

## WHY THIS CONCEPTION OF GOD?

(H.H. Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj)

It can be argued: when the whole creation as we see or contemplate upon is in reality non-existent like a flower in the sky or a castle in the air, how on earth can there be a God who created it? The Advaita Vedantin's Siddhanta is that Brahman alone is the reality; all else including Avatars are the mind's creation. Man finds solace in thinking of a higher being when things go against his desires, and has therefore created the conception of God who rules our destinies. Actually there is Brahman alone, and creation is *Sphuranmatra*. If such is the case, then may not all prayer, Kirtan, etc., take one away from the right path and distract him who wishes to progress by contemplating and concentrating on Suddha Brahman only? A student of Advaita Vedanta may argue thus.

It is true that Brahman is the only Reality and from this standpoint even creatorship cannot be attributed to the Supreme Being. Ishwara has no existence independent of Brahman, but He has greater reality than the Jiva. Even Ishwara's reality is Brahman, and so, without Brahman even Ishwara cannot be. In fact, Ishwara is the human conception of Brahman only. Though Brahman is the Absolute Reality, as far as man's knowledge of it is concerned, it is only a concept, and man cannot think of Brahman except as it is defined by the qualities manifested in the universe of space, time and objects. Hence, the human mind finds access to the reality only in

a limited sense, i.e., as the reality behind a real universe.

The mind cannot conceive of a state where Ishwara and the universe do not exist at all and only Pure Consciousness exists, for the denial of the world means the denial of all the contents of the world also, one of which is the body of the individual. In other words, the mind cannot think except in terms of some object or objects. Thought is invariably connected with a corresponding objective existence and, hence, there cannot be any such thing as 'thinking' of 'Pure Consciousness' or Brahman. But it is possible to realise this Pure Consciousness or Brahman through meditation either by the affirmative or the negative method.

Prayer, Kirtan, etc., are the ways of purifying and concentrating the mind on nobler ideals transcending the earth plane. For this purpose, prayer may be taken to mean a form of surrendering oneself to God or Ishwara and Kirtan is singing the names and glories of God or Ishwara in order to surrender oneself to Him. Both prayer and Kirtan aim at fixing the mind on God and uniting one's consciousness with Him. If God or Ishwara is real, prayer and Kirtan also must have a value and should lead one ultimately to Self-realisation.

The question can be taken up from the different points of view: firstly, the psychological, and secondly, the spiritual. Psychologically, it should be remembered that prayer is

not merely uttering of words but an intense and sincere feeling of and a longing for contact with a Power which is all-pervading, which includes everything within itself and which is the most real of all beings. The nature of thinking and feeling is such that it is not possible to think of or feel anything without transforming the psychological organ into the mode of the object which is thought or felt. And because, in the case of prayer, the object is the infinite Power itself, the mind takes such a powerful mode, that the devotee gets endowed with superhuman powers in addition to his achieving the purpose for which the prayer is offered.

Moreover, the letters forming the names of God and the Mantras for Japa selected for singing or repetition are arranged in such a way that the very pronunciation of them with deep feeling sets in harmony the whole nervous system, creates a rhythm in the flow of the Pranas, calms the Vrittis of the mind and purifies the entire nature of the person who pronounces the name of the Mantra. Hence, from the purely psychological point of view, it will be found that even without the intervention of an 'objective creator', the devotee generates within himself a tremendous spiritual force as a result of intensely asserting and feeling the presence of the Divine Being. It may be said that he brings out the manifestation of what was already within himself in a latent form.

But spiritually viewing the matter, it will be observed that God or Ishwara cannot be considered to be an illusion or an unreality as long as the Jiva has the consciousness of the reality of its own individual being and of the reality of the external world. If the Jiva is real, the world also will be perforce regarded by it as real. Consequently Ishwara also has to be

real. It is wrong to think that God is only a fancy, an imagination, or a conception of the mind, just created by man with an utilitarian motive. God is the name given to the supreme basis of this universe and this substratum or fundamental reality of the universe cannot be denied and it exists even if the mind does not imagine or formulate concepts at all. God or Ishwara is not entirely different from Brahman, but in fact is Brahman only viewed as in relation to the universe. Ishwara is the cosmic reality; Brahman is the supra-cosmic reality. In the state of Brahmasakshatkara even Ishwara pales into non-existence. But to the Jiva He is a reality which cannot be denied until it attains Brahmasakshatkara. As Ishwara is only a name given to the governing principle and the unifying factor of reality behind the Jiva and the universe, it is not possible to assert and feel the existence of the Jiva and the universe without affirming the existence of Ishwara.

It should also be borne in mind that prayers are offered by the Jiva to God or Ishwara not when the Jiva is in a state of the transcendental realisation of Brahman, where the very notion of Jiva, Jagat and Ishwara is completely transcended and negated, but when it is still in a state of bondage, i.e., when the Jiva feels the reality of itself and also the corresponding reality of the world related to it. The theory that Brahman is the only reality, that creation is unreal, that the world is ultimately non-existent like a lotus-flower in the sky does not contradict the relative experience of the Jiva that itself and the Jagat are real to it as long as it has individuality.

The dream is real until waking. The world is real until Self-realisation. As pain, pleasure, etc., experienced in dream have

got a value in dream but not in waking. Prayer, Kirtan, etc., have got a value as long as there is the feeling of self-individuality and the existence of an objective reality, but not in Self-realisation. Sadhana has a relative value but not absolute validity. If the Jiva is a reality, Sadhana too also is a reality—at least not less than the Jiva. Though it has only a relative value, it is capable of destroying vice, pain, desire and ignorance which also are only relative. As bondage is relative, a relative weapon is enough to destroy this bondage. As is the end, so is the means.

There is no doubt that when the individual soul realises the Absolute there is neither Jiva, nor Ishwara, nor the world; neither Sadhana, nor the Sadhya; neither action, nor the actor. There is only the ineffable experience of the Infinite. But as long as one finds that it is hard to deny the relative value of these categories of reality which appear to have a manifest existence, the different

forms of Sadhana like Japa, Kirtan, prayer, meditation, introspection, reflection, discrimination, enquiry, etc., have got their own values and are indispensable as far as the aspirant who has not realised the Self is concerned.

He who is equipped with proper means of Vicharashakti and purity can directly take to pure meditation on the Absolute truth itself and attain Sadyo-mukti. But those who are of a different type, and the overwhelming majority, have to resort to prayer, Kirtan, Japa, selfless service, etc., which also will pave the way to self-purification and divine experience ultimately.

There is no use trying to attempt the impossible. There is no use of a man of sense-limitations to think that since everything other than Brahman is illusory then who is to realise whom. Rigorous, hard and life-long Sadhana is essential. There is no denying of it.

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## THE ESOTERIC MEANING OF THE TEN AVATARAS

(Sri Swami Chidananda)

The prayer “*Asato maa sat-gamaya, Tamaso maa jyotir-gamaya, Mrityor maa amritam-gamaya*” epitomises the purpose of the Lord’s Creation, the grand culmination of going back into that Transcendence out of which these countless names and forms have been evolved as a blissful act of play by the One without a second. The plan of the Divine Will is that out of the One infinite, names and forms may flow out and for a time there may be a blissful play of this divine multiplicity and then once again, when the Divine Wills, there may be a going back into the pristine glorious source.

Multiplicity is the antithesis of eternal Truth which is ever One. It is unreal. It is in the nature of darkness. This cycle of becoming and perishing, birth and death, is the characteristic of this world-play. Thus, a going back into the original grandeur of Brahman means an ascent from this unreality into that Supreme Reality, from this darkness of ignorance to the Light of Knowledge, from this cycle of birth and death into that state where there is Immortality. This process is being worked out by all evolved beings.

From time to time great ones have come, who have systematised this Cosmic plan and formulated a method so that individuals in whom this purpose has been awakened may make use of this method and reach the goal quickly, that they may consciously achieve this process in themselves. These methods have come to be the various reli-

gions of humanity. Gradually, these religions have had a greater and ever-widening group of followers. These great groups exist all over the world as the great section of Hindus, Buddhists, Muslims, Christians, and so on.

But the one inescapable fundamental fact about these religions remains that all these various religions are but methods which seek to work out in some way or other the ascent of man from birth and death to Immortality.

The ten Avataras of the Lord, which are described in the scriptures, are an order calculated to teach us a sublime spiritual lesson.

