

STUDENTS OF SWAMI SIVANANDA KANYA INTER COLLEGE, KIWAI, MERRUT VISIT HEADQUARTERS ASHRAM

"Of all the gifts, the gift of Knowledge is the greatest gift."

(Sadgurudev Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj)

Following the noble dictum of Sadgurudev and being inspired by Worshipful Sri Swami Chidanandaji Maharaj to spread the light of knowledge in the rural areas, Sri Swami Ramananda Saraswati Maharaj, a Sannyasi devotee of DLS, endeavoured hard to start a school for girls in Kiwai village of Merrut District (U.P.).

Swami Sivananda Kanya Inter College, Kiwai is the fruit of his untiring dedicated efforts. About thirty students of this college,



accompanied by their teachers and Sri Swami Ramanandaji Maharaj, visited Headquarters Ashram on 2nd April 2011. During their two days' stay, the students visited the sacred shrines of the Ashram, paid obeisance to the senior Swamijis and also offered their loving services to Sadgurudev in the form of melodious *bhajans* during the night Satsanga at the holy Samadhi Shrine. They felt greatly blessed to be at the sacred abode of Sadgurudev.

May the Almighty Lord and Sadgurudev bless them all!



Sri Sankara Jayanti Message

SANKARA—THE PHILOSOPHER PAR EXCELLENCE

(H.H. Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj)

Sri Sankaracharya, the philosopher par excellence, the great apostle of the religion of Truth, the benefactor of humanity and the paragon of genuine spiritual heroes, stands ever as a never-to-be-forgotten ideal for all seekers on the path of Self-realisation. Man does not live by bread alone; he lives by the Spirit within. Spiritual hunger continues even if this physical body is cast off. Unless this innate hunger for knowledge and perfection is appeased, one cannot hope to have any rest. The saints, the sages and the Avatars provide for man, now and then, the required spiritual food. Sankara is one such great feeder of mankind. It was Sankara who finally and satisfactorily answered the perplexing questions of life, the questions concerning the inward, the outward, the above and their mutual relation, the questions which embrace existence itself. There is the seer, the seen and also something which cannot be either the seer or the seen; it has to be admitted on account of the necessity felt for believing in a reality which must be other than the individual who is the seer and the world which is the seen. Both of them are experienced to be unreal due to their inherent character of changing, passing away and giving rise to something else. Man exists because he has an immediate awareness that he exists; he has a direct apprehension of his existence. But he also knows that he is not a permanent being and that all men, animals and plants have an end. Man also knows that the world in which he lives and which presents itself be-

fore him as an object of his knowledge is subject to destruction and, therefore, ultimately not real. What, then, is real? If all living beings shall die and if the whole world, even the galaxy of solar systems, shall not last, what is it that shall last? Though it is true that everything seen perishes, is it also true that there is nothing imperishable? Sankara, the genius, comes forward and lifts the reason of man high by freeing it from the trammels of empirical vision. He boldly declares that if everything seen is impermanent, something must be permanent; if all shall come to an end sometime or other, there must be something which does not have any limit or end at any time. If the whole world is transient, God must exist and He alone can be eternal.

Sankara was not a dogmatist or a mere authoritarian, but a very clear-headed and highly intelligent logical thinker. He establishes the reality of the existence of God not simply on the ground of scriptures or tradition, but on the unshakable basis of immediate perception and on deductions there from. It is Sankara's firm conviction that nothing can be said to be transitory unless something is enduring, that no appearance is possible without a reality underlying it. The fact of the death of the individual, the changing modes of thought and the fleeting nature of the world are enough to justify us in positing the existence of a great Reality which does not vanish with the individual or perish with world. This Supreme Being is God, and to know Him is to know the truth of

all things in all forms, in time as well as in space.

The destiny of man is union with God, for man is essentially inseparable from God. Man is a part of the world and the world is rooted in God; it cannot exist if God is not. The reality of the world is the reality of God. Whatever has any value in the world belongs to the nature of God. Sankara avers that God or Ishwara is ultimately independent of all things and cannot be related to any externalised condition. But when He is thought to be so related, He is called the Creator, the Preserver and the Destroyer of the world. As He is in Himself, He is the absolute whole, Brahman Satchidananda (Existence-Knowledge-Bliss-Absolute). Man being only an appearance, his truth is in God, and he is, in the highest sense, God Himself. The *jiva*, when it is completely disillusionised, is the same as Brahman.

What, then, is the relation between the individual, the world and God? Sankara would forbid any such idea or the use of such expressions, suggesting a threefold nature of existence. Only to the blinded individual the world seems to be different from God and also different from himself, who feels to be different from God. The moment the screen is lifted, it will be seen that what really is, is an ocean of pure consciousness, the boundless Absolute where the world and the individual are no more separate beings but are united in an indivisible glory of Infinity and Immortality. This is the grand destination of life, the purpose of everyone's existence, the goal of all aspirations and endeavours. Brahman alone is real, all else has no reality independent of Brahman.

The incarnation of Sankara had the supreme mission of opening the eyes of humanity to the Transcendent Ideal for the

attainment of which it is meant. The human being is asked to discipline and regulate his life so as to conform to the Eternal Reality of God, Atma or Brahman. This direct realisation is the aim of all activities in this universe. Sankara teaches a religion for all mankind - the religion of *Brahmanubhava* or the Experience of the Absolute. The pre-requisite for the practice of this eternal religion means the culture and nurture of the precious virtues of non-irritability, self-restraint, peace, fortitude, faith and collectedness of mind, which Sankara calls the "sixfold treasure". This is to be carefully preserved with the aid of a clear discrimination of the Truth and non-attachment to external objects and states. In the whole history of the human race, there have been very few who preached with such an ardour of feeling and clarity of understanding the great doctrine of the Highest Truth that in the realisation of the Immortal Atma alone is the real solace of the individual. Glory to Sankara Bhagavatpada, the eye-opener, the light-giver, the consoler, the healer of the wound of limitation, the remedier of the disease of ignorance!

Purify your thoughts through selfless deeds, prayer and worship of Ishwara. Free the mind from distractions through *upasana* and devout contemplation, through *tapas*, *swadhyaya* and self-surrender to God. Practise to feel the presence of the indwelling Self everywhere and direct your consciousness to That, to the exclusion of all extraneous ideas. Know that your goal is *sahaja-samadhi* or *kaivalya-moksha* and be ever yearning to attain that hallowed state. May the blessings of Acharya Sri Sankara be upon you all! May all the Brahmavidya-Gurus bestow their grace upon you!

