
Mahasivaratri Message

THE SYMBOL OF SUPREME ASPIRATION

(H.H. Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj)

Blessed children of God!

The worship of Lord Siva is a symbol of the supreme aspiration of man for the attainment of the perfection of which the Lord is the embodiment. Renunciation and establishment in Self-consciousness are the two great features of Siva. This demonstrates that absolute Self-centredness is achieved through renunciation. Supreme attainment is the fruit of supreme abandonment. Siva is represented as one who is ever merged in Self-consciousness, which means that God is Self-identical—never different from Himself, never dividing His being into self and non-self. He is fullness, the goal of all, where all can find their wishes and ambitions supremely satisfied. Siva is, therefore, the ultimate consummation of life, the perfection of the self or the realisation of the truth. He is Truth itself, which has to be reached through the means of the negation of untruth, i.e. renunciation. He is also the *Samharkarta*, the destroyer of the universe of duality and multiplicity, the infolder of everything in the supreme Self.

Sivaratri is the night during which the aspirant tries to free himself from the normal animal and human functions, practise perfect self-restraint and attune himself to the Lord. In other words, the aspirant completely resigns his personality to the Supreme Siva and discards his lower nature. He observes 'Upavasa', meaning 'fast' in the obvious sense and 'living near' the Lord, in the esoteric sense. This is coupled with vigil during the night. Hence, it is a physical as

well as a mental fast. It is denying food to the body as well as to the mind. In short, it is denying the necessities of the individual person, which is the same as transcending oneself, in order to be in the ecstatic consciousness of the blissful Siva.

This divine consciousness is not easily generated in a person through ordinary means. Even as the body and the internal organs are negatively made to forgo their natural objective food, they should be positively engaged in the service of the Lord. Otherwise, they will not cease from their habit of becoming barriers to the ascent of higher consciousness. With this end in view, the devotee or the aspirant performs worship of Siva, physically, verbally and also mentally, so that no aspect of the lower nature may find a chance to manifest its normal activity which is obstructive and even directly injurious to the spiritual aspiration of man. *Rudra-Abhisheka* with *Namaka* and *Chamaka*, *Sahasranama-Archana* or *Laksha-Archana*, Kirtan of the hallowed names of the Lord, reading of the Purana extolling His glories, fast, vigil, Japa of His Mantra, meditation on His *Swarupa*,—all these form the various methods through which the Sadhaka prevents the dissipation of energy and mental force and redirects the same, through sublimation, to the Eternal Source, the Lord, God.

The human being has his life on this earth for the sake of evolving, by means of protracted Sadhana, into the Divinity that he essentially is. This truth is brought out in the

observance of the *Vratas* and *Niyamas* connected with the Sovereign of this universe, the Creator, the Almighty. These vows and Pujas are meant to open now and then the eyes of the sleepy man and awaken him to his supreme purpose in life. In the night of ignorance, the man of the world does not see the daylight of the Atman. The gross man is turned towards God through repeated exhortations and persuasions which bring to his mind, at least occasionally, the knowledge of the fact that God is the only Reality and that the attainment of Him alone is the meaning of existence. This is done through advising man to observe disciplinary vows and perform worship. The intelligent Sadhaka, however, should utilise all his time in the pursuit of the spiritual Reality, and to him the whole of life is a continuous *Vrata*, an unbroken worship, a ceaseless Sivaratri! Therefore O aspirants, let the observance of Sivaratri be the forerunner of your intense and constant Sadhana for God-realisation. Let your entire life be dedicated to Siva! The whole life in this world is "*Ratni*" or night for you. Observe vigil during this "night" of the world, and spend this night in the worship of Siva, who is Brahman. Remember "*Yasyam jagrati bhootani sa nisha pashyato muneh*". "That (worldly life) in which all beings are awake is night to the sage with spiritual perception." (Gita II, 69).

May the blessings of Parama Siva be upon you all! May you all attain Kaivalya!

II

Salutations to Lord Siva, the Source of all Auspiciousness!

The Indian genius has expressed itself wonderfully through all the *Vratas* and observances that have been handed from

generation to generation to the children of India.

Perhaps the chief among them, from the point of view of austerity and rigorous Sadhana, is Sivaratri. The whole day is spent in the worship of the Divine. The devotee fasts the whole day and engages himself in the service of the Lord.

Great stress is laid on *Vairagya*. For one full day the devotee is immersed in the Reality. Family ties, social bonds are all cut asunder. In the presence of the Lord he loses himself, his separatist individual ego dies away. The devotee turns away from the world, as it were, and resorts to the feet of the Lord.

Shama and *Dama*, in the form of control of the internal and external forces of man, are practised. The mind is centred in the Lord and is not allowed to flow objectively. The senses are "starved out" and their inner vitality directed towards the Light with the help of which they function.

Titiksha is when the devotee has to endure the greatest pain to the body—hunger and thirst.

Uparati and *Shraddha* are natural concomitants of this worship. Without *Shraddha* the worship loses its significance. Once the value is realized, then *Uparati* follows automatically.

When the senses are thus controlled, *Samadhana* comes by itself. And it is this *Samadhana* that helps the devotee to concentrate his mind in its entirety on the Lord.

Viveka is a pre-requisite here. The *Aviveki* is far away from the Lord and does not attempt the *Vrata*.

The *Vrata* performed in the proper manner with the proper mental attitude

generates intense longing for liberation or Sayujya with the Lord—*Mumukshutwa*.

The devotee is now fit to receive the Light Divine—for he has lived for one full day at least the Life Divine.

The two great natural forces that afflict man are *Rajas* and *Tamas*. *Sivaratri Vrata* aims at the perfect control of these two. The entire day is spent at the feet of the Lord. Continuous worship of the Lord necessitates the devotee's constant presence in the place of worship. Motion is controlled. *Kamadi-Shad-ripus* born of *Rajas* are ignored and controlled.

The devotee observes vigil throughout the night and thus conquers *Tamas* also.

Sivaratri is a perfect *Vrata*. The devotee does not allow even a chance of relapse into *Rajas* or *Tamas*. Constant vigilance is

imposed on the mind—every three hours there has got to be one Puja of the Lord.

The formal worship consists of *Abhisheka* of the Siva-Linga—the symbol of the One—with water, milk and other ingredients. Lord Siva is considered to be Tejomaya, always “boiling” with the fire of Tapas. He is, therefore, best propitiated by *Abhisheka*.

While doing this *Abhisheka*, the devotee prays: “O Lord! I will bathe You with water, milk etc. Do You bathe me with the milk of wisdom; do You wash me of my sins, so that the Fire of *Samsara* from which I am suffering may be put out once for all, so that I may be one with Thee—the One alone without a second.”

Glory to the Lord! Glory to the Bhaktas who observe this great *Vrata*! May His blessings be upon you all! May you all shine as *Jivanmuktas* in this very birth!

MEDITATION AND WORK

He who meditates is not able to work. He who works is not able to meditate. This is not balance. This is not equanimity. The two principles, meditation and action, must be well-balanced. You must be able, if you are ready to follow the divine injunction, to take up whatever work you are given—even a stupendous work—and leave it the next day, with the same quietness with which you took it up and without feeling that the responsibility is yours. You must be able to work hard in the world with tremendous force, and when the work is over, you must be able to shut yourself up in a cave as an absolute recluse for a long time with great peace of mind. That is balance. That is real strength.

—*Swami Sivananda*

(Swami Chidananda's Letter of 1st March)

THE SPIRIT OF MAHASIVARATRI

Immortal Atma Swaroopa!
 Blessed Seeker of TRUTH!

Om Namō Narayanaya.

The Divine Grace of the Lord of the Universe, Jagadeeshwara Mahadev, Vishwa Natha, shower upon you and fill your life with light, joy and supreme peace of Atman! Maha-Siva-Ratri, one of the holiest of holy days in this land of ours, would have been observed from the Himalayas to Kanyakumari by the time this letter comes to you. Worship of the Great God with intense devotion and holy fervour would have been witnessed all over India, and the spirit of worshipfulness and adoration would have purified the Nation's atmosphere with its unique spiritually sanctifying touch.