As you know the first of the ten Avataras is *Matsya* (Fish) Avatara. The fish lives in water, shut out from the two elements that we consider as most important for the preservation of life—pure air and sunlight. And yet if you liberate the fish from its aquatic prison and place it in life-giving sunshine surrounded by fresh air, it is greatly distressed and would die in a few minutes. Similarly, the man who is sunk in worldliness, who is worse than a beast, cannot bear the sunlight of godliness and fresh, pure air of divine life. He revels in his own dark region deprived of all spiritual light.

The next Avatara is the *Kurma* (tortoise) Avatara. The tortoise lives in water; but is able, to an extent, to live on the shore, too. This corresponds to the first stages of man’s career from bestiality to humanity and from humanity to divinity. He likes to live sunk in

ignorance, but does not seriously mind the light of truth.

Then comes the *Varaha* (Boar) Avatara. Here the evolution has taken the Jiva completely away from the worse-than-beast stage, away from the aquatic prison, and the boar, though considered as the lowest among the animals, is yet an animal and lives on mother earth, basking in sunshine and breathing fresh air.

The *Nrisimha* (the Man-lion) Avatara represents the crown of animal-creation; the lion is the king among animals. And, the composite personality of Nrisimha (the man-lion) is suggestive of the beast in man. What is the great characteristic of this Avatara? It was taken with the only purpose of killing; it was a great violent Avatara. Here we have the man who is trying to transcend the bestiality; but who is yet so gross in his nature that violence and the spirit of destruction characterise him.

Then comes the *Vamana* (the Dwarf) Avatara. The animal nature is completely gone now. The person is completely human. But he is greatly limited. He is a dwarf. His capacities are greatly limited. He got himself lodged in such narrow limits that he goes to a king and begs of him three foot-measures of land. Vamana's assumption of the universal form suggests to us that the same man is capable of transcending all limitations and realising his unity with Brahman.

Next we have the *Parasurama* Avatara where we have the Man. Now bestiality is completely shed; and humanity has supervened. We get three object-lessons from Parasurama's life.

You know how, in obedience to his father's command, he cut off his mother's head. His brothers had refused to do this.

But, Parasurama had perfect faith in his father. This faith gave birth to implicit obedience and perfect subservience to the higher will. In the spiritual path, the Guru is our father. We should learn to subserve our will to his will. We should have implicit obedience as our great motto. This can come only out of perfect faith, faith in the divinity of our Guru. Parasurama had it. And, therefore, pleased with his obedience, when his father asks him to choose a boon, Parasurama without hesitation says: "Let my mother live." She gets back her life.

Then Parasurama killed many great kings, who were proud, haughty and were inimical to Brahmins. In this description we have the perfect picture of a mixture of Rajas and Tamas, This is the very antithesis of Sattva, represented by the Brahmins. In our Yoga Sadhana we should never forget that a certain amount of destruction is absolutely necessary. Unless we destroy the weeds, the beautiful crops will not grow. Unless we annihilate our bestial nature and sublimate the human nature, we cannot rise into our divine nature. Are kings bad then? Is Rajas bad then? No. Just as righteous kings are as essential to the world as pious Brahmins, Rajas properly directed and canalised is as important to Sadhana as Sattva. Unrighteous kings can cause havoc. Rajas mixed with Tamas not only veils the Atman but makes man stray into the lethal chamber of lust, anger and greed. This must be completely rooted out, if we are to progress towards establishment in Sattva.

The third great lesson we learn from Parasurama's life is this: The Kamadhenu (the milch cow) which was in the possession of his father Jamadagni Rishi is stolen by a king. In order to avenge this, Parasurama

kills the kings. He thinks his father would be pleased with his conduct, but he finds a different attitude in his father. He severely reprimands him: "You have forgotten your own Dharma. You are a Brahmin, and the foremost duties of a Brahmin are forbearance and forgiveness. We should never retaliate. Bear patiently with everything. Since you have swerved from your duty, as an expiation, you should undertake a country-wide pilgrimage." Parasurama has to go round Bharatavarsha on such a pilgrimage. From this we learn that we should first completely annihilate our bestial nature and then, when we have become human beings truly, we should learn to subserve ourselves to our Guru, and then we should destroy all the evil propensities in us that stand in the way, as would be seen from the Rama Avatara.

In the *Rama Avatara*, Sri Rama killed many Asuras under the instructions of his Guru Visvamitra, and by his Grace Sri Rama followed Sattvic virtues like truthfulness, love, compassion and purity. Similarly, we should serve our Guru with love, sincerity and obedience for attaining liberation or God-realisation.

Then comes the *Krishna Avatara*, which is also called the *Purna Avatara*. Sri Krishna served humanity in all respects, without distinction of caste, creed or sect. For instance, He served as an ambassador, and went on a peace mission to avert the war between the Pandavas and the Kauravas. He washed the feet of guests who attended the Rajasuya sacrifice performed by Yudhishtira and also

cleaned the plates of the guests after their meals. He also served as a charioteer to Arjuna during the Mahabharata war. Sri Krishna practised and preached the gospel of selfless service, in the Bhagavad Gita. Thus the Krishna Avatara provides the spiritual aspirant with all necessary teachings to attain oneness with God.

The next is the *Buddha Avatara*. Bhagavan Buddha taught non-injury (*Ahimsa*) in thought, word and deed. Lord Buddha showed to humanity that by the practice of even a single divine virtue, viz., *Ahimsa*, one can attain God-realisation.

The scriptures say that the last Avatara, out of the ten important ones, is the *Kalki Avatara*, which is meant for removing the ignorance in humanity. So long as one is in sleep, one is not aware of the waking consciousness. As one has to awaken into the waking consciousness so as to be freed from the sleep, even so humanity has to be awakened from its slumber of ignorance to the waking consciousness of Divinity, which is the purpose of the *Kalki Avatara*.

As said by the Lord in the Bhagavad Gita, "*Sambhavami yuge yuge*", at every juncture He incarnates Himself to teach mankind the correct path to evolve into Divinity. The ten Avatars teach to negate the animal in man and to transcend the human into the divine by leading the Divine Life of selfless service, universal love, purity, truthfulness, sincerity and adaptability. May His blessings be upon you all and may we all realise the goal of life in this very birth!

Guru, Isvara, Brahman, Truth and Om are one. Serve the Guru with intense devotion. Please him in all possible ways. Have the mind fixed on Guru as the Atman. Obey him implicitly. His words must be gospel truths for you. Then only you will improve. You will get his Grace. There is no other way.

—Swami Chidananda

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## THE SEARCH FOR TRUTH

*(Sri Swami Krishnananda)*

*[Continued from the previous issue]*

### VI

This conclusion that consciousness is not limited to the body but is also outside the body follows from another interesting analysis that we can make. We cannot set a limit to consciousness. We cannot say that consciousness is here and not there. Because, to be conscious that consciousness is limited, consciousness has to be outside the limit at the same time. Who is to know that consciousness is limited? It is consciousness itself that knows. The awareness of the limitation of awareness is also a function of awareness. So, the boundary that is tentatively set to a state of awareness is also a content of awareness. One cannot be conscious that there is a limit to consciousness, unless consciousness has exceeded that limit. To imagine that there is division between two parts of consciousness would be to assume that there is consciousness even midway between the two assumed parts of consciousness. Otherwise, who is to be aware that there is a gap between two parts of consciousness? The awareness of a gap between two parts of consciousness is also awareness and, therefore, there cannot be a gap in consciousness, which means that consciousness is indivisible.

If consciousness has no parts, it is indivisible, and so all-pervading. It is infinite in its nature. The presence of the infinitude of con-

sciousness is the reason behind the mind being aware that there are objects. But where comes the question of an outside if there is a pervasion of all things by consciousness? There is an error in the perception of externality in things. If the consciousness that knows things is indivisible, and exists everywhere as subject and object, there must be definitely some mistake in our seeing or apprehending things as if they are outside us. This mistake is introduced into our perception by the operation of space and time.

Meditation is the art of transcending space and time. The moment this is effected, we enter into an infinitude of consciousness. By the various techniques of meditation, we overcome the barrier that is created between us and the objects by the action of space-time. The moment we think of an object, we think of it as it is existent in space and in time. The methods of yoga are the ways of defying the operation of space-time and effecting a union between the subject and the object, the seer and the seen, in their essentiality. In their outward forms, they are distinct; names and forms differ, but the essentiality of the things does not so differ. The content does not vary, only the shape differs. Thus in all processes of the practice of yoga, one thing alone is aimed at, viz., the union of consciousness with being.