(Swami Chidananda's Letter of 1st May 1967)

DIVORCE NOT RELIGION FROM YOUR DAILY LIFE

Beloved Immortal Atman! Blessed Seeker after Truth!

Om Namo Narayanaya! Loving salutations and greetings in the holy name of Gurudev Sivananda. May the spirit of his Divine Life Message be rekindled in your heart with new freshness and vigour at this moment, when the season of spring is at its peak point and will soon lead on to summer. All life is newly activated in the vernal season, and I pray that a perennial spring season may reign within your heart and keep ever fresh flowers of moral loftiness and spirituality therein.

With the advance of spring and the eve of summer a challenge faces you in great urgency today. Rains have failed in several areas in our country. People are in desperate situations of thirst and starvation. Those of you who are fortunate and safe must stir yourself and see what you can do to help your brothers and sisters of the drought-stricken areas. Give up the mentality of thinking that this is the problem of the Government and as long as you have paid your taxes dutifully your responsibility ends. It is not quite so simple. As a civic entity your duty might have ended by paying the taxes. But as a moral and spiritual entity your duty now stands squarely before you. It calls you. Yours is a moral responsibility and a religious duty before the gaze of God Himself. Religion means active compassion. Devotion means service. Love means sacrifice. Spirituality means feeling the suffering of others and

then struggling to relieve them by all possible means accessible to you. Spirituality without compassion and active service to those in distress is a spurious spirituality which will take you nowhere. Rush to the aid of those in distress. Think of ways and means of how best you and your friends, associates and relatives can join together and give urgent and immediate help to those in travail now. God is to be worshipped in this manner too. Let your Bhakti and love for God manifest itself in service to the living God that is before you suffering in the garb of starving men, women and children and cattle.

The vision of Adi Sankaracharya and the sublime compassion of the great Lord Buddha claim your serious attention at this hour. If you call yourselves Indians, if you recognise your heritage in the lives and examples and lofty teachings of these two unique persons, if they are enshrined in your heart and if you remember them both upon the eve of their sacred Birth Anniversary, then behold the one Atman manifest in all living beings, in the starving, in the diseased, in the poverty stricken, in the suffering and the sorrowing people in endangered areas, where drought, famine and epidemics afflict countless brothers and sisters. See "Shiva in Jiva" as the great Vivekananda Swamiji put it and worshipfully offer your compassion as your Maha-Aradhana to this Divinity manifest as man. Set aside for a while your comfortable religion of early morning bath and your temple Pradakshina and Gayatri

and Gita Parayana and take up the worship of the living God at this time of need. Let your religion be the religion of service. This is the moment, when your religion is on trial and you are being tested upon the touchstone of the realities of life. Know what your religion means when it comes face to face with life and its pains. You cannot escape the issue that confronts you. You cannot and should not hide your head in the sand. Demonstrate in the laboratory and testing ground of dynamic life what your religion has done to you and what it has made of you. If your religion has not made you selfless, sympathetic, serviceful and sacrificing, then bundle it up and throw it into the sea. It is not religion. It is delusion. Start anew and begin to become truly religious. Behold the presence of God in all and worship Him through ceaseless service in a dedicated spirit. Trample down your selfishness. There is no greater disease than selfishness. O seeker! Cleanse yourself of this disease and become a beloved of God. Religion must be living, and it must enter into your daily life. And it must regulate your relations with your fellowmen. Otherwise it is at best lopsided and little understood, and it defeats its own purpose and will avail you nothing.

Let the *Atma-drishti*, the *Atma-bhava* of Adi Shankara lighten up your approach to life. “*Sarvam khalvidam Brahma*”, “*Sarvam Brahmaremayam*” declares the voice of the spiritual Idealism that is your lifebreath. This vision must be translated into action if your cultural Idealism, your spiritual concepts and religion are to become a living force for progress and achievement. Awake and LIVE YOUR RELIGION and SPIRITUALITY. Divorce not your religion from your daily life!

Do not divide God and man. Religion and life, God and man, they constitute a mystical unity and a whole. Recognise this. Practise this awareness. You cannot love God and neglect man. You cannot worship God and ignore suffering humanity. Love and worship! Befriend and serve your fellow beings! This is religion. This is what Buddha and Sankara would have you do. It is not only necessary to Be Good, but it is even more necessary to DO GOOD whenever and wherever life demands it of you. It does so now!

The religion that does not manifest in dynamic daily practice, that does not enter into the very fabric of your character and nature (*svabhava* and *achara*) and does not infill every little thought and act of yours, that religion will die. It will not live, because it is not a living, throbbing reality to you. It becomes as a burden of dead bones.

Religion is life. If you make it a purely subjective process and keep it away from your daily life, by this isolation of your inner life from the challenges of your outer living, by this divorce from reality, it loses all vitality and will stagnate. There will be no growth, no progress and no attainment. It becomes static and sterile. It becomes as a fossil, pretty but pretty useless. You will just be a religious person with no religion in you. Religion means nearness to God. Religion means awareness of God's Presence not only as a theological fact, but also as an indwelling Reality in all forms of life. Religious life is more than bath and *puja* and *parayana*, more than visiting temples, performing ceremonies and going on pilgrimage or even mere *japa* and *sadhana*. Religious life must imply a life of responsiveness to this inescapable fact of God's Presence in

everything everywhere around you. It implies your active recognition of the fact that "God is here. He is right here in these men and things I am dealing with, living amidst and working together." It means this recognition and the natural result of it, namely the coming into your life a heightened sensitivity to the essential divine quality of all things and beings, a reverence towards this universal manifestation (*Virat* or *Vishvaroopa*) of the Supreme Spirit and a feeling that all human life and activity is a process of spiritual communion with the Supreme Being immanent in His creation. Thus you enter into relationship with your God through your life and work. You draw nearer to Him day by day. You approach your goal with each dawn and each sunset. This is the technique of constant spiritual progress and continuous spiritual unfoldment. It is the secret of true religion. It is religion—man's nearness to God and God's Presence in man.