Devotion should pervade the entire life-process of man here on earth. To live is to adore the Divine each moment of your life. To know and to be aware that God resides in all living beings, nay, in all things animate and inanimate, is verily the source of all righteousness. This knowledge is the root and support of Dharma. No man will injure another if he is intensely aware that God is in him. For he would be directly offending Him! Therefore, see Him in all and act with devotion and reverence towards all. *Sarvam Shivamayam, Sarvam Vishnumayam*. Thus let your heart whisper with every beat. Let your blood flow to the rhythm of this sublime truth. Let your body pulsate to the note of this constant assertion that everything is permeated with the Divine Essence! Then indeed will every act of yours become a

sacred sacrament, a spiritual Yajna, a Mahapuja. This is the glorious truth about your life. Arise to the light of this luminous vision. See God here and now! And worship Him here and now. In this lies the grandeur and the blessedness of human life.

Gracious, most gracious indeed is the Lord. Avail of His Grace Divine, the ever-present Love that is ceaselessly pouring upon us all. The irony of human life is not the withholding of Grace by a remote Divinity, but actually, man's rejection of the ever-present Love and Grace, running madly after egoistical pursuits and fleshy sensations. He would rather dedicate his entire life to his five senses than open his heart to the descent of Divine Love and Grace that seeks to enfold him in its infinite compassion and uplift him to the supreme blessedness.

Modern men and women should consciously seek to feel and recognise the nearness of God and the fact of His Love. This is an important task in your life. Your life is not just fleshy sensation and silly sentiment. Cultivate the deeper level of your inner being. Become increasingly conscious of your close kinship in your essential nature with the Cosmic Being. You are never apart from him. You are eternally linked and spiritually related to Him every moment of your life. This knowledge is the only real Bread of Life that nourishes your being as no other earthly nutriment shall ever be capable of doing. This knowledge is not only the Bread of Life, but is Life itself. O Man! Be nourished by this life-sustaining Divine

Manna! God is near. His life sustains you. He is your breath, your life, your strength and your support. In Him alone is your peace and joy. Abiding in Him, you lack nothing. Leaving Him, you are as nothing and are verily beggared. The Lord is your supreme wealth of wealth. May Shiva, the ever-propitious, the ever-auspicious one, be gracious unto you.

The advent of the spring season is at hand. All life is renewed now. May there be a

fresh awakening unto Divine Life and spiritual aspiration within your heart! God bless you.

With Regards, Prem and Pranams
Yours in Gurudev

Swami Chidananda
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THE POWER OF SATSANGA

Satsanga helps a long way in the attainment of Moksha. Satsanga with a sage even for a minute is much better than rulership of a kingdom. It gives all that is desirable and good. It overhauls worldly Samskaras and vicious thoughts, and gives a new spiritual turn of mind to the worldly man. It destroys Moha. It instils dispassion. It leads one to the right path and causes the sun of wisdom to shine upon one's mind. If you can have Satsanga, you need not go to any Tirtha. It is the Tirtha of Tirthas. Wherever there is Satsanga, the sacred Triveni is already there.

There is nothing so inspiring, elevating, solacing, and delightful as Satsanga. Satsanga is the greatest of all purifiers and illuminators of man. Faith in God, in scriptures, attachment and devotion to God, slowly develop in those who are regular in Satsanga. Satsanga is unfailing in its results. The effect of saintly contact is unerring or infallible.

First comes keeping company with the righteous and good men, and serving them. By such company and service, there dawns the knowledge of the essential nature of one's own self, and of the Divine or Supreme Self. Then comes Vairagya or a total disgust for everything of this world and of the next, with a yearning for the Lord. This is Bhakti. When Bhakti becomes strong, the man becomes the beloved of the Lord, and because of such dearness to Him, he is chosen by Him. Then comes the direct vision of the Lord.

Those who hear the life-giving words of good men have their hearts that are tainted with evil, purified. They ultimately reach the lotus feet of the Lord. Rogues Jagai and Madai, dacoit Ratnakara, were all transformed into saints by Satsanga.

—Swami Sivananda

SIVARATRI MESSAGE

(Sri Swami Krishnananda)

This is the eve of the holy celebration called Sivaratri, which is observed everywhere as a specially sanctified occasion for concentration and for *japa sadhana*, together with worship. The trinity of the Supreme Being is described as Brahma, Vishnu and Siva, and the great facet of Lord Siva in this trinity has a special function to perform.

The creative Brahma is assigned the work of producing newer and newer species of entities in the various categories of life that one can conceive of. Eighty-four *lakhs* of specialisations, known as *yonis*, are supposed to be the mould into which living beings are cast during this continuous process of what is known as creation.

There is also a necessity to see that what is created endures. Otherwise, it will be a lopsided manufacture of entities with no purpose whatsoever behind their coming into being. Birth is coming into being. The word 'being' implies endurance, but this endurance is of a very strange character. It is not a stable or a solid fixity of existence, as we may imagine what stability is, because this character of the endurance of created beings should cope with the simultaneous creation of beings. And, more than that, there is a necessity to see that nothing endures in a permanent manner. Brahma's function is to create, to produce newer and newer types of living beings. A peculiar, unintelligible character of endurance that is granted to these created beings is associated with Vishnu—the stabilising force, the *sattvika* element among the trinity, which balances the two other sides of existence, which are

creativity and transformation. Rudra, or Siva, is the transforming power in this created world.

The simultaneity that is involved in creativity, endurance and transformation gives the entire picture a strange tinge of endurance in the form of a continuity of process. There is no true endurance of anything in this world. The fixity of a moving body is perhaps a good example of the way in which anything and everything in the world survives. Survival is only in terms of a particular pattern introduced into a limited area of the process of transformation. It is not that this process of endurance, which is at the same time a movement, can be made an object of one's consciousness right from the beginning till the end. Just as we can see the Ganga flowing here in front of the Ashram—it appears to start near Lakshmanjhula or so, and ends somewhere further on, near Purana Jhari, and we cannot see the prior or the posterior sides of the river's movement on account of the limitation of the faculty of perception—our life in this world is a long, long movement like the movement of a long river, the Ganga or any other river, but as we can be conscious of or perceive only a limited length of the flowing process, we can be conscious of only a few years of our life, which we call life in this world.

Life in this world is a small segment of the longer process of life in the universe, which is endless and beginningless, as it were. The endlessness and beginninglessness of the three processes of creation, preservation and destruction suggest the

cyclic character of all things in space and in time. Only a cycle can be without a beginning and an end. It is not a linear movement like a beaten track on a paved road leading to some particular destination.

The three divinities—Brahma, Vishnu and Siva—are actually not three different divinities. A single intention of the Universal Being is made to manifest in a threefold manner. As we see in our own bodily individuality, for instance, the three processes are seen to be going on every day. The constituents of our body are not eternally alive. They are destroyed in the process of the body's growth. They are also renewed, and this renewal of a new life in this organism of the body calls for a transformation of the preceding conditions, which is practically the death of the preceding conditions. But the connection of the element of Vishnu between the creative and the transforming forces prevents our consciousness from being aware that there are three such activities going on in the body. We do not know what is happening at all. As if nothing is happening in the body, we feel very secure. There is a continuous upsurge of the movement of the cells of the body in all its organic parts for the purpose of creating and recreating themselves, in which process they also destroy themselves. There is, therefore, a transcendent element present in this transforming process, or what we call the dying process of one condition for the sake of giving birth to another condition.

When religions become too socially bound, ritual bound, tradition bound, they begin to focus on the supreme object of religion. The basic features of human thinking make us perceive our gods mostly as cosmically pictured counterparts of the inner psychological processes. We are unable to imagine that one single entity can

behave as a threefold performer of action as creator, as redeemer, and as transformer.