There is a single yoga, ultimately, taking forms on account of the difference in the structural patterns of minds. Just as one would like a sweet dish, another a saltish dish, etc., but it makes no difference to the fact that all partake of food for a common purpose, likewise, the essentiality behind meditations is the same, though the outer focus differs due to the needs of the minds of the individuals in the different stages of evolution in which they find themselves. Yoga is union, yes. It is the union that is necessary for beholding things as they really are and for outgrowing the erroneous awareness of the apparent duality of things. Our weaknesses, physical or psychological, are the outcome of our dissociation from things.

Strength is the necessary consequence of a union of ourselves with things. Energy is abundant in Nature. The universe is full of power; it has infinite resources. It is never poor. It is always rich. There is no poverty in the world in its true nature. But we look poor socially, physically, mentally, in every way. We are helpless beings and forlorn. This situation arises because we have blocked the avenues of the entry of forces of Nature into ourselves by the activities of the sense-organs. The senses are our enemies, if at all there are enemies anywhere, because they present us with a picture of the world which is not really there. The friends and foes that we see in the world are the concoctions of the ego and the sense-organs. The five elements we see are also the reports given to us by the five senses. There are no five elements; there is one element only everywhere, appearing in different densities of expression.

The world is seen or known in five different ways because of the five ways in which the senses work. To give an example, electric

energy is common everywhere. But, when it passes through a refrigerator, it cools; when it passes through a stove, it heats; when it passes through a railway train, it moves. The various functions of electric energy are due to the instruments through which it is made to operate; likewise is Nature. It is neither sound, nor touch, nor colour, nor taste, nor smell. There are no such things as that in Nature. But our senses abstract certain features of Nature and then become cognisant of these specified features and one sense tells us that it is smell, another that it is colour, and a third something else. If we had a hundred sense-organs, perhaps, we would have seen a hundred things in the world. Now we have, thank God, only five senses, and we see only five things. If we had only one sense, we would have seen only one thing. The sense-organs create a quintuplication of perception, where there is only a uniform reality.

Firstly, the senses deceive us into the belief that things are outside. Then there is a further deception into the belief that there are five different objects. That objects are outside is mistake enough; that there are five different things is a worse form of it. In our practices known as yoga, we have, therefore, to tackle the sense-organs first, which multiply perception into a fivefold operation, and then the mind which tells us that the world is outside us. The whole of yoga hinges upon the operation upon the senses and the mind in such a manner as to enable us to overcome the awareness of externality and its outcome as the fivefold perception through the senses. The task is undertaken either directly or in the reverse order, as is one's predilection.

*(Continued on page 13)*

## DIN AND KIV

(Sri Swami Atmaswarupananda)

**G**urudev's aphorisms, his brief, pregnant statements that he so frequently repeated, are full of spiritual wisdom. There is even a couple of his sayings that he used so often that he used to say them with initials. One was DIN, Do it Now. The other was KIV, Keep in View. Pujya Swami Chidanandaji also used to frequently repeat these initials. They have within them great practical wisdom and great spiritual force.

Normally we would associate Gurudev with DIN. Gurudev may have written 300 books, but he was fundamentally a doer. He got things done, and he knew how much *tamas* there was in the average person. Good ideas are cheap. Acting on them is not so common. So constantly, when a good idea came up, it was DIN, Do it Now. But it has to be a good idea. So if other ideas came up that didn't quite ring true to him at the moment, the answer was KIV, Keep in View.

Indeed, Pujya Swami Chidanandaji in one of his talks here has said, "If an idea comes into your mind that is according to the scriptures, you should do it immediately or else it may not get done. On the other hand, if an idea comes into your mind that is not according to the scriptures, do nothing. Just let it be.

Is there a secret about the mind that makes these two statements a technique of successful living: If an idea comes into our minds that is according to scriptures do it immediately. If an idea comes into our mind that is not according to the scriptures, just don't engage with it. Both instructions are based upon a fact of our mind, that if it is understood thoroughly and we use our mind according to this law, it will help us to control the mind and make it our servant, rather than our master.

Nothing can stay in our mind indefinitely unless we keep it there. Therefore, if an idea comes into our mind that is not according to the scriptures, then we should not engage with it. We should not resist it, let alone go along with it. If we just let it be, by the law of the mind it will sooner or later disappear from our consciousness. But by the same law of the mind, if an idea comes into our mind to do something that is good and we don't engage in it immediately, it too will fade from our consciousness and we will have missed the opportunity to do something of a positive nature.

Therefore, Gurudev's two aphorisms, that he used so frequently he put them into initials, DIN, Do it Now, and KIV, Keep in View, can remind us of the law of the mind and how we can become the mind's master rather than its slave.

A Guru is necessary. The spiritual path is beset with many obstacles. The Guru will guide the aspirants safely and remove all sorts of obstacles and difficulties.

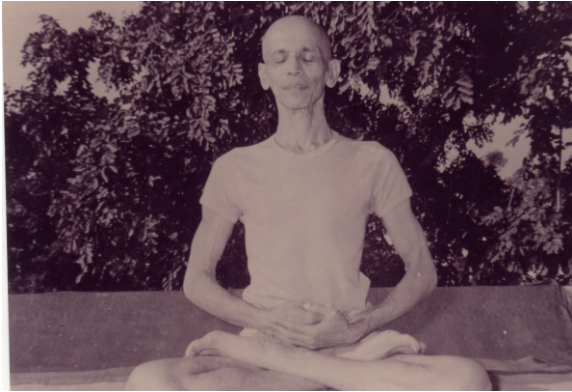
—Swami Chidananda

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Yoga for Health

## PADMASANA

(Sri Swami Chidananda)

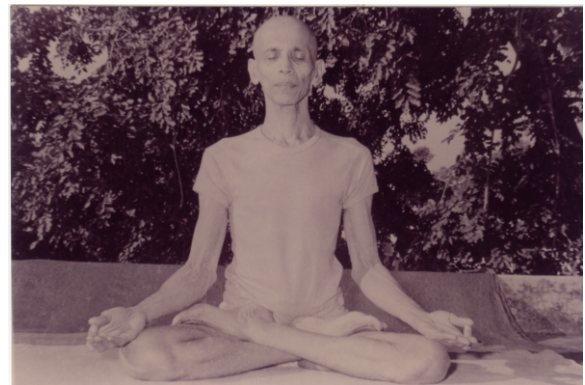


### TECHNIQUE

Sit over a folded blanket placed on even floor, with stretched legs. Always keep the spine and neck erect without bend. This is an instruction common to all the sitting postures. Bend the right leg at the knee and place the right foot on the left thigh. Then, bend the left leg at the knee and place the left foot on the right thigh. Place the two hands with the palms

facing up on the respective knee joints. Let the bent index fingers touch the middle portion of the thumbs and keep the other fingers stretched out. In the alternative, you can make the finger lock, and keep the locked hands over the left ankle. This may be convenient for some persons.

In the beginning, sit for ten minutes and gradually increase the duration according to your convenience.



In meditation, thought and being coalesce and become one.

★ ★ ★

Spiritual knowledge means the direct experience arrived at through the fusion of the essence of the object of knowledge into the essence of the subject of knowledge.

—Swami Krishnananda

## GLORY OF BRAHMACHARYA

(H.H. Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj)

[Continued from the previous issue]

### CELIBACY IN THE DIFFERENT RELIGIONS

**D**own the ages, the highest stress has been laid on Brahmacharya or sexual abstinence in every religion. Throughout folklore runs the idea that second-sight and the vision of supernatural are especially, if not solely, the privilege of celibates. Westermack favours the explanation that 'Pollution Destroys Holiness'. A tribe on the Rio Negro enjoined celibacy upon their Shamans because they believed that medicine will prove ineffectual if administered by a married man.

Lambichus states that the gods do not hear him, who invokes them, if he is impure from sexual connections. In Islam, strict continence is required on the pilgrimage to Mecca. It is required for the Hebrew congregation during the 'Theophany' at Sinai and before entering the temple. Ancient India, Egypt and Greece enforced the rule that the worshipper must abstain from intercourse with the opposite sex during and before worship. In Christianity, continence was required as a preparation for both Baptism and the Eucharist.

The highest type of Christian was a celibate. Christian teachers praised celibacy and marriage came to be in their eyes only a secondary good for those who were unable to serve continence. The bishops of the Greek Church are always celibates, being chosen from the monks.