This spirit is vitally necessary for you. For then alone it will be a living force to combat the downward pull of the lower nature in you. This power alone can oppose and overcome the assailing unspiritual factors in life with which you will have to continuously contend. Again and again you will have to invoke this higher *shakti* in your earnest *sadhana* to annihilate the baser *rajasic* and *tamasic* elements that persist and tend to prevail in your life. Again and again you should determinedly destroy and overcome this opposition within you and establish the rule of pure *sattva* and the "*daivi sampatti*" in your nature. This is the process unfolded in the life of the divine Parashurama Avatar that we recall this month by observing the annual Parashurama Jayanti. In this process

the unregenerate gross undivine aspect will contrive to entrench itself behind unassailable conditions of persistence by numerous devices as the demonical Hiranyakashipu did of yore. It is then that even in Yoga and in *sadhana* dynamic *rajas* has to be added to the essential basis of pure *sattva*—the emergence of the Man-Lion, the great Narasimha Avatar that ultimately put down Hiranyakashipu.

Power of will, spiritual determination and a pervasive opposition to the undivine in all its aspects and all its details becomes the form of this overcoming. Hence the need for your spirit of religion to interpenetrate every phase and activity of your day to day life. Then it becomes the upholder and support of your moral and ethical nature which is the very foundation of supreme spiritual illumination. Religion and moral-ethical life are interdependent and mutually indispensable. Remember, Reflect, Meditate and LIVE this truth, this law. Then you will realise the Divine Reality that is behind this law. May God bless you! May you understand the essence and the secret of Religion, *Sadhana* and Realisation and attain the Highest Blessedness and Bliss in this very life! My prayerful good wishes ever abide with you, Beloved Seeker of God!

With regards and love,

Yours in Sri Gurudev



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Swami Bhidamandir". Below the main name is a smaller, stylized mark resembling a '3' with a horizontal bar through it.

SIVARATRI MESSAGE

(Sri Swami Krishnananda)

[Continued from the previous issue]

It appears that Akbar's small child was under Birbal's care and protection, and he would take the child for a walk on the lawns. One day Birbal connived with some friends to prepare an exact image of this child, and had it placed on the precipice of a deep well which was just near the lawn where they would walk and where Akbar also reclined in the evenings. It was twilight, and things could not be seen properly. That small image looked like Akbar's child.

"Oh, my child is there!" cried Akbar.

"Yes, Your Highness. Your child is there," replied Birbal

Birbal had also arranged for someone to suddenly push that image into the well; and it was done. The image of Akbar's child was pushed into the well.

"Oh, my child is in the well!" cried Akbar, and he immediately ran towards it.

"No, Your Highness. You have attendants; you have police; you have an army; you have secretaries. Why are you running?" asked Birbal.

"Eh, fool! Don't talk. It is *my* child," said Akbar.

Then Birbal said, "Your child is very safe. I have only answered your interesting query that God need not Himself run when He has attendants. Now, why did you run for the sake of a small child when you have attendants? You could have told your

assistant or the marshal near you to go instead. But the love that you have for your child is such that no attendant will do. Can you jump into the well, Your Highness? You know you cannot, but even then you ran as if you would jump into the well!"

That is the power of unconditioned love. It cannot be seen in this world because everything is conditioned by everything else. If there is something called 'A', it is there because there is another thing called 'B'. If 'B' is not there, we cannot see a thing called 'A'. And 'A', 'B', 'C', 'D'—there are millions of things. Our consciousness is involved in all these 'A', 'B', 'C', 'D'; and even if it appears that we are immensely fond of one particular 'A', 'B' or 'C', it is false, because as long as 'X', 'Y' or 'Z' exist, they will condition the affection which the mind appears to pour forth on certain things—even if it appears that the affection is almost one hundred percent. There is no such thing as one-hundred-percent concentration or affection on anything in this world. We can only have this kind of affection in a total existence outside of which there is no 'A', 'B' or 'X', 'Y'.

This also explains why it is difficult to concentrate the mind on an Ishta Devata. The Ishta Devata is a beloved object of concentration to which we have resorted. But it is an Ishta only conditionally; it is not really an Ishta. The dear object of meditation which

we have chosen under the instruction of a Guru is only tentatively so, because there are other things in the world which are certainly equally Ishta, or desirable, and the mind knows that. Sometimes these objects are perhaps more desirable than the spirit.

Solid, concrete objects are more attractive than abstract imaginations. To the beginner in meditation, the object of meditation appears like an abstraction. The mind knows that it is a thought and that God Himself is not physically or concretely contacted. When God's thought actually solidifies itself into a concrete existence, the world will appear like a chimera—just the opposite of what happens in ordinary circumstances. The world is a very solid object. We can hit our head against the wall as it is so hard and solid, but this God whom we are contemplating is not so solid. It is a vision that is projected by the mind. This peculiarity of it not being possible for the mind to accept the concrete reality of the object of meditation, and a simultaneously acquiescing in the reality of the world outside as a solid object, prevents any successful meditation and drawing in the grace of God.

Thus, Lord Siva is Bhole Baba, Ashutosh, immediately granting boons, but only to those whose love is not hypocritical, whose love is not double-dealing, whose love is not make-believe, whose love is not to get something ulterior, because God is not an ulterior object or an ulterior motive. The simplicity of God is due to the immensity of God's existence and the nearness of this immensity to the soul of the devotee. That is why it looks so simple. Otherwise, it is not so simple. No one can be as hard as God, if even a little distance is created between the lover and the beloved.

God is the beloved. In this world, the lover and the beloved are not identical things. They are two, and therefore they shall ever remain two, and remain subject to bereavement and destruction. The lover cannot merge into the beloved, and vice versa. And, until this is done, love is not complete; until this is done, devotion is not complete. It is when the devotion is really complete that the great Lord manifests himself as the child who can sweep our floor, bring the meal that we require, wash our clothes. We hear instances of this kind in the lives of saints of Maharashtra such as Eknath, Namdev, etc. Lord Sri Krishna came as a little boy called Kandiya Krishna; he washed their clothes, swept their floor, and did other menial work for Eknath and Namdev. When it was discovered that he had come in this form, he vanished.

Our hearts are hard like granite. Whatever be the religiosity and the traditional aspiration for religious life that many manifest, it is actually a dying to live for the sake of God. The destruction that is associated with Lord Siva—he is called the Lord of Death as he destroys everything, swallows everything in the end of time—is actually the destruction of that element in every one of us, whose presence prevents him from coming near us. What that element is, each one of us has to ransack within one's own heart and see that it is taken out so that the flood from outside unites itself with the flood that is arising from inside. This is God-union.

