashram Yoga" and spoke on 'Yoga for Relaxation and Wellbeing'. Ashram Yoga is a yoga and meditation centre in the city of Auckland headed by Sri Swami Shantimurti, a disciple of Brahmaleen H.H Sri Swami Satyanandaji Maharaj, a direct disciple of Gurudev Sri Swami Sivanandaji. Swamiji was welcomed by Sri Swami Shantimurtiji. During the welcome address he spoke briefly of the connection between Gurudev and H.H. Swami Satyanandaji Maharaj and the spiritual lineage.

At the request of Kribba Moodly, Swamiji visited the Education Centre that Sri Kribbaji and Vasiji own and manage; the Kip McGrath Education Centre (Manurewa) provides tuition to students of all ages covering studies from early childhood to university education. Swamiji conducted Pooja and chanted Mantras for the success of the centre and the well being of the tutors and the students who attend the Centre.

Sri Swamiji left Auckland for Australia on 6th April. Swamiji was given a warm welcome at the Airport in Perth by devotees. During his visit from 6th to 14th at Perth Sri Swamiji attended satsangs, visited devotees and delivered talks. On Wednesday, the 7th April H.H. Sri Swami Suddhanandaji Maharaj, Sri Lakshmananda Mataji, Sri Shankar Madan and a few members of Sivanandashram & Beacon Yoga Center, Leeming, visited Sri

Swamiji at Sri Gunalan's residence where Swamiji was staying. They had a brief satsang.

Thursday, the 8th April Sri Swamiji addressed the Hindu Temple Youth Group on the topic of 'Wealth—Happiness and Spirituality'. The topic had been selected by the Youth Group for interaction with Sri Swamiji and was well received by its members. During the question and answer session which followed it was wonderful to see how the young people put forth their doubts and Swamiji replied with words of wisdom from ancient and modern scriptures. On Friday, the 9th April Sri Swamiji spoke in Tamil at the Sri Bala Murugan Temple on the subject of 'The Significance of Temple Worship'. There were about 150 devotees and all were very happy as they could understand and relate to the message well. On Saturday, the 10th Sri Swamiji conducted a satsang at Sri Gunalan's residence and spoke on the topic of 'Happiness'. It was a beautiful satsang that made all very happy. On Sunday the 11th morning Swamiji attended a satsang organised by the Siva Family members of Perth and spoke on 'Spirituality and Fine Arts' in the Hall of the Temple of Fine Arts. The Siva Family members at Perth are devotees of Worshipful Gurudev Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj. Brahmaleen Sri Shantananda Swamiji Maharaj, a direct disciple of Gurudev had founded the Siva Family to spread Gurudev's message and promote the culture and spirituality of Bharatavarsha. In the evening Swamiji gave a public talk on the subject of 'Sadhana for the Modern Human'.

On Monday the 12th evening Swamiji, on their request visited the Sivananda Ashram and Beacon Yoga Center, Perth and

spoke on the subject of 'Guru-Disciple Relationship'. Sri Swamiji stayed overnight at the Ashram and spoke the next morning the 13th, on 'Meditation' and also guided devotees in meditation.

Wednesday the 14th April was Solar New Year's Day. Swamiji conducted a brief satsang at Sri Gunalan's residence. In the evening Swamiji departed for Canberra.

Sri Swamiji stayed for a week in Canberra. The Hindu Temple and Cultural Centre Canberra, was inaugurated by Worshipful Sri Swami Chidanandaji Maharaj in the year 1999 and since then cultural and spiritual programmes are being held there regularly. Sri Swamiji was requested by them to deliver talks and hold satsang for three days, on the 15th, 18th and 19th April. On all the three days Sri Swamiji spoke on the significance of worship.

On 16th April Sri Swamiji spoke on Yoga and Mind Management at the Australian Taxation Office. Swamiji also visited the Australian National University, Canberra, and delivered a talk on "Need for Spirituality in Daily Life". Swamiji left for Sydney on 21st April.

During his stay at Sydney Swamiji visited Melbourne on request from devotees of DLS Melbourne. Swamiji attended satsangs organized by Sri P.B. Shahji and other devotees and spoke on 30th April and 1st May on Bhakti Yoga and Gurudev's message to mankind.