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Namo visvasrije purvam visvam tadanu bibhrate, atha vishvasya samhartre tubhyam tredha sthitatmane (Raghuvamsa X.16) is the famous prayer which the gods offered to the Supreme Being in the Ksheera Sagara, as recorded in the Raghuvamsa of Kalidasa: "Prostration to the Creator, and prostration to Him who sustains after having created beings; prostration to Him who withdraws everything into Himself after having created and sustained them, and prostration to That which appears in these three forms of creation, preservation and transformation."

But the mind of the human being is a composite structure. It is constituted of tiny ingredients of function and, therefore, it cannot easily visualise the indivisibility that is behind the threefold functions of creation, preservation and destruction. We see as many gods as there are inner constituents in the mind; and as many are our needs, so also are the number of gods. The religions of the world are, therefore, a social and theological reaction set up in the outer world, or in the cosmos, in response to the needs felt by the inner constituents of the mind. Our mind is not an indivisible solidity. Therefore, indivisibility cannot be thought by the mind. Even if we stretch our imagination and begin to concentrate on an indivisible total, we will find that we create a distinction of some sort or the other—a distinction between that which is thought and the thinking process on the one hand, and it being very, very necessary to picture the god, even the

highest god, as being spatially and
temporally located. *(To be continued)*

THE TRUTH AT ANY COST

(Sri Swami Atmaswarupananda)

The fundamental teaching of Vedanta is that Brahman alone is without a second. That is all that needs to be said. It encapsulates the whole truth. But in our divided consciousness we simply cannot conceive it. We feel very much that we are here separately, and most important, we feel that we are the centre of the universe. Therefore, it is impossible for our mind to accept in its deepest depth the reality that One alone is.

Pujya Swami Chidanandji has said that it cannot be understood. The reason is that a divided mind cannot understand no difference. It can't conceive of it. Therefore, our only way of knowing it, of being convinced of it, is not only to experience it, it is to become it. We have to become that One alone without a second. To do that, all sense of separation has to simply drop away. And this is not something that we can do for ourselves. All scriptures say that it is a matter of Divine grace.

Normally, Divine grace can descend no matter what our condition is, but that experience and its significance can only be sustained by a purified mind. That is why we must continuously choose the good over the pleasant. That is why Gurudev's most important, and best known, aphorism is Be good, Do good. It is not that being good and doing

good earn us something new. We are already what we are seeking, because Brahman alone is without a second. But our minds cannot grasp the subtlety of the experience of oneness, nor can it stay with it unless the mind has for years, in one way or another, practised being good and doing good.

Thus, from beginning to end our task is purification. It is a radical change that we are finally intended to bring about: Giving up our sense of doership, of importance and seeing that everything about us is simply an expression of that One alone. Accepting that truth is not an easy task. But the great thing about it is that it is possible for each and every one of us. If God-realisation was something outside ourselves, that we had to get, then we would have permission to feel that it was too much for us. But as it is our ground, our reality, then the question is how much do we want the Truth. Are we prepared to pay the day by day sacrifices of living by the truth of our being rather than succumbing to the falseness of separation?

Therefore, no matter what our other qualifications are, we are qualified to make that decision: I want the truth, the truth above all, and at any cost. Then it becomes possible for each and everyone of us, no matter what our other qualifications may, or may not, be.

HATHA YOGIC METHODS

(H.H. Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj)

[Continued from the previous issue]

JALANDHARA BANDHA

Contract the throat. Press the chin firmly against the chest. This is practised at the end of Puraka and at the beginning of Kumbhaka. Next to this comes the Uddiyana Bandha. These Bandhas are something like three stages of one exercise.

UDDIYANA BANDHA

Empty the lungs by a strong and forcible expiration. Now, contract and forcibly draw up the intestines and also the navel towards the back so that the abdomen rests against the back of the body high up in the thoracic cavity.

This Bandha can be practised in a standing posture also. In this case, bend a little forward, resting the hands on the thighs and keeping the legs a little apart. These three Bandhas are a good combination. The description of Nauli Kriya can be taken as the next stage of Uddiyana Bandha.

NAULI KRIYA

Uddiyana Bandha can be done in a sitting posture also, but Nauli generally is done while standing. Keep the right leg a foot apart from the left and rest your hands on the thighs, thus making a slight curve of the back. Then do Uddiyana Bandha.

Now allow the centre of the abdomen free, by contracting the left and the right side of the abdomen. You will have all the muscles in the centre in a vertical line. Keep it so as long as you can do it comfortably. Do this much only for a few days.

After some practice, you should contract the right side of the abdomen and allow the left side free. Here you will have all the muscles on the left side only. Again, contract the left side and allow the right side free. By having such gradual practices, you will understand how to contract the muscles of the central, left and right sides of the abdomen.

Now comes the final stage of Nauli Kriya. Keep the muscles in the centre. Slowly bring them to the right side and then to the left side in a circular way. Do this several times from the right to the left and then do it in the reverse order, from the left to the right. You should always turn the muscles with a circular motion, slowly. You cannot derive the full benefits of this Kriya when you do not do it slowly and gradually. Beginners will feel a slight pain in the abdomen in the first two or three attempts. They need not fear. The pain will vanish after two or three days of regular practice.

MAHA MUDRA

Sit on the ground. Press the anus with the left heel. Stretch out the right leg. Take hold of the toe with the two hands. Inhale and retain the breath. Press the chin against the chest firmly. Fix the gaze at the Trikuti or the space between the eyebrows. Retain the posture as long as you can. Practise on the other leg also.

YOGA MUDRA

Sit on Padmasana. Place the palms on the heels. Exhale slowly and bend forward and touch the ground with your forehead. If you retain the pose for a long time, you can breathe in and out as usual. If you do it for a short time only, retain the breath till you raise the head and come back to your original position and then inhale. Instead of keeping the hands on the heels, you can take them to the back and catch hold of the left wrist with your right hand. This Mudra is useful in keeping up Brahmacharya. It reduces excessive fat in the belly and removes all disorders of the stomach and the bowels. Constipation is removed. The gastric fire is increased. Appetite and digestion improve. If you cannot retain the pose for a long time at one stretch, repeat the process several times. Take rest in the intervals.

EASY AND COMFORTABLE PRANAYAMA

Sit on Padmasana or Siddhasana with an empty or light stomach in your meditation room. Close your eyes. Close the right nostril

with the right thumb and draw in the air through the left nostril. Close the left nostril also with the right little and ring fingers and retain the air as long as you can. Then remove the right thumb and exhale very, very slowly. Again, in the same manner, draw in the air through the right nostril; retain it as long as you can; and then exhale through the left nostril. The whole process constitutes one Pranayama. Do twenty in the morning and twenty in the evening. Gradually and cautiously increase the period of retaining the air and the number of Pranayamas also. When you advance in the practice, you can have three or four sittings and you can do eighty Pranayamas in each sitting.

BHASTRIKA PRANAYAMA

Sit on Padmasana. Keep the body erect. Close the mouth. Inhale and exhale quickly twenty times like the bellows. Constantly dilate and contract. The practitioner should start with expulsions of breath following one another in rapid succession. When the required number of expulsions, say, twenty for a round, is finished, the final expulsion is followed by the deepest possible inhalation. Retain the air as long as you can keep it comfortably and then very, very slowly, exhale. This is one round of Bhastrika. Take a little rest and then do another round. Do three rounds in the morning and three in the evening. This is a very powerful exercise, beneficial for Brahmacharins. You can do this even when you are standing.

(To be continued)

Yoga in Daily Life

RAJA YOGA

(H.H. Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj)

[Continued from the previous issue]

CONTROL OF MIND

Life in this physical plane is a mere preparation for the eternal life of everlasting sunshine and joy which is to come when one gets the knowledge of the Self through intense and constant meditation after purifying the mind. This immortal life of supreme joy is described as the 'Kingdom of Heaven', in the Bible which is within you, in your heart. Realise this Immortal Life. O Sushil! by controlling the mind, enjoy the Supreme bliss of the Self.