The monk who lowers himself to touch a woman's person with corrupt thoughts, while he clasps her hand or keeps his hand on her hair or touches one part or another of her body, brings shame and degradation on the Order. The present ordination vow is to abstain from all sexual intercourse as long as life shall last.

The Jains force on their Munis the rule to abstain from all sexual relations; not to discuss topics relating to women; not to contemplate the forms of women. Lust is thus condemned: "Of the myriad vices, lust is the worst."

There are other rules subsidiary to his forbidding all actions of an unchaste kind, especially any act or word which might either lead to a breach of the principal rule or give rise to an impression outside the community, that it was not being strictly observed.

A Bhikshu is not to sleep in any place where a woman is present, or to preach the sacred doctrine in more than five or six words to a woman unless a grown-up man be present, or to exhort the sisters unless specially deputed to do so, or to journey along the same route with a woman. On his round for alms, he is to be properly clad and he is to walk with downcast eyes. He is not to accept a robe from any woman not related to him, except under specified conditions. He is not

to sit in a secluded place with a woman, much less to touch or speak to her with impure intent.

Numa was said to have instituted the "Order of Vestal Virgins". They remained unmarried for thirty years. Burial alive was the penalty for breaking the vow of chastity. The Virgins were distinguished by extraordinary influence and personal dignity. They were treated with marks of respect usually accorded to royalty; thus, on the streets, they were preceded by a lector and the highest magistrates made way for them. They enjoyed sometimes the exceptional privilege of riding in a carriage; at public games, a place of honour was assigned to them. And after death they, like the imperators, were allowed to be buried within the city, because they were above the laws. They enjoyed the royal privilege of mercy, for if they met a criminal on his way to execution, his life was spared.

The Buddhist "Order of Mendicants" was governed by the 227 rules of the

Patimokha. Of these, the first four were of specific gravity. A breach of any one of the four rules involved expulsion from the order; and they were, therefore, called the Parajika or the rules as to acts involving defeat.

The first rule says: "Whatsoever Bhikshu—who has taken upon himself the system of self-training and rule of life, and has not thereafter withdrawn from the training or declared his inability to keep the rule—shall have carnal knowledge of any living thing, down even to an animal, he has fallen into defeat, he is no longer in communion". "Withdrawn from the training" was the technical expression for throwing off the robes, retiring from the order, and returning to the world, a step which any member of the order was at liberty to take at any time.

The Peruvian "Virgins of the Sun"—a type of priests—were punished with living burial if detected in misconduct.

*(To be continued)*

*(Continued from page 9)*

Thus, yoga leads us to a kind of operation which is not merely individualistic. It is a common affair of all people. There is no such thing as my yoga or your yoga. We are all in the same boat. Our problems are common stock. We are in the same difficulty and we have to seek for the same remedy. Yoga is a common need that will be felt by every indi-

vidual. It is neither a religion, nor a creed; it is a need of life, as the breath we breathe. Yoga is the science of existence. It neither belongs to the West nor to the East. It is neither Hindu, nor Christian, nor Muslim. It is not any religion at all. It is the very fact of the essential structure of human existence.

*(To be continued)*

The control of the mind is, therefore, equal to the finding of the relation between the finite and the Infinite.

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There is really no such thing as renunciation of anything, because nothing in the world really belongs to you.

—**Swami Krishnananda**

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## Sivananda's Gospel of Divine

### **GOD—YOUR SUPREME GOAL**

#### **AVOIDING ARGUMENT**

Swami Satchidananda, an old Sannyasin who was staying in the Ashram, entered the office. He bowed to the Master and sat on a bench, contemplating the Master's countenance full of peace and bliss.

Sri Gopala Iyer also entered and exhibited to the Master clippings from newspapers, containing his contributions on the results of his researches in the sacred epics of the land. Surely a lifetime's labour would evoke a great deal of enthusiasm and approbation from the Master.

Sri Gopala Iyer sat beside Swami Satchidanandaji and, having nothing to do, picked up a conversation with his bench-mate. Polite words, courtesy, arguments, slightly heated debate—and the mercury in the 'egometer' began rising high!

Satchidanandaji was trying in vain to impress on the pundit that Advaita was not to be trifled with, that those who went mad if milk did not reach them in time for their morning coffee, should not cry down the Puranas, the Divinities and saints. This touched the pundit's delicate chords and he burst out, almost calling the Swami names, characterising him as a 'pseudo-Sannyasin', a 'mere flesh clothed in the orange garb', a 'waster of life', etc!

A sudden mellowing, and Satchidanandaji gave a very welcome twist to the disension.

"Maharaj, my knowledge is extremely

poor. I have not touched the fringe of the ocean of knowledge in which you ever swim. I am as yet a student, you are advanced. I beg your pardon for arguing with you."

This silenced the pundit, who walked out with his head held erect!

The Master smiled at Satchidanandaji and said, "Very good reply!"

#### **CULTURAL SERVICE FIRST**

Sri Natarajan had come from South India on a fund-collection mission on behalf of the Akhilandeswari temple. They had been experiencing difficulty in carrying on the work which was commenced by his father. Sri Natarajan had come to Delhi for the purpose of collecting funds. He did not meet with the success he had expected. He requested the Master to bless him with success in the undertaking.

The Master was silent for a while, almost as if he was unmindful of the visitor's plea. He was listening all the while, besides doing his own work.

The pen was put away.

"Do some Anushtan. This sort of running about for money is no good. By sheer Adhyatmic power you must be able to invoke God's Grace and get what you need. Money will come to you. You need not run after it. Reduce the food expenses in connection with functions. Whatever money is collected you must try to utilise for cultural purposes. Food will only create more quarrels and unnecessary crowds.

“Start a Sanskrit college. Bring out translations of the Vedas and Upanishads. Then people will be benefited. They will appreciate your work and money will pour in. Study the working of such colleges elsewhere. Obtain suggestions from Sri S.V. Iyer of Chingleput. He has organised a Seva Ashram there. That is the way to work. Then people will come to know of your spirit of service and will themselves come forward to help. Nowadays, no one will give you a donation merely for the sake of feeding.”

“Swamiji, food is also necessary, is it not?”

“Yes, that also; but the main thing is cultural service.” “Annadana (food charity) first and . . .”

“No, no. Jnana Dana (charity of knowledge) first and Annadana next. You can give a man food and in a few hours he will be hungry again. Furthermore, if you do not satisfy him and feed him according to his taste, he will abuse you.”

Where is God? There is nowhere where He is not. Just as one thread penetrates all the flowers in a garland, so also, one Self penetrates all these living beings. He is hidden in all beings and forms, like oil in seed, butter in milk, mind in brain, Prana in the body, foetus in the womb, sun behind the clouds, fire in wood, vapour in the atmosphere, salt in water, scent in flowers, sound in the gramophone records, gold in quartz, microbes in blood.

God dwells in all beings as life and consciousness. God is in the roar of a lion, the song of a bird, and the cry of a babe. Feel His presence everywhere.

See God in the wings of a butterfly, in the letters Alpha and Omega, in the cough of a patient, in the murmur of a brook, in the sound of a bell. Behold the wonder of the Lord's face in every object of this world.

Every breath that flows in the nose, every beat that throbs in the heart, every artery that pulsates in the body, every thought that arises in the mind, speaks to you that God is near.

Every flower that wafts fragrance, every fruit that attracts you, every gentle breeze that blows, every river that smoothly flows, speaks of God and His mercy.

The vast ocean with its powerful waves, the mighty Himalayas with its glaciers, the bright sun and stars in the wide sky, the lofty tree with its branches, the cool springs in the hills and dales, tell you of His omnipotence.

Everything is God. Good is God. Misfortune is God. Greet Him in everything and rest peacefully in bliss.

God pervades the entire universe. He walks in the garb of a beggar. He moans in pain in the guise of the sick. He wanders in the forest clad in rags. Open your eyes. See Him in all. Serve all. Love all. —**Swami Sivananda**

## Sri Guru Purnima, Annual Sadhana-Week and 45th Punyatithi Aradhana Celebrations

### Sri Guru Purnima

The sacred and holy occasion of the annual worship of the Spiritual Master, which is usually known as the Guru Purnima or Vyasa Purnima was solemnly observed at the Headquarters Ashram on the 18th of July 2008.