Sri Swamiji gave a live talk in the Community Channel, Australian Broadcasting Corporation (A.B.C), Victoria University Campus Melbourne on "The Structure and Content of Vedas". During the talk some

questions were put to Swamiji by listeners over the phone and the programme was interactive.

Sri Swamiji was in Sydney for about three weeks during his tour in Australia. On his arrival at Sydney, Sri Swamiji had an informal meeting with the members of the Divine Life Society, Australia, and discussed with them the various programmes chalked out and expressed his appreciation for the wonderful work being done by DLS Australia in the holy name of Sri Gurudev and spoke on the need for consistent growth of the activities of DLS Australia. Swamiji also attended a satsang held at Sri Vijayaratnam and Pushpaji's house and spoke on Divine Life. Swamiji left for New Zealand, Perth and Canberra and returned to Sydney on 22nd April. On his arrival at Sydney, the Hurstville Group arranged a senior citizen's satsang and Swamiji spoke to them on Yoga and interspersed the talk with quotes from various scriptures including the Upanishads and Bhagavad Gita. On 23rd April Swamiji visited a Liverpool Bhajan Group satsang in Glenfield. The Bhajans were sung very beautifully and with lot of bhav. Swamiji appreciated the devout singing of the devotees and spoke about the glory of Namasamkirtan.

On 24th April DLSA had arranged a Cultural Programme at Strathfield Town Hall in the evening. The event was very successful with a lot of good music concerts. Swamiji addressed the audience and spoke about the need for spiritual growth to mitigate the problems in the secular life.

On 25th April, a Children's camp was organised by the committee members and 28 children between the ages of 8 and 16 participated in the event. The camp was very suc-

cessful and very encouraging positive reports were received from children and parents alike. In fact, most of the children desired similar camps to be conducted every six months or at least once a year. Swamiji was invited to participate in the camp and to address the children on the camp theme 'God is your friend'. Swamiji expressed his happiness for the way the camp was conducted due to the fact that the children really enjoyed it. The programme included Yoga, Bhajans, creative performances, value inculcation, games and a little fun for children.

In the evening of the 25th April Swamiji attended a drama on Lord Ayyappa which was organised by a group called 'Ananya Samarpana'. The drama was performed after nearly a year of study and practice and it was received very well. Swamiji was honoured at the function and was requested to speak on Lord Ayyappa. Swamiji narrated that Lord Ayyappa was a perfect example of the meeting of the Shaivait and Vaishnavait faiths and Lord Ayyappa's worship provided a means for all people to offer their prayers without any division.

Swamiji visited Melbourne between 29th April and 4th May and returned to Sydney the same day.

In the evenings between 6th and 9th May, Swamiji gave public talks from 7.30 to 9.00 pm daily at Homebush Boys High School. The topic for the lecture was the "Isavasya Upanishad" and it was conducted like a class room lecture – a Jnanayagna. Swamiji also answered all the questions raised by the participants. The DLS Australia provided hand-outs to all assembled with the text of the mantras and the commentary by Worshipful Gurudev Sri Swami Sivanandaji

Maharaj, from the book 'Principal Upanishads'. The Mantras were projected on a wide screen for easy reading of the participants.

Swamiji also visited homes of devotees and conducted satsangs. Mantra Diksha was given on 09th May 2010 in the morning to a few devotees on their request.

A Spiritual Retreat was conducted by DLS Australia in the premises of the Bahai Convention Centre in Yerrinbool, NSW between 14th May and 16th May 2010. 29 devotees attended the retreat and it was very successful and enlightening as evidenced by the feedback received from all the retreat attendees. Among the participants there were DLSA members, friends and other interested persons from Indian, Lebanese, South American and Australian backgrounds.

The Yoga Sutras of Patanjali was dealt with in depth during the talks in the retreat and Swamiji linked up the Sutras like an array of pearl beads on a strong string. Swamiji completed the Sadhana Pada and the Samadhi Pada chapters within the limited time available and managed to complete in detail all points. Swamiji referred to Gurudev's Yoga of Synthesis and the dictum of Gurudev 'Serve, Love, Give, Purify, Meditate, Realise'. The concept of Surrender to God was pointed to as a primary tool to move speedily towards the goal.