The secrets of Yoga Sastra can only be imparted to that student who is Jitendriya and Abhyasa-Sura, who has devotion to Guru, who has Vairagya, discrimination, who is firm in his determination and who has strong conviction in the existence of God.

The mind is single, but it appears dual in dreaming state as the perceived, through the power of Maya or Illusion. The mind itself takes the forms of rose, mountain, elephant, river, ocean, enemy, etc. Just as heat is inseparable from fire, so also fluctuation is inseparable from mind. It makes the mind restless. This fluctuation is caused by the power of Rajas. It is the fluctuation that causes Asanthi (absence of peace of mind). The Bhaktas remove this tossing by Japa, Upasana and worship of Ishta-devata.

The power of fluctuation is itself the mind. This fluctuating mind alone is this world. The mind becomes no mind if fluctuation disappears. The mind ceases to exist, if it becomes destitute of this fluctuation. What is called Maya is this fluctuating potency of the mind. Mind does havocs through the power of fluctuation. Fluctuation is Mara or Satan or Vasana or Ishana or Trishna. It was this fluctuation that tempted Visvamitra. It is this fluctuation that brings about the downfall of a struggling aspirant. Destroy this fluctuation through strong Viveka, constant meditation and ceaseless Brahma Vichara.

As soon as fluctuation manifests itself various sorts of imaginations crop up. Imagination co-exists with fluctuation. Imagination is as much dangerous as fluctuation. Fluctuation moves the mind. Imagination fattens the mind. Mind, minus fluctuation and imagination is a mere zero. Fluctuation and imagination are the two wings of the mind bird. Cut the right wing through Atmic enquiry and the left wing through the practice of thoughtlessness. The great bird—mind—will fall dead on the spot immediately.

The one dividing wall between the soul and body is mind. If this wall is broken by ceaseless Atmic enquiry, then the Jiva mixes with the Supreme Soul just as the river mixes with the ocean.

Close your eyes. Meditate. Open your heart to the inflow of the invisible power. You will find in the Bible "Empty thyself, I will fill thee." Then you will have abundant, super-intuitional knowledge which is beyond the reach of intellect. Just as water freely flows when the tap is turned, so also Divine Wisdom will flow freely when the obstacles of ignorance that stand in the way of knowledge are removed. You will get flashes, glimpses of the Divine inspiration, revelation and intuition. You will have to put yourself in a state of quietude by silencing all bubbling thoughts and emotions and connect the mind with the source by withdrawing the mind from sensual objects, just as you do in telephone by turning the switch off and connecting the two persons who want to speak.

All duality is of mind. The whole of duality is caused by the imagination of the mind. If all imaginations are withdrawn into the mind itself by constant practice of discrimination, Vairagya (dispassion), Sama, Dama and Samadhana, you will not experience the dual universe. The mind will become no mind. As it has nothing to cognise, it will rest in the source, the Atman.

"My mind was elsewhere, I did not see."
"My mind was elsewhere, I did not hear"; for a

man sees with his mind and hears with his mind.

The attraction for objects and the ties of various sorts make the man bound to this world. Renunciation of all attractions for objects and breaking up the ties constitute real Sannyasa. That Sannyasi or Yogi who is free from attraction and ties enjoys infinite bliss, supreme joy and eternal bliss.

The mind should be absorbed in the word OM (Pranava). That Yogi or Jnani whose mind is absorbed in OM has no fear whatsoever. He has reached the goal of life.

The fire of meditation rapidly consumes all evils and sins. Then there follows that knowledge of Truth which confers perfection, everlasting peace and immortality.

Stop the Vrittis through constant and steady practice. The mind will become no mind. You will attain Yogarudha state (the Absolute state). The seeds of Avidya in the form of potential tendencies which are embedded in the mind are all burnt to ashes when the mind rests in the Truth during Samadhi. The fire that burns is the fire of knowledge of Atman (Jnana Agni, Yoga Agni).

When the Yogi has attained the last stage of meditation, when he has entered into Asamprajnata Samadhi, he becomes a Jivanmukta in this very life. The fire of Yogic Samadhi burns all Samskaras *in toto*. There are now no seeds for rebirth.

(To be continued)

Children's Page

RIGHTS AND DUTIES

(Sri Swami Ramarajyam)

Why did the war of Mahabharata break out?

The Pandavas demanded that they be given their fair share of the kingdom.

The Kauravas replied, "We will not give you even an inch of land, but if you beg from us, we can oblige you."

Lord Krishna said to the Kauravas, "Don't deprive them of their share of the kingdom and their right to rule."

The Kauravas repeated their reply—"We will not give even an inch of land."

The Pandavas insisted on their demand and said, "We want our share. Why should we beg?"

The Kauravas and the Pandavas went

to war against each other. The Kauravas were killed along with several hundred thousands of warriors. This is what happens when you deprive someone of his rights. The rights of others are really theirs. Depriving others of their rights and laying claim to them is unfair. If you want to claim something, claim the duties. Let the rights not become your concern. The duties are your property; the rights are others'. To be greedy for other people's property is the greatest fault.

Moreover, whosoever is at fault is sure to lose, however strong he is. Five cannot stand out against hundred, but the Kauravas, though hundred in number, fell and the Pandavas, only five in number, were victorious.

One has to strive earnestly and sincerely to make oneself worthy of being offered to the Lord. That then becomes the discipline, the earnest endeavour, the continuous abhyasa—to make oneself ever worthier, ever holier, ever more spiritual, ever more divine, that one may indeed become a most worthy offering to be placed at His feet as an adoration.

The greatest thing with which you can adore God is yourself, your life. Thus, the holier you become and the holier your life becomes, the more worthy it becomes to be offered to the Lord. The more spiritual and divine that you make yourself, filling yourself with light in all parts of your being, the worthier becomes the offering you place before Him and the more glorious becomes your adoration of the Divine.

—**Swami Chidananda**

Sivananda's Gospel of Divine Life

LIVE DIVINELY

ROOT OUT SELFISHNESS

Sri Swami Chidananda had delivered a thrilling discourse during the morning university class on the importance of rooting out selfishness in the spiritual aspirant. He dealt with the various methods of achieving this end. At the conclusion the Master asked Sri Parasuraman if he had taken notes of the lecture.

"Swamiji, I am maintaining a diary of all that takes place here."

"Hearing a lecture is only the beginning of Sadhana," the Master began. "Just close your eyes now and think how many times you have allowed the fullest play for your selfishness. Make a note of this in your diary. You will be astounded at your spiritual state. A searching analysis will reveal to you the subtle forms that selfishness assumes. You should slowly endeavour to eradicate all negative qualities.

"Some people imagine that they have reached very near perfection. They imagine that they are only a hair's breadth to Nirvikalpa Samadhi. They think that they have had the experience of Samprajnata Samadhi. They close their eyes and only dream, for in their everyday life you will find them full of selfishness, egoism and evil qualities.

"When they close their eyes some others think that they see the Atma Jyoti. 'Why does not Nirvikalpa Samadhi follow immediately?' they ask.

"Some claim to have seen Lord Krishna. 'Lord Krishna came to me thrice, but why

does He not appear a fourth time?' these people delude themselves.

"You must apply yourself vigorously to the eradication of selfishness. Surrender yourself to the Lord. Live for Him alone. He will then reveal Himself to you."

SPIRITUAL PRIDE

After the evening Satsanga was over, a Sannyasin with an imposing appearance began to discuss with the Master the cardinal tenets of his cult and the practice advocated by his Guru and himself.

"Swamiji, from our point of view, even hearing, reflection and contemplation have no significance. Our only Sadhana is to listen in silence—mere listening without even trying to grasp through the mind what is being perceived or heard. We do not try to understand because the Atma is beyond the reach of understanding. Our Guru has told us that this is the best method, and that all other practices are meaningless. One day Truth will shine of Its own accord without any effort on the part of the aspirant."

"Very nice," said the Master with his characteristic smile. "But the aspirant must be a super-Adhikari to grasp the Truth in this manner. To Janaka the utterance of 'Tat Twam Asi' once was sufficient and he realised the Self. But nowadays even if we hear it a million times we seem to be far, far away from the Truth."