The function commenced early in the morning at Brahmamuhurtha 4.30 A.M., at the Sivananda Auditorium with prayers, group meditation and recitation of peace chants. Sri Swami Atmaswarupanandaji Maharaj and Sri Swami Yogaswarupanandaji Maharaj spoke on the significance of the day as relevant to all spiritual seekers throughout the world. Whoever be the Guru, whomsoever they may worship, it is the day for all the seekers of the God to invoke the blessings and grace of their Spiritual Preceptor.

In the forenoon, the formal worship was conducted in the Samadhi Shrine, with Abhisheka, Archana and Mangala Arati. Soon after this all the monks and devotees of the Ashram assembled at the Sivananda Auditorium to participate in the worship of the sacred Padukas of Sat Gurudev Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj, which was performed in an elaborate traditional manner.

After the Paduka Puja brief forenoon Satsanga was held. The programme commenced with opening Kirtan, Jaya Ganesha prayer and other Bhajans by Sri Swami Dharmanishthanandaji Maharaj. Soon after this Revered Sri Swami Padmanabhanandaji Maharaj read out the message of Revered and Worshipful Sri Swami Chidanandaji Maharaj, which was sent specially for the occasion of Guru Purinma. After reading the message, Sri Swamiji read out Brahma Sutras of Bhagawan Vysa and thereby formally invoked the blessings of Vyasa Bhagawan on the sacred Guru Purnima day.

During the Satsanga, Revered Sri Swami Nirliptapapdaji Maharaj and Revered Sri Swami Yogaswarupanandaji Maharaj spoke about the importance of the Guru in the path of Spirituality. Sri Swami Vimalanandaji concluded the forenoon Satsanga with a brief talk and sang some of Gurudev's devotional songs. The sacred Prasad was distributed to all the devotees in the end of the Satsanga.

Further report about Sadhana Week will be continued in the next issue.

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**SWAMI CHIDANANDA**  
(PRESIDENT)

The Divine Life Society  
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Distt. Tehri-Garhwal,  
U.K., Himalayas, India

### TO THE READERS OF THE MONTHLY MAGAZINE

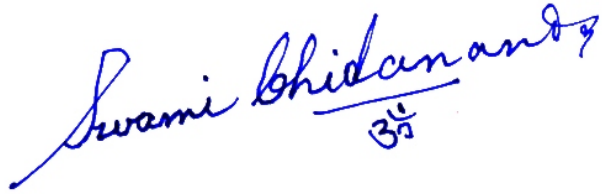
Radiant Immortal Atman!

Reference to the Guru-Purnima, dated 18th July 2008. Many devotees from all corners of India and abroad (like Don and Moo Briddell) have sent their devotion-filled messages to me.

Even though I wish to thank the above-mentioned devotees for their devout greetings individually but they are so numerous that it is impossible for me to acknowledge them individually and separately. Therefore, I do this thanks-giving through the pages of our monthly magazines, i.e., “**The Divine Life**” in English and “**Divya Jivan**” in Hindi.

May Almighty God and Gurudev Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj shower their Divine Grace upon you all on the sacred occasion of Holy Guru-Purnima that has recently passed.

May God and Guru Bless you!



(Swami Chidananda)  
President,  
The Divine Life Society

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Children's Page

## THE PRICE YOU SHOULD PAY TO PLEASE GOD

(Sri Swami Ramarajyam)

Nandlal of Bengal was a renowned artist. Avanindranath Tagore was his Guru (teacher). Once Nandlal painted a picture of Lord Krishna and showed it to him. Avanindranath looked at the picture for a little while and then glanced at him angrily. Shaking his head in disapproval, he threw it at Nandlal and said, "Is this a painting? Even the Patias (local painters) can paint better."

Nandlal said nothing. He picked up the painting, which was lying on the floor, touched his feet and went away quietly. At that time Nobel laureate Rabindranath Tagore was sitting with Avanindranath. He had cast a glance at the painting and was fascinated by it. Before Avanindranath had disapproved of the painting, he was thinking he (Avanindranath) must be feeling extremely happy to see the painting.

After Nandlal left, Rabindranath said to Avanindranath, "What a beautiful painting! And, you made such a comment!"

Avanindranath said, "You are right. Even I cannot paint such a beautiful picture."

Rabindranath said in surprise, "Why did you throw it?"

Avanindranath's eyes moistened with tears. He said, "I threw it because Nandlal is my favourite student. I will have to hurt him a little to impress upon him the need for labouring hard to maintain and develop his talent. Only then can he rise higher than where he stands now and be a better artist. Had I appreciated his painting, there would have been little or no possibility of his progress as an artist. His onward march from where he is now would have come to a halt."

Dear children, every action of ours should aim at pleasing God. God will be pleased more if we do those actions in a better way—better than the way we normally do. Note that our 'better way' is not the ultimate point to be reached. The ultimate point is 'the best way' of doing. This will be reached by labouring hard. This is worth doing because God will be pleased with our hard labour. God's pleasure will pave the way for the development of our talent and for our progression. Nothing is achieved without paying a price. Hard labour is the price we pay for pleasing God.

It is a psychological secret that if you strictly believe that what you want has come, it should come and it has to come, because your resolution touches the object that you need and it gravitates towards you immediately.

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The object of meditation is the final choice that you make in this world.

—Swami Krishnananda

## DADA J.P. VASWANI—A PROFILE

It is difficult to describe a saint, whose life is a hidden mystery. With simplicity and humble mannerisms, he hides his transcendental connections. But look deeper and you will find eyes that mirror placid lakes of serenity. Go closer and you will be enveloped with an indescribable feeling of bliss and unimaginable joy. In further proximity you will be disarmed; the five senses and the reasoning mind will not be able to comprehend an experience like this. Who is capable of transporting ordinary mortals like us to heavenly spheres? It can only be a true man of God!

Dada J.P. Vaswani is one such soul whose life is enshrined in the ideals set by the great seers and saints of ancient India. A practical and modern thinker with the traits of a mystic of yesteryears, he is a philosopher, friend and guide to millions around the globe.

Born in Hyderabad-Sind in 1918, Jashan Pahlajrai Vaswani, had a Ph.D in Physics with a thesis favourably assessed by Dr. C.V. Raman, and had brilliant career options open before him, but he chose to follow the road less travelled. He gave up his academics and joined his uncle and mentor, Sadhu T.L. Vaswani—a spiritual and intellectual beacon of modern India.

Even as he steps into his 90th year. Dada holds the mantle of spiritual head and administrator of the Sadhu Vaswani Mission, which has its headquarters in Pune. The Sadhu Vaswani Mission is a world renowned humanitarian service organisation. Its activities include such diverse areas, as educa-

tion, village upliftment, hospitals and medical aid, free housing projects and self-help schemes.

Dada believes that he is a pilgrim who is in search of people who look for the deeper meaning of life. He assumes the role of the guide who awakens the higher self of people. He is a gentle reminder that our lives are governed by a divine power.

Being a modern day saint, he decries ritualism and religious divides! His faith is rooted in the religion of Love and Service.

Dada J.P. Vaswani believes that the love that we express should find itself in the form of action. In Dada's words: "Another name for love-in-action is service and sacrifice. We must serve others! When we serve others we realise that against the background of the sorrows of others, our own sorrows appear so small." He believes that we have been given this human birth to help others. He says, "the deeds of kindness that we do for the less fortunate ones is the rent we pay for inhabiting this body."

Dada J.P. Vaswani is also a prolific writer; he has authored more than eighty books in English and Sindhi, many of which have been translated into other Indian and foreign languages. His words have stirred and inspired people from many walks of life.

Dada's philosophy is always practical and his thinking rational. This makes his teachings more acceptable and attainable.

A few of his utterances are as follows:

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- If you wish to build humanity anew, then begin with the child.
  - It is vital that we cultivate the healing habit of silence in this age of noise and ceaseless activity.
  - By what may we know that a man has made progress in spiritual life? By humility. He realises that without God he is nothing.
  - Knowledge talks, wisdom listens.
  - In the hustle-bustle of life, never forget that you are essentially divine. *Tat twam asi* (Thou art that.)
  - The opposite of love is not hatred; it is apathy, indifference to the needs of those around us.
  - If I have made one human being happier, one creature more comfortable, one heart more hopeful, my day has not been wasted.
  - Thou knowest all my Beloved, let Thy will be Done! In joy and sorrow my Beloved, let Thy will be done!