Sivaratri Vrata is a disciplinary occasion that is instituted in religion for the purpose of an occasional gathering of our spirits for the sake of that which is great and glorious, and the ideal of our lives. **(Concluded)**

MAKE GOD REAL AND LEAD A DIVINE LIFE

(*Sri Swami Atmaswarupananda*)

Gurudev said that the goal of life is God-realisation. Realise means to make real. Therefore the goal of life is to make God real—not a theory, not a concept, but real. There are many ways that we can try to make God real, but three ways are most common.

Normally we would like to make God real in His transcendental form, that which is beyond our understanding. But when we do that, ultimately we are forced to recognise that when they say that God is unknowable, unthinkable, unimaginable, that that is exactly what they mean. Unknowable means unknowable. Therefore the fruit of this search is a recognition of the absolute unknowability of God. When that is truly accepted, it brings a certain knowledge and peace.

The second place that we can search for God is in the manifest world, in everything that is known, including our own thoughts and identification. The ultimate discovery once again is that we can never see God as an object. The subject that we normally see life with, the ego, has to disappear, and then all objects are our own self. Reality alone is. There is no doubt, because there is no doubter left.

Then there is a third way that is suggested by the *mahavakya* that declares: "This self is Brahman," meaning that our innermost self, that which is actually directing us at all times is That. Although it is our

Indweller and is ever present, it is not graspable by the mind, and, therefore, we never notice it. Sometimes it will shine forth as a voice, other times as quiet guidance. If we meditate on it, we will recognise that it is always there, always guiding us. Unfortunately, only occasionally are we aware of that guidance. But when we realise that that guidance is always there, we can also recognise that it is not different from our own self. It can never be an object to our mind, because it is the source of our mind.

We make the mistake of looking for some state that we can be established in where we will feel that we have arrived. But Gurudev's instructions were to make God real. We are meant to be convinced of the reality of God and that we are That—here and now. We are not meant to be looking for some other state, although other states can be helpful if taken as indicators.

Realise the truth of the scriptures and live a divine life. That was the message of Gurudev. Pujya Swami Chidanandaji used to say to us, "You are Divine. Know this truth and live to express it." In other words, make God real here and now and lead a divine life. And our late revered Vedanta teacher, Swami Brahmanandaji, would say to us, "You just can't believe that this world, just as it is, is God." We are meant to believe it, and to live a divine life.

HATHA YOGIC METHODS

(*H.H. Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj*)

[Continued from the previous issue]

ASSERTIONS AND MEDITATIONS

Sit alone in your meditation room. Close your eyes. Slowly repeat again and again the following formulae. Now, saturate the mind and intellect with these ideas. Your whole system, flesh, blood, bones, nerves and cells should powerfully vibrate with the following ideas:

I am all-purity (Suddhoham) Om Om Om

Sexless Atman I am Om Om Om

There is neither lust nor sexual Vasana (subtle desire) in Atman Om Om Om

Lust is mental Vikara (modification);

I am a Sakshi (witness) of this Vikara Om Om Om

I am Asanga (unattached) Om Om Om

My will is pure, strong and irresistible Om Om Om

I am fully established in physical and mental Brahmacharya Om Om Om

I am feeling the purity now Om Om Om

You can have a sitting at night also. This is general meditation for Self-realisation. Sit for ten minutes. Increase the period to half an hour. Keep up the Bhava (mental attitude) during work also.

Write down on a piece of paper, in bold types, the word "OM PURITY" six times. Keep the paper in your pocket. Read it

several times during the course of the day. Fix it also in a prominent place in your house.

Have the word image "OM PURITY" clearly before the mind. Remember several times daily the Brahmachari-saints like Swami Vivekananda, Swami Dayananda and their powerful actions. Think over the multifarious advantages of a pure life of Brahmacharya and the disadvantages and evils of an impure life. Never leave the practice. Be regular and systematic. Gradually you will become purer and purer and ultimately you will become an Oordhvareta Yogi. Be patient!

Daily feel: "Through the grace of God, I am becoming better and better, every day, in every way". This is auto-suggestion. This is another effective method.

COLD HIP-BATH

A cold hip-bath is very invigorating and enervating. There is not much difference between a hip-bath and a sitz-bath. A cold hip-bath tones and soothes the nerves of the genito-urinary system and stops nocturnal discharges in an efficacious manner. This is the general nervine tonic as well, as all the nerves are braced up.

Stand up to your navel in a river, lake or tank for half an hour. Repeat Om or Gayatri or

any other Mantra. Rub the lower part of the abdomen or belly with a coarse turkish towel or a piece of *khaddar* several times. This can be practised twice daily, morning and evening, in summer season. The bath can be conveniently managed at home in a big zinc tub. Aged persons and convalescents can use luke warm water. Wipe the parts with a

dry towel and put on warm clothing. Cold douches, spinal douches and cold shower baths are of immense use in the practice of Brahmacharya. Shower baths can be easily adjusted at home by fixing the spray-apparatus to the tap.

(To be continued)

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Yoga in Daily Life

JNANA YOGA

(H.H. Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj)

[Continued from the previous issue]

Moksha is the summum bonum of life. It is freedom from births and deaths. It is not annihilation. It is annihilation of this little "I".

It is obtained through Knowledge of the Self. You will have to know the truth through direct intuitive experience.

You will have to cut asunder the veil of ignorance by meditation on the Self. Then you will shine in your pristine purity and Divine glory.

ASSERT THE MAJESTY OF YOUR REAL SELF

You are not the little self, Mr. John Murray. You are not Miss. X.Y. Banerjee. You are not Mr. S.R. Iyer. You are not Mrs. A.M. Iyengar. Endeavour to remove this body idea. Attempt to eliminate this sex idea. You are neither a male nor a female. Transmute the sex energy or reproductive energy into spiritual energy or Ojas Sakti by pious thoughts, constant Satsanga, ceaseless Atmic enquiry, study of Atma Jnana books,

mental drill and meditation. Remember always, "I am. I exist. I am a centre of consciousness in the ocean of life. I am a centre of thought, influence and power."

Courage, power, strength, wisdom and joy are your divine heritage, your birthright from the Absolute. Develop your will-power. Will has made intellectual and spiritual giants. You are equal to any and every man. You have emanated from the same source. You are an expression of the same one life, one Existence, one Sat, one Reality. You are the real "I", the real Atman. You are immortal. You can hardly be destroyed. You are invincible. You can by no means be injured. Belief in this sense-world alone is death. Your real nature is Satchidananda, immortality and bliss. The Seer of Self sees not death nor disease nor sorrow. The Seer sees all as his own Self. He pervades all. He knows everything. He is all-powerful.

WHAT IS ATMAN?