After dwelling on several other topics, the Master said to the disciples, "The Maharaja of Sitamau is a great devotee. His Sadhana is a continuous repetition of the

Name of Lord Rama throughout the twenty-four hours of the day. He has attained great psychic powers through this practice, too, because a devotee who happened to use the Maharaja's bed had a vision of Lord Rama, which he attributed to the Mantra-Shakti of the Maharaja. The Maharaja is also well versed in the Upanishads. Yet he would say that he was only a practitioner and quite unfit for Vedanta. He was too humble even to call himself an advanced aspirant and a Japa Yogi!"

SHYNESS TO SING KIRTAN

During the night Satsanga some new visitors caught the Master's attention. He called out to them one by one and asked them to sing Kirtan. An advocate and another high official offered many excuses but found that the Master would not yield.

"You don't know Kirtan?"

They could not say no, for that would be telling a lie!

"I know Swamiji."

"Then sing. What is the difficulty in saying, 'Ram, Ram, Ram'?"

Each one then poured forth his heart, the shyness having vanished.

AWAKENING THE KUNDALINI

A visitor put the Master the question, "Swamiji, is it absolutely necessary to learn a particular Yoga for attaining God-realisation, or can one attain the state by leading a normal life and practicing concentration?"

"Concentration is Yoga. Study is also helpful to the practice of Yoga."

The visitor further questioned, "Should one attempt to raise the Kundalini Shakti?"

"Do not worry about the Kundalini. It will take care of itself. It will rise of its own accord

when purity of mind is achieved through the practice of Japa and meditation."

ELEVATING THE CONSCIOUSNESS

A visitor asked the Master, "Why is it that sometimes the consciousness rises to a high level, during which we can see and experience many things, and then it comes down again? Why is it that we cannot retain the consciousness at the same level?"

The Master replied, "During the time when the mind is Sattvic you get this elevated consciousness. But due to the forces of Rajas and Tamas and the undercurrents and desires in the mind, your consciousness comes down. Do more Sadhana. Develop dispassion. The more the desires are thinned out, the more the mind will be filled with Sattva. It will be steady like a light in a windless place. During holidays you can come and remain here and enjoy seclusion and daily Satsanga. You can do more Sadhana. A little observance of silence, a little Pranayama, a little seclusion—these are all aids."

VALUE OF FASTING

A lady visitor requested the Master to give her some instructions.

"Do Japa, Do Kirtan and render selfless service," said the Master. "Study the *Ramayana* and the *Bhagavata*. Enquire, 'Who am I?' Do charity of one-tenth of your income. Take simple food. Reduce chutney. Observe a fast once a fortnight."

The lady remarked, "I get good concentration of mind when I fast."

"So continue to fast occasionally," advised the Master. "If you take heavy food you cannot practise concentration. Fasting develops Sattva."

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 on a cold winter day that an elderly Sadhu was carried inside the Home. He was brought from the nearby road side, where he was staying together with a few other Baba's. About one month earlier he suffered a stroke which left one side of the body completely paralysed. There was the intense cold, and undernourished and covered with dirt he was. The weather had been such that bathing outside was completely impossible for a sick and handicapped person. One passer-by heard of his suffering and pain and arranged for his admission in Sivananda Home. By God's and Gurudev's Grace, this Babaji is improving quite well under medical treatment and physiotherapy and has started walking with support. Om Sri Ram Jai Ram Jai Jai Ram,

A few more new admissions were welcomed in the Home this month. One of them was a gentleman who was brought from the street where he was conspicuous right in

the middle of the main road, injured on his head, bleeding from the ears, and one of the ears half cut off. Nothing could this gentleman mention when he was admitted, but only his name and the name of the village to which he once belonged; though that seemed to be a long time ago, considering his physical and mental condition. For nights he was not able to sleep (nor allowed others to!) and he would roam around and around. Gradually both his physical and psychological situation improved, and where he initially would pass his outgoings anywhere, he reacted positively on the bathroom training and after a few weeks started even giving a little hand in serving his fellow brothers. He might have known what intense hunger is, since at food timings he would be the first in the row, pushing and pulling others, being afraid of being forgotten and having to spend the rest of the day with an empty stomach. May God bless him!

*"Lord, in the silence of the rising day,
I come to ask Thee peace, wisdom and strength.
Today I want to see the world with eyes
full of love,
to be patient, understanding, meek and wise,
to see beyond appearances.
To see Thy children as Thou seest them
and appreciate the goodness in each one."
(Chano S Rivera)*

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

**SWAMI SIVANANDA MEMORIAL ENDOWMENT LECTURE
AT THE UNIVERSITY OF MADRAS**

With the noble aim of imparting spiritual and cultural knowledge to the young generation of our Sacred Motherland, the Divine Life Society Headquarters is striving sincerely to create Chairs, Endowments and Study Centres in different Universities. In pursuit of this sacred mission, H.H. Sri Swami Padmanabhanandaji Maharaj, General Secretary, DLS Headquarters visited Chennai in October 2009 and had discussions with the officials of the University of Madras about creating an Endowment in the Philosophy Department in the name of Holy Master Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj. The Endowment was created in the University of Madras in February 2010 for Swami Sivananda Memorial Lectures.

The first 'Swami Sivananda Memorial Endowment Lecture' was held on 23rd February, 2011 at the department of Philosophy, University of Madras. Dr. S. Pannerselvam, Head of Philosophy

Department, apprised the audience of the Sponsorship of the Divine Life Society and introduced the speaker Dr. Narayana Raja. Dr. Narayana Raja, Director, Madurai Institute of Social Sciences, Madurai was then honoured by Prof. Venkatachalam. Dr. Narayana delivered two inspiring lectures one in English and one in Tamil. In his English Lecture, he spoke on the Philosophy of Swami Sivananda comparing it with the Western Philosophy. In the Tamil lecture, he highlighted the Humanism in the Philosophy of Swami Sivananda. The lecture concluded with the question-answer session.

The Divine Life Society Headquarters acknowledges with gratitude the efforts of the officials of University of Madras in successfully organising Swami Sivananda Memorial Lecture and the service rendered by Dr. Narayana Raja.

May the blessings of Lord Almighty and Sadgurudev be upon all.

Follow the Truth always. Strive for it ever in thought, word and deed.
Be compassionate. Be bold. Resign yourself to the Lord. There is no room for lamentation and despair. Stick tenaciously to your principles and ideals. Do your duty without looking to the fruits or consequences of your actions, and God will be with you.

—*Swami Sivananda*

CULTURAL TOUR OF SRI SWAMI PADMANABHANANDAJI MAHARAJ

In response to the kind invitation of DLS Vishakhapattanam Branch, Sri Swami Padmanabhanandaji Maharaj, General Secretary, DLS Headquarters visited Vishakhapattanam Branch on 19th January, 2011 and attended Satsanga. Sri Swamiji visited Kakinada next morning and blessed the devotees in Home Satsangas held at the residences of Sri Seshagiri Rao, Chidiga, Indrapalem and Sri Bhargava, Gandhi Nagar. In the evening, Sri Swamiji was accorded a ceremonial welcome at Sabha Vedika, Rama Rao Peta in a Public Satsanga organised by the DLS Kakinada Branch. Sri Swamiji addressed the gathering on 'Divine Life' as envisaged by Sadgurudev.

At the invitation from Pujya Jnaneshwari Mataji of Shanti Ashram, Sri Swamiji visited Thottapalli to attend the Birthday Celebration of Swami Omkar. Thereafter, Sri Swamiji proceeded to Warangal to attend the 37th All Andhra Pradesh DLS Spiritual Conference held from 23rd to 25th January, 2011. Sri Swamiji inaugurated the Conference by *Divyajeevan Dhvajarohanam* (hoisting the flag of Divine Life) and *Jyotiprajwalanam* (lighting of the lamp). The Conference was well organised and attended by over 2000 delegates from all parts of Andhra Pradesh. For all the three days, Sri Swamiji gave

inspiring discourses to the participants on various topics as Essentials of Divine Life, Karma yoga and Philosophy of Sadgurudev Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj. Sri Swamiji also interacted with Branch representatives and gave them a brief guideline for the effective functioning of the Branches.