Yoga classes were conducted between 6.15 a.m., and 7.30am each morning at the centre. The Yoga sessions were well received and the devotees attending the classes expressed their deep gratitude for the benefits and knowledge accrued by doing

the Yoga asanas. Each devotee felt revitalised and invigorated after the classes. Swamiji conducted a guided meditation session from 7 a.m., to 8 a.m., on Sunday and catered for the needs of the attending devotees. The efficacy and benefits of these Yoga and meditation classes can be confirmed, as this was personally experienced and expressed by all the attendees.

Swamiji spoke on the values of leading a divine life and how the Divine Life Society has always encouraged the Yoga of Synthesis as advocated by Gurudev Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj. During his visit, Swamiji in his natural style spoke eloquently on the significance of the Upanishads, referring to Gurudev's, Worshipful Sri Swami Chidanandaji's and Sri Swami Krishnanandaji's teachings on many occasions.

In an informal satsang on the eve of Swamiji's journey to Malaysia, Swamiji expressed thanks to all the members of DLSA and specially to Sri Gunvant Vaghelaji and Nayanaji, Sri Chandra Gunalanji, Sri Radha Krishna Sharmaji, Sri Akash Deep Randevji, Sri Shaaji, Sri Kamalaji, Sri Uditramji, Sri Vijayaratnam and Pushpaji, Sri Vedaji, Sri Srinvasji, Sri Sankar Ramaiah and Jessieji, Sri Sushilji, Meenuji, Sri Asaiji, Sri Ashmataji, Sri Sushmaji, Sri Lakshmiji, Sri Lalitaji, Sri Vijayji and others for effectively organising the various programmes, including the logistics. Sri Swamiji left for Malaysia on 18th May 2010.

Swamiji's visits to the various cities in Australia enabled the devotees of Worshipful Gurudev to come together and provided a boost to the Divine Life Movement.

REPORTS FROM THE D.L.S. BRANCHES

Bargarh (Orissa): The Branch continued its daily Puja, Swadhyaya, Yoga class, homeo dispensary and weekly activities—Paduka Puja on Thursday, Satsanga on Saturday and Gita study on Sunday evening. Arranged special Maha Mrityunjaya Mantra Japa on 11th and special Shodashi Utsav on 25th April for H.H. Sri Swami Sivananda Gurusevanandaji Maharaj who passed away recently. Monthly publication of 'Mahat Vani' in Oriya was sent free to all devotees and other Branches.

Baripada (Orissa): March 7 was observed as Sadhana day. Mobile Satsanga on 10th March in the house of a devotee, Narayana Seva to 110 deaf and dumb students on 8th March and Ramnavami celebration on 24th March were other programmes. Distribution of free medicines to 183 patients of Leprosy colony was also continued.

Bellary (Karnataka): Daily Pooja and Satsanga on every Sunday with Paduka Pooja continued during April. Celebrated H. H. Sri Swami Krishnanandaji Maharaj's Birthday on 25th. A three days special Yoga session was arranged from 26th in co-ordination with Dr. Suresh.

Bikaner (Rajasthan): In addition to two-time Puja at Mrityunjayeshwar Mahadev Temple and weekly Satsanga on Sundays, the Branch conducted mobile Matri Satsangas with Sri Sunderkanda Parayana and reading of Japuji Sahib on the second Tuesday and last Saturday, Paduka Puja on Sivananda Day and Havan on Chidananda Day. Seva through Sivananda Library and financial aid to needy students continued.

The special activities:- (i) The recitation of Sri Ram Charitmanas and Sri Durgasaptashati during Vasant Navaratri (16th to 24th March) (ii) Bhajan and Kirtan on Ramnavami (iii) A special puja and chanting of Panchakshari Mantra on the anniversary of Pran-pratishta of Mrityunjayeshwar Mahadev on 27th March (iv) Sri Sunderkanda Parayana and recitation of Hanuman Chalisa for eleven times on 30th March (Hanuman Jayanti) and (v) a special Mantra chanting session for children on 25th April.

Burla (Orissa): The Branch conducted weekly Satsanga on Sunday and Monday with Japa, Dhyana, Kirtan and Swadhyaya. Celebrated the Branch Anniver-

sary on 14th January, Maha Sivaratri on 12th February and Sri Gaurang Mahaprabhu Jayanti on 28th February and Sadhana Day on 1st March. H.H. Acharya Sri Viswa Chaitanyaji Maharaj of Chennai visited the Ashram on 24th January and delivered a discourse to the devotees.