Atman or Brahman is Existence

Absolute, Knowledge Absolute, Bliss Absolute. It is different from the gross, subtle and causal bodies. It transcends the five sheaths (Pancha Koshas). It is the witness of the three states: waking, dreaming and deep sleep. It is the support of the twenty-four Tattvas. It is distinct from Jiva and Ishvara who are associated with Avidya and Maya respectively.

The Self appears to be finite on account of Avidya. But when the ignorance is dispelled, that one Atman shines by its own light, like the sun when clouds are dispelled. This Samsara which is filled with love, hatred, etc., is really like a dream. It appears to be all real, so long as one is involved in it, but when one awakes by acquiring true knowledge, it becomes unreal. Just as bubbles rise from, exist and dissolve in the water, so also the Supreme Lord who is the material cause for everything, the pure Atman, by the contact with the five sheaths, etc., appears to put on their respective qualities. Just as we attribute blue colour to the sky, so also we attribute on account of indiscrimination, the qualities and activities of the body and the organs to the pure, Satchidananda Atman. Passion, desires, happiness, misery, etc., exercise their functions only during waking and dreaming states when the intellect is present and are not present in the deep sleep, when intellect is absent. They, therefore, belong to the intellect and not to the Pure Nirvikara Atman. Egoism and the idea "I know" crop up

by indiscriminately mixing up the Satchidananda aspect of Atman with the functions of Buddhi.

VEDANTIC SADHANA

A beginner in Vedanta should study Atma-Bodha, Tattva-Bodha, Laghu Vasudeva-Manana and Vivekachudamani. English translations are available. He should have a comprehensive understanding of the Vedantic Prakriyas. He should have an intelligent grasp of the three bodies, the five sheaths and their Dharmas or functions, and the three states of consciousness, viz., Jagrat, Svapna and Sushupti. He should know the various Yuktis such as Anvaya Vyatireka, Adhyaropa-apavada, Neti-neti, Laya Chintana, Bhaga-Tyaga Lakshana, etc. He should have a clear knowledge of Vivarta Vada, Advaita Vada, Drishti-Srishti Vada, Sva-Prakash-Vada and Ajati Vada.

An advanced student should study Upanishads, Brahma Sutras, Panchadasi, Vichara Sagar, Naishkarma Siddhi, Chit Sukhi Khandana Khadhyam, Advaita Siddhi, the monumental works on Vedanta. Advanced books should be read under a Brahma-Sroti, Brahma-nishta. He should repeat mentally Pranava (OM) at least 21,600 times daily. He should start his Sadhana, Japa and Nirakara meditation early in the morning at 4 a.m. He should possess the four means of salvation.

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 garbs 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

Children's Page**THE SUPPORT OF GOD***(Sri Swami Ramarajyam)*

The war of Mahabharata was about to start. Arjuna as well as Duryodhana went to meet Lord Krishna to seek His help. Arjuna had gone on behalf of the Pandavas and Duryodhana on behalf of the Kauravas.

Lord Krishna said, "I can offer either myself or the Yadava armies by way of my help. You can decide between the two."

Duryodhana said to himself, "What help Lord Krishna alone can render? In a war it is the army, which is helpful, and not an individual."

Arjuna thought—May the Lord be on our side! Only His presence will do wonders. We, the five Pandavas would gain the strength of five hundred thousand soldiers.

Both of them spoke their minds. Lord Krishna gave himself to the Pandavas. The Yadava armies were given to the Kauravas.

Who won finally? Pandavas fought the war with Lord Krishna on their side and won it. Though small in number, they were victorious. On the other hand, the hundred Kauravas fought with the help of millions of Yadava soldiers but lost the war.

This is the auspicious consequence of relying on the support of God. If you use your energies, your capabilities and your resources, relying fully on the support of God, you are sure to achieve success. If you ignore this support, even the strength of all the creatures on earth is not going to help you, let alone your strength.

WHERE IS GOD?

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.

—*Swami Sivananda*

Sivananda's Gospel of Divine Life

FAITH AND PRAYER

ATTRIBUTES OF GOD

1. God is the end or goal of all Yoga Sadhanas.
2. God is absolutely perfect. He is the highest purpose or highest good of the world.
3. God dwells in all beings as consciousness and life.
4. The Lord is one. He is the first. He is all that is. His name is Truth.
5. Where is God? There is nowhere where He is not.
6. God hears a man's private conversation as plainly as thunder.
7. The Lord's body fills every corner of the universe. Its substance is wisdom.
8. The Lord pervades everything, just as sweetness pervades sugar-cane.
9. He who has all glory, all power and all knowledge is Bhagavan or the Lord.
10. The Lord possesses infinite qualities to an infinite degree.
11. God is the Soul or Absolute Spirit independent of matter.
12. God is love, beauty, truth and goodness.
13. God is truth. God is love. God is the source of light and life. God is fearlessness. God is perfection. God is freedom. Attain God-realisation and be free.
14. God is the unseen teacher.
15. God is the Guru of all.
16. God is not only love but also wisdom, peace, bliss, light and power.
17. In Him are all wisdom, light, bliss, peace and joy. Remember Him always.
18. God is perfection, freedom, all wisdom, all peace, all bliss, immortality and eternity. Therefore, He alone is the real ideal of man.
19. The one God dwells in all temples, churches and mosques.
20. God is your partner always.
21. God is your indweller (Antaryamin).
22. There is no friend like the indweller.
23. God is nearer to you than your nose or jugular vein.
24. The Lord was in the beginning; He lives through all ages. He shall be forever one, for His nature is eternity. Know Him and be free.
25. God exists. Nothing can exist without a cause. Seek Him and be happy.
26. The only substance, the only reality that endures for ever is God.
27. Resort to Him. Take refuge in Him. Realise Him and be free.
28. God is not very far but is nearer to man than man is to himself.

29. God is an able and intelligent shepherd. He guides His sheep when they go astray.

30. God is the unifying principle of the world and the centre towards which all things strive.

ON DOING ONE'S DUTY

Vishnu Swamiji expressed this doubt to the Master: "If the disciple's duty towards the growth of the institution to which he belongs clashes with his obedience to the Guru, what should he do?"

"The Guru's words must be obeyed, whatever happens to the Ashram. Then everything will be all right," observed the Master.

Vishnu Swamiji noted down the instruction and after a moment's thought, asked again, "If the duty is not done properly is it not a sin?"

"If you fail in your duty it is a sin."