On 27th January, Sri Swamiji visited Pullampeta, a village in Kadappa District of Andhra Pradesh and blessed the devotees. Then, Sri Swamiji visited a small hamlet Jettivaripalli in Kadappa district on the banks of Bahuda River and blessed the villagers in a Satsanga held at Nageswara temple. Thereafter, Sri Swamiji visited Pattamadai in Tamil Nadu to attend the meeting of the Board of Trustees of Sri Swami Sivananda Charitable Hospital. Sri Swamiji then proceeded to Palghat, Kerala and attended Srimad Bhagavata Saptah organized by the DLS Palghat Branch to celebrate the 101st Birthday Anniversary of Brahmaleen Sri Swami Jnanananda Saraswatiji Maharaj, a direct disciple of Worshipful Gurudev who did yeoman service in Kerala. Sri Swamiji addressed the gathering on 1st February, 2011. Sri Swamiji visited the Temple of Fine Arts, Coimbatore next day and had Satsanga there. Sri Swamiji returned to the Headquarters Ashram on 4th February, 2011.

CULTURAL TOUR OF SRI SWAMI NIRLIPTANANDAJI MAHARAJ

H.H. Sri Swami Nirliptanandaji Maharaj, Vice-President, The Divine Life Society Headquarters, undertook cultural tours during December 2010 and January 2011, in Odisha and West Bengal.

On 19th December, 2010 Swamiji Maharaj went to Sivananda Centenary Boys' High School, Khandagiri, Bhubaneswar. Sri Swamiji being the President had discussions with the School officials about the various matters connected with the School.

The next day, *i.e.*, on the 20th Sri Swamiji met the students of Class X who have been identified as likely to do very well and get the top positions in the final Board Examinations this year and gave them suitable advice and blessings. He also met separately the other students of Class X and blessed them similarly. In the evening Swamiji Maharaj attended the Prayer Class of the School, and addressed all the students. He also gave blessings to all of them for the annual examination.

Then Sri Swamiji visited Chidananda Hermitage Shanti Ashram, Baliguali, Puri. Swamiji Maharaj discussed with Revered Sri Swami Jitamohanandaji Maharaj, the In-charge of the Ashram, and looked into the affairs of the Shanti Ashram. He also met some devotees who wanted to have his Darshan.

At Sivananda Centenary Boys' High School on 23rd December Sri Swamiji attended a meeting in connection with the construction of the Prayer Hall and Dining Hall of the School. The meeting was also attended by Parampujya Sri Dibya Singha Debji, Gajapati Maharaj and some other important people of Odisha.

Thereafter Swamiji Maharaj proceeded to Kaniha in Angul District to attend the DLS Conference.

The DLS Danara Branch had constructed its Satsanga Hall and had requested Swamiji to inaugurate it. On 26th December Sri Swamiji visited Danara and inaugurated the Prayer building named "Chidananda Satsang Bhavan". Swamiji also gave a discourse on the occasion. There was a gathering of a large number of devotees.

From 27th to 30th December Swamiji was at NTPC (National Thermal Power Corporation), Kaniha. The DLS Bhimkand Branch had organized the 6th All Odisha DLS Youth Camp at NTPC, Kaniha for four days from 27th. Swamiji Maharaj inaugurated the Youth Camp on 27th, and addressed the participating youth on the occasion. More than 450 Youths had joined the Youth Camp.

There was also the 33rd All Odisha Divine Life Society Spiritual Conference organized by DLS Bhimkand Branch, for four days, starting from 27th. Sri Swamiji Maharaj was the President of the Conference and attended it on all the days. Pujya Gajapati Maharaja Sri Dibya Singha Debji, H.H. Sri Swami Padmanabhanandaji Maharaj, General Secretary, DLS Headquarters, Parama Pujya Babaji Chaitanya Charan Dasji Maharaj of Bhagavat Ashram, Puri, H.H. Sri Paramahansa Prajnananandaji Maharaj, Head of Prajnana Mission, and many other saints and dignitaries participated in the Conference. Swamiji Maharaj gave discourses and blessings in all the sessions on all the days and also spoke on "Meditation" in the early morning session. The Conference was attended by around

2500 delegates, besides about 3000 to 4000 local devotees from the general public who also had taken part in it.

The Conference and the Youth Camp were excellently organized and were perfect in all respects. This was one of the best States-Level Conferences organised so far. The devotees were also participating in the Conference very peacefully, quietly, and with rapt attention. Both the events were a grand all-round success and were immensely beneficial to the participants. My hearty congratulations and sincere thanks to all the organisers for their silent, smooth and dedicated Seva for the purpose!

The NTPC Management had invited Swamiji Maharaj to address the Senior Officers of NTPC on "Importance of Ethical Values for Officers" on 30th December. Sri Swamiji visited NTPC on that day and gave a discourse on the subject to the Senior Officers. The Executive Director, General Managers, Additional General Managers, other Heads of Departments, some other senior officers and Union Leaders of NTPC were present. Swamiji Maharaj also answered their questions. There was lively discussion and it was a very useful event.

Swami Sivananda Kalyan Samiti, Angul which has been set up by the DLS Branches of Angul and Dhenkanal Districts, has adopted village Gahama for rendering various services, naming it Swami Sivananda Sevagram. They have recently constructed the Divyanam Mandir and requested Swamiji for its inauguration. On 31st December Sri Swamiji visited Swami Sivananda Sevagram, Gahama, and inaugurated the Divyanam Mandir, where it is proposed to conduct Akhand Mahamantra Kirtan on permanent basis. There was a very good gathering of

devotees from the surrounding villages. Swamiji Maharaj gave a discourse on the occasion.

In the afternoon of that day Swamiji visited F.C.I. Township DLS Branch in Vikrampur and attended the special Satsanga arranged on the occasion. Many devotees of the Branch had gathered. Sri Swamiji addressed the devotees and spoke on the importance of Satsanga.

On 1st January, 2011, Swami Sivananda Kalyan Samiti had organised a visit of Swamiji to village Mankidia Sahi near NTPC. The Samiti has been periodically distributing useful articles to the people staying there. Swamiji Maharaj gave away blankets to the residents on that day as per the programme.

Sri Sudhanshu Bhushan Mishra, IAS (Retd.), President of Satyananda Yoga Vidyalaya, Bhubaneswar, had invited Swamiji Maharaj to give a talk at the Yoga Vidyalaya. On 5th January Sri Swamiji visited the Yoga Vidyalaya and as per their suggestion gave a talk on "The causes of Sorrow and its Eradication". There was a very good gathering of important people, senior government officers, intelligentsia and devotees of Bhubaneswar. Swamiji also answered the questions put by some members of the audience. The talk was very enlightening and beneficial, and was very much appreciated by all.

Swamiji Maharaj visited Kolkata, West Bengal, on 21st January.

The Divine Life Society, West Bengal, had organised its Annual Sadhana Shibir at Hamiragachi, from 22nd to 26th January. Swamiji Maharaj visited Hamiragachi on 22nd January, and inaugurated the Sadhana

Shibir. He stayed there from 22nd to 26th and attended the Sadhana Shibir fully, on all days and in all sessions. Everyday from 23rd, Sri Swamiji addressed the Sadhaks in the early morning meditation class. Swamiji Maharaj also gave discourses in the forenoon and afternoon sessions daily, and spoke on subjects like Karma Yoga, Bhakti leads to Mukti, Raja Yoga, Jnana Yoga, How to lead the Divine Life, Spiritual Sadhana in Grihastha Life, Importance of Guru in Spiritual Life, etc. Sadhaks from West Bengal, Odisha, etc., had joined the Sadhana Shibir. The Shibir was conducted in a serene atmosphere, and it was very beneficial to the participants and was quite enjoyable. The arrangements were very good and the stay there was very comfortable for one and all.