### SONG FOR DEVELOPING WILL

(H.H. Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj)

*Bhajo Radhe Krishna, Bhajo Radhe Shyama; Om Om Om Om Om, Om Om Om Om Om  
Soham Soham, Sivoham Soham*

Will is Atma-Bal, Will is dynamic; Have a strong Will, and realise Atman.	Om Om Om Om
Your Will has become weak, through various desires; Destroy them to the very root, by Vivek-Vairagya-Tyag.	Om Om Om Om
My Will is powerful, I can blow up mountains; I can stop the ocean waves, I can command elements.	Om Om Om Om
I can command nature, I am one with Cosmic Will; I can dry up ocean, like Muni Agastya.	Om Om Om Om
My Will is pure and strong, no one can resist; I can influence people, I always get success.	Om Om Om Om
I am hale and hearty, I am always joyful; I radiate joy and peace, to million distant friends.	Om Om Om Om
I can give Samadhi, by simple gazing; I can do Sakti-Sanchar, by mere Sankalpa.	Om Om Om Om
I am Yogi of Yogins, I am Emperor of emperors; I am King of all kings, Shah of all Shahs.	Om Om Om Om
I can elevate aspirants, by simple Master's touch; I can work wonders, by the power of Sat-Sankalpa.	Om Om Om Om
I can heal millions, from a long distance; This is due to Will, therefore develop Will.	Om Om Om Om
Give up Vasanas, and think of Atman; This is the royal way, to develop your Will.	Om Om Om Om
Keep diary, give up cares and worries; Do simple Tapas and develop attention.	Om Om Om Om
Develop patience, and have command of temper; Control the Indriyas, and practise meditation.	Om Om Om Om
Have power of endurance, and practise celibacy; All these will help you, to develop your Will.	Om Om Om Om
I am neither mind nor this body, Immortal Self I am; I am witness of three states, I am Knowledge-Absolute.	Om Om Om Om

## NEWS AND REPORTS

### NEWS FROM THE HEADQUARTERS

#### SEVA THROUGH SIVANANDA HOME

Sivananda Home has been started by the Divine Life Society Headquarters to humbly serve the needy and the poor people, those who require medical aid, but have no resources, no human help, no shelter, no attendant and those who are suffering from contagious diseases.

From the nearby Leprosy Colonies, several patients were admitted in the Home this month with different ailments besides leprosy: old age related problems, dehydration, diabetes, anaemia, asthma, injury after a fall, etc. Blood transfusions were administered to an elderly handicapped Babaji and two patients were hospitalized in serious conditions. One of them suffered from an acute perforation of the intestines and is still under observation and medical treatment in the Hospital. The other patient was treated for enteric fever, infective hepatitis and remained in a coma state for three days. By Gurudev's Grace and His All-pervading loving Presence, this Leprosy patient had a speedy recovery and could be discharged within a week.

"Swami Chidananda found a leprosy patient lying on the road to Haridwar. He carried him on his shoulders, right to the Ashram. Most people in the Ashram were afraid of contagion, so Swamiji put him in a tin-shed

over the hill. The patient had open ulcers and the flesh was falling off the limbs. Swamiji had to feed him eight or ten times a day, even as a mother would feed a child. Swamiji Maharaj has a soft corner in his heart for the people suffering from Hansen's disease. Swamiji never forgets to visit the leprosy patients on days of big celebrations in the Ashram. He distributes some special Prasad and all rush to him like children to their beloved father." (from "This Monk from India")

Other patients were also admitted this month, destitute, drenched in wet clothing, too weak to look for shelter and food. From the Ashram Headquarters two patients were brought in, one gentleman with infected ulcers on the legs, infested with maggots, who is slowly but steadily improving day by day. And one Babaji with paralysis of the right side of his body, hardly able to walk or talk, was admitted just a couple of hours earlier. Besides the newly admitted patients, others could be discharged from the Home after completing their treatment. Om Sri Satgurudevaya Namah.

*Gurur Brahma Gurur Vishnuh  
Gurur Devo Maheshvarah  
Guruh Sakshat Param Brahma  
Tasmai Sri Gurave Namah.*

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

## VALEDICTORY FUNCTION OF 59TH BASIC YOGA-VEDANTA COURSE

The valedictory function of the 59th Basic Yoga-Vedanta Course was held on Saturday, 28th June 2008, in the Academy's Lecture Hall. After the invocatory prayer, Sri Swami Yogavedantanandaji Maharaj, Registrar of the Academy, welcomed all those present on the occasion. Prof. Rajinder Kumar Bhardwaj Ji, Assistant Registrar, read the Report of the course. Thereafter some of the students expressed their impressions about the course. H.H. Sri Swami Nirliptanandaji Maharaj, Vice-President, H.H. Sri Swami Vimalanandaji Maharaj, General Secretary, The Divine Life Society Headquarters, graced the function and awarded certificates and Jnana Prasad to the students and honoured the members of the Faculty. The students also expressed their gratitude and offered gifts to all the faculty members.

Delivering the Valedictory address, H.H. Sri Swami Vimalanandaji Maharaj told the students about his experiences in the Ashram, during the early days of his stay and his fond memories due to his interaction with the two great Masters, Gurudev H.H. Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj and H.H. Sri Swami Chidanandaji Maharaj. Swamiji said that he never missed Gurudev's Satsanga and whatever he is today is due to these

two great saints. He told the students that it is very difficult to get a human birth and advised them to have constant remembrance of God. Quoting Papa Ramdas, a great saint, he said, 'Constant remembrance of God is life, forgetfulness is death'. The students were advised to do every work as worship of God and offer it to Him.

His Holiness Sri Swami Nirliptanandaji Maharaj, congratulated all the students for having successfully completed the course and was also happy to learn from their impressions that they have gained from it in all respects. Swamiji told the students that in our life we have three types of happiness—Sattvic, Rajasic and Tamasic. He explained the difference between these three types and advised the students to go beyond these three and try to attain Eternal Happiness, which can be experienced only through God-realisation. He also advised the students to maintain a daily routine and to practise daily what they have learnt during their stay in the Academy, keep in view the goal of life, i.e., God-realisation, and steadily go forward to achieve it. Swamiji invoked the Blessings of God and Gurudev on the students and others present in the function.

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

### AN ANNOUNCEMENT

**DIVINE LIFE SOCIETY, SURENDRANAGAR BRANCH, GUJARAT GOLDEN JUBILEE CELEBRATION & SADHANA SHIBIR, 6TH TO 9TH NOVEMBER 2008**

By the grace of Most Worshipful H.H. Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj the Divine Life Society, Surendranagar Branch will be celebrating its Golden Jubilee from 6th to 9th November 2008. A Sadhana Shibir is also proposed to be conducted on this occasion. Senior Swamijis from the Divine Life Society Headquarters will be participating and guiding the Sadhana Shibir. All devotees are cordially invited to participate in the functions.

For enrolment and information please contact:

Sri J.M. Sur, 7-Hatkeswar Mandir Hall, Surendranagar-362 001, Gujarat.

Phone: 02752-225341, Mobile: 09428292352

—THE DIVINE LIFE SOCIETY

## REPORTS FROM THE DLS BRANCHES

### INLAND BRANCHES

**Ambala (Haryana):** During the month of June 2008, the regular activities of the Branch were daily Satsanga which preceded by half-an-hour collective Japa of Mahamrityunjaya Mantra on Sundays, 15 minutes Shiva Mantra Kirtan on Mondays, Sri Hanuman hymns on Tuesdays and Saturdays, Guru Bhajans on Thursdays, and Sri Devi's hymns on Fridays. There is Homeopathy Seva at two centres daily, and Jal Seva. Special activities were a mobile Satsanga at the residence of a devotee on 4th June and Satsanga Mandali Foundation day on 26th June.

**Bellary (Karnataka):** The Branch conducted daily Puja and the weekly Satsanga on Sundays. It also organized special Puja and Satsanga on the birth anniversary of H.H. Sri Swami Devanandaji Maharaj.

**Bhanjanagar (Orissa):** There is weekly Satsanga with study of "Ponder These Truths" conducted by the Branch on Sundays, Ekadasi Satsanga with Sri Vishnu-sahasranama Parayana, and on Sankranti day, Sri Sundarakanda Parayana.