"When contradiction comes between obedience and duty, what should be done?"

"If there is contradiction, pray. Pray and wait," was the Master's reply.

SAGE'S EXPERIENCE OF DREAM

"Is it true that one who experiences Samadhi or God-consciousness will also have dreams?" asked an aspirant.

The Master replied, "Yes, he also will have dreams but his experience of them will

be quite different from that of other people, just as his waking state, too, is different from the waking state of ordinary people. A sage sees only Brahman during his active life in the waking state. He sees the world as a dream while still retaining his Brahmic Consciousness always. Similarly, during dream and deep sleep also, the sage retains the Brahmic Consciousness and is not affected by these states. His experience during the states of waking, dream and deep sleep is entirely different from the experience of ordinary people in these states."

PAST BIRTH RELATIONSHIP

"Is it necessary," queried Vishnu Swamiji, "that we should have had contact with Swamiji in our previous lives?"

"Yes," replied the Master. "You must have had."

"Then why do some students go away from Swamiji after a short stay?"

"Because of their past Karma."

CONTROL OVER SLEEP

"How can we have control over sleep?" asked a student.

"Take light food at night. Give up rice for the night meal. If sleep comes during meditation, stand up. Pour water on the face. Tie a tuft of hair on your head to a nail on the wall so that it will wake you up when you fall asleep. Whenever sleep supervenes, stand up. Practise Pranayama."

* * *

INAUGURATION OF SIVANANDA PEACE PILLAR IN PIETERMARITZBURG, KWAZULU-NATAL, SOUTH AFRICA

With the noble mission of promoting peace and harmony, Sri Ishwar Ramlutchmanji, an ardent devotee of Sadgurudev Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj from South Africa, has committed himself to install Sivananda Peace Pillars at different places of South Africa. At a heritage site in Pietermaritzburg one Sivananda Peace Pillar of 3.5 metres high was inaugurated on 16th April 2011.

H. H. Sri Swami Padmanabhanandaji Maharaj, General Secretary, DLS Headquarters was invited to attend the Ceremony of Unveiling the Sivananda Peace Pillar at the Pietermaritzburg City Hall, KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa on 16th April 2011. The function was hosted jointly by KwaZulu Natal Provincial Government and Sri Ishwar Ramlutchman.

The event began with the unveiling of the historic Sivananda Peace Pillar Heritage Monument by Premier Zweli Mkize of Republic of South Africa and Sri Swamiji and Sri Ishwar Ramlutchman. Apart from the devotees of Sadgurudev, Mr. Roy Padayachee, National Minister of Communications, Mr. Mike Tarr, Mayor of

Pietermaritzburg, Mr. Yusuf Bamjee, Mayor of Umgungundlovu District Municipality, Mrs. May Mkize, the first Lady of the Province, Mr. Logie Nadoo, Deputy Mayor of Durban and many other dignitaries attended this glorious event. This was followed by deliberations on peace and harmony by the various dignitaries at the Heritage City Hall. Sri Swamiji delivered a brief talk on Gurudev and his contribution to peace and welfare to humanity.

On this auspicious occasion, Sri Swamiji also released three books—‘Gems of Wisdom’, ‘Positive Aids to Peace’, and ‘Thus initiates Swami Sivananda’ for free distribution. Thereafter, Sri Swamiji and Sri Mr. Ishwar Ramlutchman presented the Sivananda Peace Awards to several KwaZulu-Natalians including Premier Mkize for their significant contribution towards promoting unity and peace.

We offer our prayers to Sadgurudev to bless Sri Ishwar Ramlutchmanji with radiant health, long life and happiness so that he can continue to do Gurudev's seva.

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NEWS AND REPORTS

NEWS FROM THE HEADQUARTERS

SEVA THROUGH SIVANANDA HOME

By the profound Blessings of Sri Gurudev and the immanent Grace of Sri Swamiji Maharaj, the Divine Life Society Headquarters continues rendering its humble service through Sivananda Home, situated in Tapovan near Laxman Jhula. It provides medical facilities for homeless people who have become ill and are in need of in-patient treatment.

Though all the beds are usually occupied, there is at the same time a dynamic turn, in-patients getting discharged after treatment, and new patients being admitted.

It was about 11.00 p.m; on an average day, when a female patient was brought inside the Home for admission. She was found by a kind-hearted passer-by, who recognized her distress, while seeing her without clothing, bleeding, covered in an old stinking blanket, all by herself in the darkness, scared and in deep agony.

"Your task is not to seek love, but merely to seek and find all the barriers within yourself that you have built against it." (**Rumi**)

She might have been roaming on the streets for quite a long time, observing the smell of her body, enormous nails, infested hairdos and old injuries all over, as silent witnesses of unimaginable suffering. Her

body was completely cramped up, as in a spastic condition, and only at the time of food, she would stretch her hands out and gulp down her complete meal in a few minutes; at the same time trying to fetch as much food as possible from other inmates. Even soap bars she would swallow and she would just sleep with her slippers still on her feet.

It was only after more than three weeks of admission that she spoke her first winged words: "Every day early in the morning, I am taking the Name of the Lord." While uttering these words, which she went on repeating, a veil disappeared from her painful face and she regained her dignity as a human being, having a divine outlook almost. So, *this* was her secret, *this* had sustained her all those days, months, maybe years altogether. *This* was her one and only support, *this* was the One existing Reality, her only faith, her sole hope, her compass, her anchor and her wisdom: To call on His Name and to be in His Presence. Then. Now. Always.

"There is one thing in this world which must never be forgotten. If you were to forget everything else, but did not forget that, then there would be no cause to worry; whereas if you performed and remembered and did not forget every single thing, but forgot that one thing, then you would have done nothing whatsoever." (**Rumi**)

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

SRI RAMANAVAMI CELEBRATIONS AT THE HEADQUARTERS ASHRAM

Lord Rama is the Supreme Soul, the Antaryamin, the Protector of all beings. The Name of Lord Rama is the greatest purifier of the heart. Therefore, recite His Name, sing His glory and serve His lotus-feet.

(Sadgurudev Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj)

Sri Ramanavami, the sacred day of the advent of Lord Sri Rama on this earth plane, was celebrated with deep devotion and spiritual gaiety at the Headquarters Ashram on 12th April 2011.