Chandigarh (U.T.): During March, besides its daily evening Satsanga, Thursday's collective Maha Mrityunjaya Mantra chanting, daily one hour evening Yogasana class, Narayana Seva by feeding more than 300 persons every Sunday and also free medical treatment to more than 50 patients every Sunday, the Branch celebrated Sri Ram Navami on 24th with Swadhyaya of Ramayana, Ram Nam Japa, Bhajan, Kirtan and 12 hour Akhanda Maha Mantra Kirtan followed by Hanuman Jayanti on 30th.

Chatrapur (Orissa): During February, the Branch conducted regular weekly Satsangas on all Thursdays, and special Satsangas on 13th, 15th, 21st and 28th in addition to Daily Satsanga on all other days. Sivananda & Chidananda Days were observed with special Paduka Puja and Archana on 8th and 24th respectively. Maha Shivaratri on 12th with One Lakh Shiva Mantra Archana and Sundara Kanda Parayan with 12 hours Akhanda Maha Mrityunjaya Mantra Kirtan was celebrated with a lot of fervour.

During April the Branch had five weekly Satsangas, three special Satsangas and one special programme, besides Sivananda and Chidananda Day observations on 8th and 24th respectively. Sankranti on 14th was observed with Parayan of Sundarakanda.

Ghatpadmur, Jagdalpur (Chhattisgarh): Daily morning prayer session with Yoga class, evening Mantra chanting, night one hour Satsanga and Guru Paduka puja on Thursdays, Hanuman Chalisa with Sundara Kand Parayan on Saturdays and Vishnu Sahasranama Parayan on Sundays continued during March. Chaitra Navaratri was celebrated with nine days Ram Charit Manas Parayan with daily Devi worship that concluded with 12 hours Akhanda Ram Nam, Havan, Kanya Puja, etc. Hanuman Jayanti on 30th started with 108 times collective chanting of Hanuman Chalisa and there were Havan, Archana and Sundarakanda Parayana.

Gumargunda (Chhattisgarh): Daily evening Viswanath Mandir and Samadhi Mandir Puja, morning prayer and Yoga classes, two hours night Satsanga, Paduka Puja on Thursdays, Parayana of Durga Chalisa on Fridays, Hanuman Chalisa and Sundara Kanda on Saturdays and Siva Chalisa on Mondays continued during March. Chaitra Navaratri was celebrated with nine days Ram Charit Manas Parayan with daily Devi worship that concluded with 12 hours Akhanda Ram Nam, Hawan, Kanya Puja, etc. On 30th Hanuman Jayanthi was celebrated with 108 times collective chanting of Hanuman Chalisa with Hawan, Archana and Sundara Kand Parayan.

Imphal (Manipur): The Branch conducts regular Satsangas on purnima days with Bhajan, Kirtan and discourses on philosophy of Bhagavad Gita. The 4th Satsanga was on 28th April. The new Executive Committee is earnestly engaged in, to give a total face lift to 2 Acre Ashram complex and streamline all activities of the Branch.

Jaipur (Rajasthan): Regular Activities: Daily morning Devi Bhagavata Katha; Evening Satsangas on all days except Saturday; on 6th and all Saturdays Sundarakanda Parayan, Hanuman Chalisa, etc.; on Thursdays evening collective chanting of Maha Mrityunjaya Mantra; Weekly Satsangas on every Sunday morning with Maha Mrityunjaya Hawan, recitation of various hymns and Swadhyaya of Gurudev's writings; Matri-Satsanga on Monday afternoon; Homeopathic Clinic-1165 patients treated; Daily Yoga class; Financial aid of Rs.150/- each to 26 poor widows monthly; daily Narayana Seva on Sundays to 300 poor people; monthly distribution of 113 Kg of dry Ration to Leprosy Colony; Rs.27,000/- per month scholarship to 105 students; and Swami Sivananda Library.

Special Activities: (i) 1st to 8th April Srimad Bhagavata Katha by Sri Swami Atmananda Giriji Maharaj of Gita Sandeepani of Ujjain; (ii) Special Bhajan by Sivanand Matri Satsanga on Baisakhi day (iii) 20th to 27th April Srimad Bhagavata Katha by Pandit Sri Satish Chand as part of Sri Swami Krishnanandaji Maharaj's Birthday celebration.