**Bhilai (Chhattisgarh):** The Branch conducted the monthly Satsanga on 29th June with Paduka Puja. Its Matrisatsanga included recitation of Sri Hanuman hymns on Tuesdays, of Sri Lalita-sahasranama Stotram on Fridays, and of Sri Vishnu-sahasranama Stotram and Srimad Bhagavad Gita during two Ekadasis. It also held on the birth anniversary of H.H. Sri Swami Devanandaji Maharaj a special Satsanga with Paduka Puja and Sri Vishnu-sahasranama Stotra Parayana.

**Bikaner (Rajasthan):** Regular Activities: 2-time Puja, daily Satsanga with Svadhyaya,

monthly Matri-Satsanga with recitation of Sri Sundarakanda and a Sikh scripture on 9th June, Paduka Puja on Sivananda Day, Gayatri Mantra and Mahamrityunjaya Mantra Yajna, and Satsanga with Bhajan-Kirtan on Chidananda Day, scholarships to students, Sivananda Library and Yogasana class. Special Activities: (1) Srimad Bhagavat Saptaha from June 3 to 7, (2) Gurudev's Sannyasa Diksha Anniversary: Paduka Puja, "Om Namoh Bhagavate Sivanandaya" Mantra Sankirtan, Bhajans, Prasad, etc., and (3) Nirjala Ekadasi celebration.

**Buguda (Orissa):** The Branch conducted the weekly Satsanga on Thursdays in the Bhajan Hall of its Sivananda Ashram, and also weekly mobile Satsanga. It held the monthly Sankranti day Satsanga in a temple.

**Chandigarh:** The daily evening Satsanga of the Branch includes Svadhyaya of Ramayana, and on Tuesdays recitation of Sri Hanuman hymns and on Thursdays collective Japa of Mahamrityunjaya Mantra. Sunday morning Satsanga includes Svadhyaya of 'Sadhana' and 'A Call to Liberation'. In the Satsanga on the fourth Sunday, Revered Sri Swami Dharmanishthanandaji gave a talk on 'The role of Guru', and participated in the special mobile Satsanga on 21st June. During the Satsanga on 29th June, a revered monk gave an illuminating talk. The Branch organised a 12-hour Akhanda kirtan of Mahamantra on Sivananda Day. It continued its social service through Yogasana classes in the morning as well as in evening, free medical consultation on all Sundays and feeding the poor on the last Sunday.

**Gandhinagar (Gujarat):** The Branch conducts Satsanga thrice a week, daily Yogasana session in the morning, daily evening Yogasana

class for women, Yogasana training class from 1st to 10th every month. It also arranges Daridra Narayana Seva on Sivananda Day and Bal Narayana Seva through Anganavadi on Chidananda Day. Financial aid to a leprosy colony and poor patients, Homoeopathy Clinic, Swami Sivananda Library are its other regular activities.

**Gurgaon (Haryana):** The Branch held Satsanga on Sundays, Mantri-Mandali Satsanga on Mondays, Katha and Havan on Ekadasis, Sri Satyanarayana Puja, and Katha and Bhajan-Kirtan on Purnimas. Earlier it organised Akhanda Path of Sri Ramacharit Manas on Sri Rama Navami and Sri Ramayana Katha from April 18 to 26. The programmes on the Birth Anniversary of H.H. Sri Swami Premanandaji Maharaj included Paduka Puja, Sri Sundarakanda Parayana, Bhandara, etc. It arranged Srimad Bhagavat Katha from May 11 to 18. There was treatment of 569 patients through Sivananda Free Clinic, and also check-up of 200 patients through health camps.

**Jeypore (Orissa):** The Branch conducted daily 2-time Puja, the weekly Satsanga on Sundays, and the weekly mobile Satsangas on Thursdays. On Sivananda Day, the programmes were Paduka Puja, Havan, Prasad Sevan in the morning and Satsanga in the evening in May, and 10-hour Sadhana Day in June. On Sri Adi Sankaracharya Jayanti, a special Satsanga with a talk on his life was organized. It also held a spiritual discourse of a visiting monk on 4th May.

**Khatiguda (Orissa):** The Branch had the weekly Satsanga on Thursdays, Ekadasi Satsanga with Sri Vishnu-sahasranama Stotra Parayana and a mobile Satsanga on 15th June. Sivananda Day was Sadhana day with 12-hour Akhanda Japa of Mahamantra and Narayana Seva.

**Khurja (U.P.):** The Branch conducted its

weekly Satsanga on Sundays with Svadhyaya and Sankirtan, Mahamantra Sankirtan by women at noon and by men for one hour in the evening. On the birth anniversary of H.H. Sri Swami Devanandaji Maharaj sweetened cold water was served to the public from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. It continued the daily Yogasana class for men in the morning and for women in the evening. It granted dole of Rs.200/- per month to a destitute woman.

**Lakhimpur-Kheri (U.P.):** The Branch had its weekly Satsanga on Mondays. It included Srimad Bhagavad Gita Svadhyaya and Mahamantra Sankirtan. It held a special Satsanga on the first death anniversary of Sri Viswanath Sethji. Rich tributes were paid to this ardent devotee of Gurudev.

**Manjhiguda (Chhattisgarh):** The Branch organised special Ganga Puja and Arati on Sri Ganga Dussehra.

**Nabarangapur (Orissa):** The Branch held special Satsanga and spiritual talks in a school from May 28 to June 2 on the visit of Revered Sri Swami Sivananda-Gurusevanandaji, and others.

**Nandini Nagar (Chhattisgarh):** In addition to the daily Brahma-muhurta session of prayer-meditation-recitation, the Branch conducted weekly mobile Satsangas on Thursdays, Saturday Matri-Satsanga with Sri Sundarakanda Parayana and recitation of Srimad Bhagavad Gita and Sri Vishnu-sahasranam Stotram during the two Ekadasis. Akhanda Mahamantra Kirtan for six hours every month was the other regular activity. It also organized Havans on 23rd May and 10th June.

It conducted a 3-day Residential Sadhana Shivar for children from June 30 to July 2. Revered Sri Swami Vidyanandaji of Dongargarh, Br. Pankaj Choubeyji of Raipur and many local scholars addressed the 45 participating children on

‘How to Develop Good Moral Character’, ‘God-realisation’ and ‘Bhakti Yoga’.

**New Delhi, Sri Swami Sivananda Cultural Association:** On the auspicious day of Gurudev’s Sannyasa Diksha anniversary Srimad Bhagavad Gita Parayana and Arati were done and Prasad was distributed. On 2nd June, food was distributed to 150 destitute, old, widows in Vrindavan Ashrams after holding Satsanga.

**New Delhi, Vasant Vihar:** The Branch is conducting its Sunday Satsanga with increasing enthusiasm of both the organizers, as well as the participants. Its highlight is Sri Sundarakanda Parayana on the first Sunday, meditation on the second, Svadhyaya of Gurudev’s writings on the third and a spiritual talk on the fourth Sunday.

**Nimapara (Orissa):** In addition to the daily one hour Mahamantra Akhanda Kirtan followed by reading of one chapter of Srimad Bhagavatam, the Branch held on Thursdays Paduka Puja and weekly Satsanga, special mobile satsanga on 15th and 16th June, and mobile Satsanga in a nearby village on 31st June. Its monthly Sadhana Day was on 29th June.

On the occasion of Pratishtha Mahotsav anniversary of Lord Jagannath on 8th June, a 12-hour Akhanda Kirtan of Mahamantra was done on the previous day, and on the 8th daylong programmes including special Puja and Havan, in presence of Revered Sri Swami Rameswaranandaji and Revered Sri Swami Sadasivanandaji and also Prasad-sevan by 200 participants was organised. It also organized 5-day youth camps for girls from May 9 to 13, and for boys from May 14 to 18. The two Swamijis conducted the programmes in which 100 boys and girls participated. Discourses on Bhagavad Gita by another Swamiji were arranged in both camps.

**Raipur (Chhatisgarh):** The Branch continued its regular activities of Sunday Satsanga, ‘Om

Namah Sivaya’ Mantra Sankirtan for one hour on Mondays, and special Puja and Sri Vishnu-sahasranama Parayana on Ekadasis.

**Rourkela (Orissa):** In addition to the twice-a-day Puja in Sri Viswanatha Temple, the weekly programmes of Paduka Puja in the morning and Satsanga in the evening on Thursdays, and Matri-Satsanga on Fridays at Sivananda Ashram, the Branch also arranged weekly mobile Paduka Puja in the morning and Satsanga in the evening at the residence of devotees on Sundays. 12-hours Akhanda Japa on Chidananda Day was the other regular activity.