Then Swamiji Maharaj returned to Kolkata. On 29th January, Sri Swamiji attended a Satsanga of devotees assembled at the residence of Sri Jitender Guptaji. He

also answered the questions put by some devotees.

Smt. Prabha Mukherjee had invited Swamiji Maharaj to her residence. Sri Swamiji visited her house on 30th January and attended a special Satsanga of 'Matri Sangh' arranged for the purpose. The Matri Sangh was started in 1986 at her residence, and it has been having Satsanga regularly all through. They have completed 25 years of their Satsanga and thus it was Silver Jubilee for them. Swamiji Maharaj appreciated this and congratulated them, spoke on the occasion and also answered questions from devotees. Most of the lady devotees of the Matri Satsanga had attended.

At the residence of Sri C.B. Sehgal also Sri Swamiji met the devotees in a small Satsanga on 31st January. Swamiji also gave reply to the queries of the devotees on spiritual matters.

**THE DIVINE LIFE SOCIETY
SPIRITUAL CONFERENCE—JALANDHAR**

By the grace of Most Worshipful Gurudev Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj, a Zonal Conference of Divine Life Society (North Zone) and 92nd Birth Anniversary celebration of H.H. Sri Swami Premanandaji Maharaj will be held on 7th May, 2011 at Om Premanand Mandir, Jalandhar, Punjab.

The Conference will be blessed by senior monks from DLS (H.Qrs.). All Devotees are cordially invited to participate in the programme aimed at dissemination of spiritual knowledge and world peace.

For Enrolment and other information please contact:

1. Sri Virender Partap (Vir Jee) 09888997192
2. Sri R.K. Chopra 09878803601, 0181-2254322

REPORTS FROM THE D.L.S. BRANCHES

Ambala (Haryana): The Branch conducted collective chanting of Maha Mrityunjaya Mantra for half an hour on Sundays, Sri Hanuman Chalisa and other chantings on Tuesdays, and Japa of "Om Namo Narayanaya" during solar eclipse on 4th January. A Competition of Bhajan singing among members was arranged and 3 winners won prizes. Free Homoeo Seva continued as usual.

Badakuanl (Odisha): Besides daily 2 times Pooja with Vishnu Sahasranama Stotram and Bhajans in the evenings, weekly Guru Paduka Puja and Satsanga on Thursdays and special Paduka Puja on 8th of every month, the Branch celebrated the festival of Kartik Poornima for 7 days in November and conducted 3 Mobile Satsangas during January.

Badhiausta (Odisha): In addition to regular Sunday Satsanga, Thursday's Guru Paduka Puja, Mobile Satsanga at different villages and daily prayers, Pooja, Meditations etc., the Branch organized a Youth Camp on 23rd January, at Government School, Kalingi, Ganjam, with 277 participant students of classes 6th, 7th and 8th. They were taught Yogasana, Pranayama, Spiritual and Ethical Knowledge, Adarsh Vidyanthi Jeevan etc.

Barbil (Odisha): The Branch conducted 5 Thursday Evening Satsangas

and 4 Monday Evening residential Satsangas during December. Observed Gita Jayanti on 19th and Sadhana Day on 24th. Homoeo Dispensary treated 432 patients.

Baripada (Odisha): The Branch observed Sadhana Day on 3rd December and 1st January, on the Annual Day of the Branch, besides Daily Paduka Pooja and Mobile Satsanga on 18th December and 16th January. Special Satsanga was on 20th December and 17th January. Distributed medicines to Leprosy colony.

Bellary (Karnataka): In addition to Sunday's Guru Paduka Puja, short-term Yoga Classes and Nadi Chikitsa Shibir were conducted. Deepavali and Sri Swami Krishnanandaji Maharaj's Punyatithi were observed in November.

Bhilai Nagar (Chhattisgarh): The Branch held Satsanga on 5th December in Netaji Transport Building with Guru Paduka Pooja, Bhajan, Kirtan and Shantipath. Matri Satsanga on Tuesdays with chantings of Hanuman Chalisa and with Lalita Sahasranama on Fridays, both followed by Bhajans and Kirtans continued. Both Ekadasi Days were observed with Vishnu Sahasranama and Bhagavad Gita Parayan.

Bhongir (A.P.): the Branch organized daily collective Vishnu Sahasranama chanting and observed Aradhana Day of Brahmaleen Sri Swami Devanandaji Maharaj

on 7th January at Sri Kanyaka Parameswari Temple with prayers and Guru Pooja.

Chatrapur (Odisha): During January, the Branch conducted regular weekly Satsangas on all Thursdays, and special Satsangas on 1st, 4th, 9th, 15th, 16th, 17th, 19th, 20th, 21st, 23rd, 26th and 30th, in addition to Daily Satsanga on all other days. Special Paduka Puja and Archana were on 8th & 24th . Makar Sankranti was celebrated with Sundar Kand Parayana.

Digapahandi (Odisha): *Regular Activities:-* 2 time Pujas, bi-weekly Satsanga on Thursdays and Sundays, Paduka Puja on 8th and 24th and Satsanga on Sankranti Days.

Gumargunda (Chhattisgarh): The Branch, besides its regular activities, celebrated 18th Punnyathithi Aradhana of Brahmaleen Sri Swami Sadapremanandaji Maharaj on 10th January with Prabhat Pheri, special Satsanga, Havan and Bhandara, preceded by 3 days Akhanda Sankirtan and attended by 3000 devotees. Makar Sankranti on 14th and Republic Day on 26th January were also observed.

Jagadapur (Chhattisgarh): *Regular activities*—Daily morning Prayers, Meditation, Chantings, Satsanga and Yogasan. Evening Sankirtan of “Om Namah Sivaya”. Guru Paduka Pooja on Thursdays. Hanuman Chalisa and Sundarkand Parayan on Saturdays, Vishnusahasranama on

Sundays. **Special programmes** – Observed Punyatithi Day of Sri Swami Sadapremanandaji Maharaj on 10th January with Paduka Pooja and Akhanda Kirtan; Platinum Jubilee on 13th with collective chanting of ‘Om Namo Bhagavate Sivanandaya’ and Poojas for 3 hours; Makar Samkranti on 14th and Republic Day on 26th January with Flag hoisting and singing of National Anthem by students.

Jaipur, Raja Park (Rajasthan): **Regular Activities during November to January**—(1) Daily morning Devi Bhagavat Katha. (2) Daily Evening Satsangas with chantings, Bhajans, Pravachan and Meditation. (3) On Sundays morning Satsanga from 8 to 10 a.m. (4) On Mondays Satsanga by Swami Sivananda Mahila Satsanga Mandal in Siddheswar Mandir. (5) Homeopathic Clinic treated 3297 patients. (6) Daily Yoga class. (7) Monthly financial aid of Rs.150/- each to 28 poor widows. (8) Daily Narayan Seva on Sundays to 300 poor people. (9) Monthly distribution of 105 Kg of dry Ration to Leprosy Colony. (10) Rs.7,800/- per month scholarship to 105 students and Seva by Swami Sivananda Library. **Special Activities** - Deepavali Annakoota Mahotsav, Srimad Bhagavata Katha Sapthaha, Dhyana Yoga Shibir, Gita Jayanti celebration with Gita Mahatmya Katha, Pravachan, Parayan and Gita Yajna and series of lectures by Swami Yogavedantanandaji Maharaj.

Khatiguda (Odisha): Besides 2 times

Puja, weekly Satsanga on Thursdays, Ekadasi Satsanga on 15th and 29th January, with Parayan of Vishnu Sahasranama, Mobile Satsanga on 23rd, The Branch arranged Sadhana Day on 2nd with 12 hours Akhanda Mahamantra chanting and Narayan Seva.