Jeypore (Orissa): Besides twice-a-day Puja, bi-weekly Satsanga on Sunday and Thursdays, the Branch observed Sivananda Day on 8th March and organized special Satsanga on 3rd March in the holy presence of Sri Swami Sivananda Guru Sevanandaji

Maharaj and Sri Swami Parama Priyanandaji Maharaj; and another special Satsanga on 26th March with a gathering of 70 devotees.

Kantabanji (Orissa): The Branch conducted Satsangas on first three Sundays in March and April with chantings, Puja and study of Bhagavad Gita under the guidance of Sri R.R. Das.

Ladies Branch, Sunabeda (Orissa): Besides daily Puja, Japa and Parayana, weekly Satsangas on four days a week, Ekadasi observations with Paduka Puja and Vishnu-sahasranama Parayana, Akhanda Maha Mrityunjaya Mantra Japa for 12 hours on 24th of February and March, the Branch celebrated Maha Sivaratri by whole night vigil and worships and Sri Ram Navami with Navaha Parayan of Ram Charita Manas at Hanuman Mandir.

Malviya Nagar, Jaipur (Rajasthan): In addition to daily Satsanga & Yoga Sadhana, on every Sunday Hawan and Satsanga, Friday Bhajan by Mahila Mandal, Tuesday Narayana Seva (feeding etc.) and free Homeopathic treatment during January to March, the Branch conducted special Satsanga on 31st January with Sri Swami Yogavedantanandaji Maharaj and Sri Swami Bhagavatswarup Acharya (Bhaskar Swami) ji Maharaj and celebrated Maha Shivaratri in February and Fago-utsav on 7th March .

Moirang (Manipur): The Branch continued its daily evening Satsanga for children in the house of members and weekly Satsanga at the Branch. All Manipur State Satsanga conducted on 14th March was attended by 250 devotees and there were discourses on Bhagavad Gita.

Nandini Nagar (Chhattisgarh): During April, the Branch continued its daily Brahma Muhurta Satsanga from 4:30 to 6:30a.m., evening Satsanga from 6:30 to 7:30p.m., six hours Akhanda Maha Mantra Kirtan on 3rd, weekly mobile Satsanga on Thursdays, Matri Satsanga on Saturdays, observation of Ekadasi with Parayan of Sri Vishnu Sahasranama and Bhagavad Gita; and special Satsanga on 25th to celebrate the Birthday of Sri Swami Krishnanandaji Maharaj. The visiting team of the Branch conducted Satsangas on 18th at Mahasamund and 25th at Bilaspur.

Nayagarh (Orissa): During November to April, the Branch continued with its regular activities of weekly

Satsanga, Anna Dana, etc. and celebrated special occasions like Gita Jayanti on 30th November, a special Satsanga and a retreat in January to welcome the New Year, Maha Shivaratri on 12th February, Sri Ram Navami on 24th March and Hanuman Jayanti on 14th April. As a part of "Platinum Jubilee" celebration, the Branch started a Seva for the all round spiritual development in nearby "Ktriberpur" village. All the functions and programmes were presided over and guided by Sri Swami Dharmaprakashanandaji Maharaj.

Phulbani (Orissa): Twice-a-day Puja and Satsanga on Sundays and Sivananda and Chidananda Days with special Paduka Pujas continued in the month of April. Maha Vishuva Sankranti on 14th with Havan, Parayan of Sundarakanda and Hanuman Chalisa was observed. Sri Swami Sivananda Gurusevanandaji Maharaj's Shodasi was also observed on 25th with Paduka Puja and Maha Mrityunjaya Mantra Japa.

Rangabeda (Orissa): Daily morning Guru Paduka Puja, evening Satsanga and weekly Satsanga on Thursdays continued during March.

Rourkela (Orissa): During March and April, the Branch continued its daily morning Meditation and Yoga classes, Sunday mobile Satsanga, Thursday Paduka Puja and evening Satsanga; and observed 8th and 24th of the months with special worship and Satsanga. As special functions, Sri Ram Navami and Hanuman Jayanti were celebrated. A special Sadhana Day from 5 a.m., to 8 p.m., with 24 participants was organised in which Sri Swami Brahasakshatkarandaji Maharaj and Sri W.S. Dahiyaji delivered discourses, besides a talk on Rama Katha by Sri. L.P. Singhji. Sri Viswanath Temple Pratishtha Day was observed on 5th March and there was a spiritual discourse by Sri P.K. Panda on 21st March.