As a prelude to the celebration, the *Mula Parayana* of Sri Valmiki Ramayana was done from 20th March to 6th April 2011. The chanting of Divine *Taraka Mantra* "Sri Ram Jai Ram Jai Jai Ram" was done daily for two hours from 8th to 10th April in the holy premises of Sri Vishwanath temple. On 11th April, there was *akhand* chanting of sacred *Taraka Mantra* from 7 a.m. to 6 p.m. by the sadhakas and devotees of the Ashram.

On Sri Ramanavami Day, immediately after the *brahmamuhurta* prayer-meditation session, a *prabhat-pheri* was organised. A special *Yajna* was also performed for world peace. From 9 a.m. to 12 noon, a grand

abhisheka and *archana* were offered to Lord Sri Rama with chanting of *Vedic Mantras* in the sanctum-sanctorum of beautifully decorated Sri Vishwanath temple. All the sannyasins, brahmacharins, sadhakas and visitors of the ashram participated individually in the *abhisheka* and *archana*. The simultaneous singing of melodious *bhajans* and *kirtans* by the devotees filled the whole atmosphere with the vibrations of divine ecstasy.

To mark this auspicious occasion, some DVDs having early morning meditation talks of Worshipful Sri Swami Chidanandaji Maharaj and talks of Revered Sri Swami Brahmanandaji Maharaj were also released. Thereafter, the *Avatar Sarg* describing the Lord's advent was read from Sri Valmiki Ramayana and Sri Ramcharitmanasa. The celebration concluded with a grand *arati* and distribution of sacred *prasad* at Annapurna Dining Hall.

May Lord Sri Rama and Sadgurudev bless us all with the constant remembrance of the Divine Name.

You can attain God-realisation through worship of Avatars like Lord Krishna and Lord Rama. Many have already attained God-realisation in this manner. Tukaram, Ramdas, Surdas, Mira Bai and Tulasidas have seen God face to face. Their powerful writings bespeak their high spiritual attainments.

—Swami Sivananda

MAY 2011

NEWS AND REPORTS

19

REPORTS FROM THE D.L.S. BRANCHES

INLAND BRANCHES

Ambala (Haryana): During the month of March 2011, the Branch continued its regular activities of weekly Satsanga on Sundays with half-an-hour collective Japa of Mahamrityunjaya Mantra, Video Satsanga on the Second Sunday of the month, and Tuesday Satsanga with Sri Hanuman hymns recitation, and social service through two Homoeopathy Clinics. It also held special programme in grand scale to celebrate its Foundation Day on 25th March.

Bangalore (Karnataka): Regular Activities: Weekly Satsanga with Paduka Puja, Svadhyaya and recitation from Sri Guru Gita and Sri Bhagavad Gita; Friday Satsanga with Parayana of Sri Vishnu-sahasranama and Sri Lalita-sahasranama Stotras and Sri Devi Puja, Special Abhishekam and Svadhyaya of Gurudev's writings on the first Sunday; Akhanda Kirtan on the third Sunday; Divine music on the fourth Sunday followed by Video Conference with H.H. Sri Swami Padmanabhanandaji Maharaj.

Barbil (Odisha): The Branch held the weekly Satsanga on Mondays, mobile weekly Satsanga at the residence of the devotees on Thursdays, and the monthly Sadhana Day on Chidananda Day. Paduka Puja was performed on the Agni Utsav Day, 17th February, Sivananda Homoeopathic Dispensary treated 475 patients during February.

Bargarh (Odisha): In addition to the daily activities of 2-time Puja-Arati and evening Yoga meditation Vidyalaya class—Yogasana, Pranayama, Svadhyaya, meditation—the Branch conducted Paduka Puja on Thursdays, the weekly Satsanga on Saturdays and Bhagavad Gita Parayana Chakra (rotation) and study on Sundays. On the occasion of the Foundation Day

of the Ashram, it organised on February 8-9 two-day programmes—Special Puja, discourses on Srimad Bhagavatam, Prasad Sevan, distribution of clothes to the leprosy patients and needy destitutes, a souvenir.

Baripada (Odisha): In addition to the daily Paduka Puja, the Branch held special Paduka Puja on Sri Maha Sivaratri. Mobile Satsanga on March 6 and 12, Special Satsanga with Paduka Puja on the 14th and 29th and the monthly Sadhana Day with Paduka Puja on 6th March. It supplied the monthly requirement of medicines to 105 inhabitants of a leprosy colony. Food was distributed to 220 orphan children on March 19 and 31, and to 100 poor persons residing in a leprosy colony on 8th March.

Berhampur, Lanjipally (Odisha): On the occasion of the Foundation Day of the Branch; it organized Srimad Bhagavata Saptaha from February 12-18. Yogasana camp was also along with it. On the concluding day a Yajna was performed and Prasad and clothes were distributed. The Visarjana ceremony was on 19th February.

Bhilai (Chhattisgarh): The monthly Satsanga of the Branch on 6th March included Paduka Puja, Bhajan-kirtan, Bhog, Arati, etc. The Matri-Satsanga included Sri Hanuman Chalisa Path on Tuesdays, Sri Lalita-sahasranama Stotra Parayana on Fridays, and Sri Vishnu-sahasranama and Srimad Bhagavad Gita Parayana during the two Ekadasis.

Bhuj (Gujarat): The fortnightly Satsanga of the Branch included spiritual talks. The special programme on Makara Sankranti was Laghu-Rudra-Yajna, Guru Puja, Sri Siva-Mahimna-Stotra Parayana, Prasad, etc. It also held on Platinum Jubilee Programme an

exhibition of photographs and books of our Gurus.

Bikaner (Rajasthan): Regular Activities: 2-time Puja in Sri Mahamrityunjyeswar Mandir; weekly Satsanga on Sundays; Matri-satsanga with Sri Sundarakanda Parayana on the second Tuesday and the last Saturday every month; special Satsanga on Sivananda Day; Havan along with Mahamrityunjaya and Sri Gayatri Mantra on Chidananda Day; Sivananda Library; and Financial aid to poor students.

Special Activities: (1) Solar Eclipse: Bhajan-Kirtan. (2) Makara Sankranti: Bhajan-Kirtan, distribution of sweets, fruits, biscuits to the blind students. (3) Sri Vasanta Panchami: Sri Saraswati Puja. (4) Sri Maha Sivaratri: Sri Panchakshara Mantra Kirtan, distribution of fruits, sweets to the poor. (5) Sri Gauranga Mahaprabhu Jayanti: Mahamantra Kirtan, Gulal Holi.