Layidam (A.P.): The Branch conducted Sri Sita Rama Maha Yajna from 8th to 18th December, at Sri Sitarama Pushkarini. Sri Mata Jyotirmayananda, Sri Swami Samatananda and Sri Bhaskara Bhatla Sreerama Murthy delivered lectures. Teppotsavam was celebrated by thousands of devotees with Vedic Chantings, Mahamantra Sankirtan, Parayana of Vishnu-sahasranama, Hanuman Chalisa and Ramayana.

Nandini Nagar (Chhattisgarh): During December and January the Branch continued its daily Brahma Muhurta Satsanga from 4:30 a.m. to 6:30 a.m. evening Satsanga from 6:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m., six hours Akhanda Maha Mantra Kirtan on 3rd, weekly mobile Satsangas on Thursdays, Matri Satsangas on Saturdays, observation of Ekadasi with Parayan of Sri Vishnu Sahasranama and Bhagavad Gita. **Special activities** - (1) Gita Jayanti on 19th December with Parayan of complete verses. (2) Special Residential Youth Camp from 23rd to 26th December with 35 participants from Ahiwara, Bhilai and Nandini Nagar. (3) The Branch Officials visited DLS

Mahasamund on 11th and 12th to attend Yoga Shibir and Raipur on 17th December to attend Branch opening ceremony. (4) **Platinim Jubilee Programmes-** i) Debate competition on "CORRUPTION" for students of Primary, Middle, Higher Secondary School and College. 33 students participated and 12 winners (3 from each group) were awarded Cash (Rs.1039/-) and Certificate by Chief Guest Sri. D.N. Swamy, Dy. General Manager (Flux), Bhilai Steel Plant, on Republic Day Functions. ii) Inter School Yoga Asana Competition—57 students participated and 9 winners were awarded Cash (Rs.537/-) and Certificate by Chief Guest Ms. Padma Swamy on Republic Day Functions. (5) Yogasana Training Camp from 17th to 21st January to students under the guidance of Swami Vidyananda Saraswati. (6) Arranged special Satsanga at Durg, Rajnandgaon and 4 Satsangas at Camp, Ramnagar, Bhilai with an intention to revive the inactive Branches.

Nayagarh(Odisha): Besides regular weekly Satsanga, Sundarakanda Patha and Seva through Chidananda Annakshetra, the Branch organized 9 days "Sri Rama Charita Manas" with discourses by Sri Swami Dharmaprakashananda Saraswati during Dashara. Observed Sadhana Day on 14th November, Gita Jayanti on 19th December and Platinum Jubilee on 13th January with Paduka Pooja, Meditation, Satsanga, distribution of printed literature and Narayan

Seva to 40 homeless victims of fire incident of Bebartapalli village.

Phulbani (Odisha): In addition to daily 2 times Pooja, weekly Satsanga on Sundays, Paduka Pooja on 8th and 24th, the Branch observed Gita Jayanti on 19th December with oblation to sacred fire for every Sloka of Gita and Annadan with a gathering of 150 devotees.

Shankar Nagar, Raipur (Chhattisgarh): The Branch conducted Ladies Satsanga on Mondays at Hanuman Mandir and General Satsanga on Thursdays at devotee's residences. Winter clothings were distributed in tribal areas of Jagdalpur, Odisha and some part of M.P.

Sikkim: The Branch observed Platinum Jubilee of the Divine Life Society with a special Satsanga on 13th January. Further Satsangas were conducted on 20th January and 3rd February. Sri. Manorath Dahal, General Secretary of the Branch conducted daily 2 hours Yoga Class from 12th to 17th December for 25 students.

South Balanda (Odisha): Besides regular 2 times Pooja, Friday weekly Satsanga, Sunday's 'Chidananda Bal-Vikash' for children, Guru Paduka Pooja and special Satsanga on 8th and 24th January, the Branch observed Makar Sankranti Day on 14th, with Guru Paduka Pooja in the morning and 3 hours "Akhanda Maha Mrityunjaya Mantra Japa" for world

peace and universal brotherhood. Also arranged "Akhanda Maha Mantra Sankirtan" for 3 hours on 29th.

Special Activities (1) Satsanga at the residence of Sri E. Nageswar Rao on 5th December (2) Gita Jayanti on 19th December with Paduka Puja, Parayan and Pravachan (3) Sadhana Day on 2nd January as part of Platinum Jubilee Celebrations. Swami Sivananda Bodhananda, Swami Ramakrupananda and others delivered talks on Divine Life Society and Bhagavad Gita to 300 participants. (2) Satsanga on 31st January, at the residence of Sri Srinibas Padhy, Vice-President of the Branch.

Steel Township, Rourkela (Odisha): The Branch conducted a special Satsanga and 2 Sadhana Days at the residence of devotees. Gita Jayanti was celebrated on 19th December, with Sri Gopala Sahasra Archana, Guru Paduka Pooja, Gita Yajna, Narayan Seva and an enlightening talk by Sri Swami Brahmasakshakaranandaji Maharaj on Guru Maharaj's life and teachings.

Sunabeda (Odisha): The Branch held weekly Satsanga on Thursdays and Sundays from 7:00 to 8:30 p.m. with Bhajans and Swadhyaya; and special Satsanga on Initiation Days with Guru Paduka Pooja and Havan. The Ladies Wing had weekly Satsangas on Wednesdays and Saturdays. Sri Swami Mokshapriyanandaji Maharaj from

Headquarters gave special Satsangas on 19th and 20th December.

Tasker Town, Bangalore: Thursday spiritual gatherings performed Guru Paduka Poojas, chanting of Bhagavad Gita and Swadhyaya in connection with the observance of Gita Jayanti, Dattatreya Jayanti and Hanuman Jayanti. Devi worship was conducted on all Fridays with Parayanam of Lalita Sahasranama and Vishnu Sahasranama. Special Satsanga was on 5th with Sri Odugattur Swamigalu and Akhanda Kirtan on 19th. Along with the Platinum Jubilee of the Divine Life Society, the 66th Anniversary of the Branch was celebrated from 13th to 16th January. Gaanakala Bhushana Sri R.K. Padmanabha released Jnana Yajna booklet on the occasion.

Triplicane, Chennai, (Tamil Nadu): The Branch celebrated Platinum Jubilee of the Divine Life Society with 12hours Akhanda Mahamantra Kirtan on 2nd, Guru Paduka Pooja and Annadan to general public on 8th and a pilgrimage to in and around of Tiruvarur with Darshan of Sri Saptavidanga Linga.

Usmanpura (Gujarat): The Branch Conducted daily Yoga class in the morning followed by Japa Yajna for half an hour. Performed Guru Paduka Pooja on 2nd January.

Varanasi (U.P.): A Group of devotees

conducted Satsanga at the ancient Durga Temple across Ganga on 5th December. In January, on 9th and 23rd, Satsangas were held at "Vriddha Ashram" with chanting of Mantras and Stotrams, Bhajans and Swadhyaya. The Branch gave financial aid of Rs.5000/- to Sri Lalji Mali, father of Deepak aged 13 years, suffering from "Aplastic Anemia" admitted in B.H.U. hospital and Rs.500/- to the inmates of "Missionaries of Charity" located at Shivala Ghat, Varanasi.

Vikrampur (Odisha): In addition to daily 2 times pooja, weekly Satsanga on Wednesday and Guru Paduka Pooja on 8th of every month and other special days, The Branch arranged Gopal Sahasra Nama chanting with Archana on 7th November, Bhagavad Gita Parayan with Gopal Sahasranama on 14th November and collective Japa of Maha Mrityunjaya Mantra on 17th November. Sri Swami Nirliptanandaji Maharaj from Headquarters gave a special Sadhana Day-cum-Satsanga on 31st December to a good number of gathering.

Visakhapatnam (A.P.): In January, in addition to regular activities of Yoga Classes and weekly Satsanga on Mondays and Free Medical checkups, visit of Sri Swami Padmanabhanandaji Maharaj from Headquarters on 19th was a special event. Swamiji visited the Viswanath Mandir building under construction and gave a special Satsanga to more than 200 devotees.