Shodashi day of H.H. Sri Swami Sivananda Gurusevanandaji Maharaj was observed in a befitting manner in which more than 100 devotees paid their homage to the departed soul. Free homoeo clinic continued its Seva on Sundays.

Shankar Nagar, Raipur (Chhattisgarh): The Branch conducted its regular Gita classes on every Thursday and Swadhyaya classes on Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday and Saturday from 5 p.m., to 6 p.m. It celebrated Maha Shivaratri on 12th and observed

Ekadasi on 25th February with full Geeta Parayan. "Akhand Deep" was started with the resolve to keep the Branch alive for ever. Mini Library facility was provided with English and Hindi DLS and other books.

South Balanda (Orissa): During March and April, the Branch conducted regular twice-a-day Puja, evening Satsanga on Fridays; 'Chidananda Bal-Vikash' a special programme for the youth on Sundays; "Sankirtana Sadhana" for devotees on Wednesdays; on 6th March Guru Paduka Puja in the morning and Srimad Bhagavad Gita Parayana in the evening with a group of 140 devotees; Sivananda & Chidananda Days on 8th and 24th with special worships and Satsanga; Akhanda Maha Mrityunjaya Mantra Japa for three hours for world peace on 15th March and 14th April; Akhanda Maha Mantra Sankirtan for three hours on 23rd March and 17th April; special Satsanga on 11th April to offer Sradhanjali to H.H. Sri Swami Sivananda Gurusevanandaji Maharaj.

Steel Township, Rourkela (Orissa): The Branch organized four Satsangas and one Sadhana Day during January and four Satsangas during February in the residences of devotees. Special Satsanga on 12th January to celebrate 55th birthday of HH Sri Swami Brahma Sakshatkarandaji Maharaj with Guru Padukapuja, Bhajan, chantings, Narayan Seva and a talk on Guru Maharaj's life & teachings by Swamiji; celebrations of Branch Foundation Day on 24th January and Sivananda Yuva Kendra Foundation Day on 25th January with 350 students at Divine Life Academy, Rourkela were the special functions.

Tasker Town, Bangalore (Karnataka): The Branch in March conducted cultural gatherings on Thursdays 4th, 11th and 25th, and Fridays 5th, 12th and 26th; first Sunday gathering with Swadhyaya; Akhanda Kirtan for 3 hours on Sunday 21st; Divine Music on 4th Sunday 28th and Vasanta Navaratri celebrations from 16th to 24th with Swadhyaya of Gurudev's writings on Sri Rama and talks by members of the Branch.

Vasant Vihar, New Delhi: During March, special Satsangas were conducted on all the four Sundays in the houses of devotees. Sunderkand Parayana, Meditations, reading of Gurudev's teachings and collective discussions on that, and spiritual talks by invited local saints were the main activities of weekly Satsangas.

IN MEMORIAM



His Holiness Sri Swami Vijayanandaji Maharaj, a close disciple of Revered Shri Shri Ma Anandamayi, who performed extraordinary *tapas* during his lifetime, and who received sannyas diksha directly from Ma Herself, attained Mahasamadhi on April 5, 2010, at Ma's Holy Ashram in Kankhal, Haridwar, during the time of the great Kumbha Mela. Revered Swamiji was 96. The previous evening, Swamiji gave his customary darshan outdoors seated near Ma's Holy Samadhi Shrine. On the 5th, Swamiji felt weak and remained resting in his room, surrounded by a few disciples. Around 5 p.m. he sat in meditative posture and with serenity told them, "Now I am going". The Peace and Holiness that filled the room was profound.