It also organized the following special activities: (1) Sri Rama Navami: Paduka Puja in the morning, Narayana-seva at noon and evening Satsanga. (2) Sri Hanuman Jayanti: as Sadhana Day. (3) Birth anniversary of H.H. Sri Swami Krishnanandaji Maharaj: Paduka Puja and Sadhana Day. (4) Gurudev’s Sannyasa Diksha Anniversary: Spiritual programmes in the morning as well as evening. (5) Birth anniversary of H.H. Sri Swami Devanandaji Maharaj with special Satsanga.

**Rourkela, Steel Township (Orissa):** The Branch organised a 5-day Youth Development Camp from May 16 to 20. H.H. Sri Swami Nirliptanandaji Maharaj, Revered Sri Swami Sivananda-Gurusevanandaji, Revered Sri Swami Brahmasakshatkaranandaji and others gave inspiring discourses to the 156 participants, both boys and girls of 15-30 age group. Sri Swami Nirliptanandaji Maharaj inaugurated the temporary Satsanga Bhawan. Satsanga and Yajna followed the inauguration. In the Sadhana Day of the Branch on 21st May, 140 devotees participated. Oriya translation of “Sivananda Day-to-Day” and two booklets were released.

**Sambalpur (Orissa):** The Branch conducted daily 3-time Puja in Sri Viswanatha Mandir,

weekly Satsanga on Sundays, weekly meditation session on Saturdays, Paduka Puja on Sivananda Day and Chidananda Day, and Srimad Bhagavad Gita Parayana on Shukla Ekadasi every month. During May 2008, the Homoeopathy Dispensary treated 450 patients.

**Shergada (Orissa):** The Branch conducted twice a day Puja and weekly Satsanga on Sundays. It continued its social service through Homoeopathic Dispensary.

**Sunabeda (Orissa):** The Branch held daily Satsanga with Svadhyaya of "Bhakti Yoga" and also biweekly Satsanga with Paduka Puja and Svadhyaya of Srimad Bhagavad Gita on Thursdays and Sundays. It held a special programme on Sri Narasimha Jayanti. The medical unit at the Ashram site treated 100 patients during May.

**Sunabeda, Ladies Branch (Orissa):** In addition to the daily activities of Puja-Arati, reading of Srimad Bhagavatam and Mahamrityunjaya Mantra Japa in the morning, and one hour Mahamantra Sankirtan followed by prayer-recitation-Japa session in the evening, the Branch also conducted in the afternoon biweekly Satsanga on Wednesdays and Saturdays, and Shishu Satsanga on Sundays. The additional activities on Ekadasis are Paduka Puja and Sri Vishnu-sahasranama Stotra Parayana. 12-hour Akhanda Japa of Mahamrityunjaya Mantra was done on Chidananda Day. The Branch held Sadhana Day on 11th May. On the occasion of the visit of Revered Sri Swami Dharmaprakashanandaji, a public lecture was arranged on 31st May.

**Vadodara (Gujarat):** The Branch conducted the weekly Satsanga on Thursdays, and Paduka Puja and 9-hour Akhanda Japa of 'Om Namo Bhagavate Sivanandaya' Mantra on Sivananda Day and of Mahamrityunjaya Mantra on Chidananda Day. Dr. Jayant Dave gave a talk

in the special programme on Sri Adi Sankaracharya Jayanti. The Branch continued its social service through daily distribution of free medicines to the poor patients at the General Hospital, Homoeopathy Dispensary (4 days a week), Ayurvedic Dispensary (twice a week), and acupuncture treatment at subsidized rate on Wednesdays and Thursdays.

**Varanasi (U.P.):** The Branch held its fortnightly Satsanga on 8th and 22nd June.

**Visakhapatnam (A.P.):** The Branch held, on Mondays, the three-and-half-hour Satsanga and free Medical check-up by Dr. N. Nageswar Rao, and daily Satsanga on other working days. Srimad Bhagavad Gita Parayana is done on all Ekadasis, and on the birth anniversary of H.H. Sri Swami Devanandaji Maharaj, special Puja, recitation of Sri Vishnu-sahasranama Stotram and Sri Hanuman Chalisa, and Prasad distribution were the additional programmes. Daily free Yogasana, Pranayama and meditation training was continued.

## OVERSEAS BRANCHES

**Hong Kong (China):** The Branch organised 2-hour special chanting of Mahamrityunjaya Mantra for those who suffered in recent calamities. The monthly Satsanga on 10th May in which 49 persons attended, included 1-hour chanting of Mahamrityunjaya Mantra and a talk on Gurudev's "The Voice of the Himalayas". On the remaining Saturdays, one hour Mahamantra chanting was done with total 291 participants in April-May. 306 new persons attended the regular Yogasana class during June. It also organised two 4-session special Yoga Workshops (82 participants), a meditation and Pranayama class (8 participants), and Yogasana and Pranayama Gala programme (108 participants).

## WAYS OF MEDITATION

*(Sri Swami Shivapremananda)*

*[Continued from the previous issue]*

### TECHNIQUES OF MEDITATION

6. Fix the mind on the breath as in the first exercise and practise the following six affirmations by repeating them half-a-dozen times each, alternating with a deep feeling of the absorption of their meaning, while breathing spontaneously, without concentration. After one month, add retention, with repetition of the relevant affirmation and concentration on the heartbeat.

### KEY TO SUCCESS

- a. Inhale peace, retaining repeat "profound harmony" and exhale conflict.
- b. Inhale love, retaining repeat "spiritual fullness" and exhale resentment or ill-feeling. Likewise:
- c. Generosity, charity of heart, selfishness.
- d. Understanding, patience, intolerance.
- e. Honesty, truth, insincerity.
- f. Compassion, selfless love, attachment.

One may formulate other autosuggestions as per the need of the moment. Each of these exercises can be done for a few minutes, sitting in a comfortable posture with closed eyes, but with the back, shoulders and neck straight without being rigid. When tension builds up or the quality of meditation becomes shallow, discontinue and resume the

next day. A session of half an hour daily, preferably in the morning before breakfast or in the evening either before or two hours after dinner, is recommended. It can be prolonged and done in the morning and evening as per the individual's inclination. Motivation, quality and regularity are important. As Patanjali says, practice is the key to success.

### PSYCHOLOGICAL PROCESS

We can know our mind by observing our desires and tendencies, and our reaction to challenge, when the security of the ego is threatened. Our inclinations, choices as to books, magazines, TV programmes, places of entertainment and friends give a general indication to our nature. We also know about the kind of insecurity and lack of fulfilment by observing our intolerance, nagging, vituperation, harping on mistakes made by others, nursing of resentment over the years.

To observe the mind well one has to be impartial, that is, egoless. It is as if observing someone else's mind as a silent witness, not getting involved in self-justification, nor self-condemnation, but as a patient, kindly and understanding friend trying to help, pointing out that unhappiness is caused by selfishness and self-aggrandisement, dissatisfaction by superficiality and frivolity, anxiety by attachment and insecurity of the ego. It is a

method called *sakshi bhava*. Self-observation and analysis should not be overdone but, in order to overcome the fear of one's negative shadow, one has to face and come to terms with oneself, from time to time.

The state of the mind is dependent on the state of the "I", as it projects itself in the process of its survival and fulfilment, through the archetypal and recent background of race, religion, culture, social influence and education, and gathers experience by interaction, thereby forming layers upon layers of memory, one's happiness or unhappiness always depending on how the "I" has been treated.

Consciously or unconsciously one envies those who are successful in their profession due to their motivation, intelligence, endeavour and, above all, being more alert and, therefore, capable of learning, more astute to process and make use of knowledge, and more strong-willed to get where they wish to be. One also admires those who have been able to realise some spiritual ideals and gathered a measure of peace and happiness.

However given the choice, one is likely to pursue material success first and, failing or not being fulfilled by it, would turn to spiritual values. The reason is that one is oriented more empirically than philosophically, as survival is a greater priority than one's need to be happy through a philosophically-induced or religiously-connsoled state of mind. One is hardly aware of being related to a spiritual origin from which flow security and happiness, security by faith and happiness by doing something useful for and loving the good of others.

Since the infinite spirit is immanent in all, the experience of a sacred presence within by meditation and as a bonding link to those we can identify with by a loving relationship of caring, sharing and understanding, is the only way to lighten the weight of selfishness and loosen the strain of pride and vanity. This can never be done by meditation alone but by identifying the good of oneself with that of those we live and work with. *(To be continued)*