Swamiji was a French physician who met Ma Anandamayi in 1951 at the age of 36 at her Ashram in Benares. He never returned to France. "Before I met Ma", he said, "I had the impression, not very clear, that there was something to re-awaken. I didn't know what it was; so I went to India to find a wise man who could awaken that 'something' inside. Landing in Buddhist Ceylon, and then proceeding along the East coast of India, I had arrived in Banaras. Tired and disappointed, almost convinced that my journey had been in vain, and determined to return to France, I had already reserved a berth on the "Marseillaise", which was to sail from Colombo in two weeks. Someone told me to see Ma Anandamayi. I wasn't that interested. The Guru I wanted was an old man with a white beard. But I went anyway. From the moment I saw her, I had a strange impression. When I got back to my hotel, I felt a super-human happiness that I had never before experienced. I thought without doubt that she was the Guru that I had come to find. In those 20 minutes she had infused something into me, which still continues. I was in a strange state—my heart swelled with jubilation, with joyful exaltation—the state of one who has just found what he has always yearned for in its most secret recess. Her image did not leave me anymore, even at night, and the very thought of her drove tears into my eyes. The next day I went back to Ma's Ashram and I asked, 'Ma, can I stay in your Ashram?' She told me, 'Yes'. I went." Swamiji remained associated with the Shri Shri Anandamayi Ashrams for 60 years.

"To find someone like Ma! It's like a miracle, like finding a treasure that you never would have imagined. You don't want to lose it. That's what happened to me. I discovered somebody so perfect and great, for whom it's worth leaving everything. She helped me, she guided me; without Ma, what would I be now? As if by strange alchemy my entire potentiality for affection, all that one can love and admire in the world, was transferred to her. But at the same time this love became so pure, so sublimated that it merged into, and greatly intensified the call for the

 Absolute that I had always felt. All worldly attachment lost its attraction and the spiritual ascent became easier, since she had donned me the wings of Love. The months that I have spent near her have given me the conviction that she is the Lord Himself, incarnate in the body of a woman. We believe that Ma Anandamayi was a descent of the Divine, called forth by groups of devotees praying to God with enormous devotion until He manifests, until He descends in some form for a certain mission. Ma used to say: 'From *moha* (attachment) to this body, all other *moha* will vanish.' And also, 'To realise one's Self is to realise God, is to know God; and to realise God, is to know one's own Self.' This is the message of Ma Anandamayi." Over the years Swami Vijayananda made the teachings and Presence of Ma Anandamayi a living reality for countless devotees and visitors.

Once Ma had asked Swami Vijayananda what he wanted to have done with his body after his death. He answered, "You can throw it anywhere, I do not care about it!" Ma stood up and told those present: "It can't be thrown like this! Swami Vijayananda was a Rishi in his past birth. His body has made such intense *tapas* that it is too sacred to be discarded in *jal samadhi* or by cremation. It is to be given *bhu samadhi* (interred)." As *bhu samadhi* is not the custom in Kankhal, it was decided that the best way to respect Ma's will concerning the body's preservation was to repatriate it to France. Consequently, after many formalities, the funeral, *bhu samadhi*, of His Holiness Sri Swami Vijayanandaji Maharaj, took place at the famous cemetery of Pere Lachaise in Paris, France, on Monday, April 26, 2010.

Sri Swami Muktanandaji Maharaj, one of our Gurubhais sends the following report to Swami Vimalanandaji, the President of the D.L.S. Headquarters.

"Revered and beloved Swamiji,

I have been attending the funeral of Sri Swami Vijayanandaji Maharaj. As you know, He was a very close disciple and Sannyasin initiated by Sri Sri Maa Ananda Mayi Herself who performed extraordinary *tapas* during his lifetime. He lived and moved everywhere with Maa who called him Her Rishi. It was Maa's wish that he should have a *Bhu Samadhi* which took place in the famous cemetery of Pere Lachaise in Paris, France on Monday April 26, 2010 at 11:00 a.m., I consider myself fortunate and blessed to have been attending the ceremony as the representative of the Divine Life Society and moreover, because I was the only Sannyasin in attendance. There was a beautiful Puja performed by Sri Pushparaj of the ashram of Maa, a little procession and beautiful chants. The day was radiant and the sun was shining in the midst of the clouds as if for Maa Herself. Swami Chandandi Mataji, the Purvashram niece of Maa performed the main Puja before the departure of Swamiji's body from India and she declared that with Swami Vijayananda's body going to France, Maa Herself was coming to France. I feel this is true and that the Presence of Swamiji in this cemetery will be a blessing for this country and all visitors. Om!"

—*The Divine Life Society*