Boudh (Odisha): The regular activities of the Branch are weekly Satsanga on Thursdays, and monthly Paduka Puja on the last Sunday. It organized special programmes in grand scale on February 2-3 on the occasion of its Foundation Day. On 2nd February, Revered Swami Dharmaprakasanandaji and Revered Swami Brahmasakshatkaranandaji addressed an assembly of 300 students and teachers of a High School in a nearby village. In the Nagar Sankirtan four Sankirtan Mandalis had also participated. It reached the Town Hall where there was the main public function, which was inaugurated with the rituals of lighting the lamp, garlanding the portraits of our Gurus. Dr. Prasanta Kumar Pradhan, I.A.S., the Collector and D.M. Boudh District, the Honourable Speaker Odisha Legislative Assembly and the two Swamijis graced the function by their presence.

On the second day, early morning

meditation was followed by Yogasana, flag hoisting and Paduka Puja. The two Swamijis gave discourses in a local college, and also in a Girls' High School. In the evening there was a public programme in the Town Hall. There was overwhelming response from the public and the Hall was overcrowded. Four Jnana Prasads were distributed.

Chandigarh: The Branch organised Sadhana Shibir on March 6-7 as its Annual Day celebration. H.H. Sri Swami Vimalanandaji Maharaj, Revered Swami Tyagavairagyanandaji, Revered Swami Ramarajyamji, Revered Swami Vaikunthanandaji, Revered Swami Dharmanishthanandaji, Revered Swami Brahmeshanandaji and Sri Pankaj Ji of Sri Ramakrishna Mission, and Sri Gopiji gave spiritual talks and guidance. Revered Swami Bhaktibhavanandaji rendered Bhajans and Kirtans. 200 delegates attended the retreat. The programmes included early morning meditation, Yogasana class, Prabhat Pheri, Paduka Puja and discourses.

Chatrapur (Odisha): In addition to the daily Satsanga, the Branch held weekly Satsanga on Thursdays, one mobile Satsanga on 6th March, Paduka Puja on Sivananda Day and Chidananda Day, and the monthly Parayana of Sri Sundarakanda on the Sankranti Day. The programme on Sri Maha Sivaratri was Sri Sundarakanda Parayana and one lakh Archana with Sri Panchakshara Mantra—59 participants in the forenoon, and 6-hour Akhanda Japa of Mahamrityunjaya Mantra in the evening.

Chennai, Triplicane (Tamil Nadu): The monthly programme on Sivananda Day is Paduka Puja, recitation of Sri Rudra-Namakam and Chamakam and other hymns and Anna Daan (feeding the poor) to about 100 poor. The Branch arranged a special Satsanga with Paduka Puja on Sri Ugadi (the New Year Day), and Satsanga with

Paduka Puja and Sita Kalyanam on Sri Rama Navami. In the free Medical Camp for endoscopy Dr. Algasundaram took free test of 10 patients on the first Sunday of March and 15 patients in April.

Digapahandi (Odisha): The Branch conducted 2-time Puja, biweekly Satsanga on Thursdays and Sundays, Paduka Puja on Sivananda Day and Chidananda Day and a special Satsanga on the Sankranti. The programme on Sri Maha Sivaratri was Puja and Archana of Lord Siva, Bhajan-kirtan, Arati, etc. On the Sankranti Day, in addition to the special Satsanga in the evening, the programme in the morning was Paduka Puja and Havan.

Ghari (Manipur): The Branch held its weekly Satsanga regularly.

Ghatpadamur, Jagadalpur (Chhattisgarh): Regular Activities: Daily early morning prayer-meditation, Sri Ramayana Path, recitation, Yogasana class, and in the evening half-an-hour Kirtan and Satsanga; Paduka Puja on Thursdays; Sri Sundarakanda Parayana on Saturdays; and Sri Vishnu-sahasranama Stotra Parayana on Sundays.

Special Activities: (1) Sri Vasanta Panchami: Sri Saraswati Puja, 3-hour Akhanda Kirtan, Mantra Japa, etc. (2) Sri Maha Sivaratri: 24-hour Akhanda Sankirtan; Puja-Abhisheka in the evening; Havan, Arati, Satsanga and Bhandara next day—800 devotees had Prasad Sevan. (3) Sri Gauranga Mahaprabhu Jayanti: 2-hour Akhanda Kirtan, Sankirtan procession, Bhajan-Kirtan.

Gumergunda (Chhattisgarh): Regular Activities: 3-time Puja in Viswanath Mandir, daily early morning prayer-meditation followed by Yogasana class; daily evening 2-hour Satsanga; Paduka Puja on Thursdays; Sri Sundarakanda Parayana on Saturdays; and recitation of hymns on other days.

Special Activities: (1) Sri Vasanta Panchami: Sri Saraswati Puja-Archana. (2) Sri Maha Sivaratri: Akhanda Sankirtan of 'Om Namah Sivaya' Mantra for 15 days by devotees of 15 villages; nightlong four Puja-Abhishekas—5000 devotees participated; Havan and Bhandara on the next day. (3) Sri Gauranga Mahaprabhu Jayanti: one hour Akhanda Japa, Bhajan-kirtan, Holika Dahan.

Jaipur, Malaviya Nagar (Rajasthan): In addition to the daily activities of midday meditation (one hour), study group meeting and Yogasana class, the Branch had Havan and weekly Satsanga on Sundays, Matri-Satsanga on Fridays and Narayana Seva (distribution of food to the poor) on Tuesdays. It continued social service through Sivananda Homoeopathic Dispensary. It had organised 5-day programme of Platinum Jubilee. It included Yogasana, meditation and competition in essay writing, drawing-painting, music and elocution. It also held special programme on Sri Maha Sivaratri and on 13th March.

Jeypore (Odisha): The Branch conducted 2-time Puja, biweekly Satsanga on Sundays and Thursdays, 3 mobile Satsangas, and Havan, Puja and Prasad Sevan on Sivananda Day. It organised on 13th February Gita Yajna—oblation after collective chanting of each Sloka followed by Dwadasakshara Mantra as Samput. All the hundred participants had holy Prasad.

Kantabanji (Odisha): The Branch held the weekly Satsanga with Bhagavad Gita Svadhyaya regularly.

Khatiguda (Odisha): The Branch conducted weekly Satsanga on Thursdays, two mobile Satsangas, Ekadasi Satsanga with Sri Vishnu-sahasranama Stotra Parayana, and the monthly Sadhana Day with 12-hour Akhanda Japa of Mahamantra and Narayana Seva on 6th

March (first Sunday). It held Paduka Puja on Purnima.

Nabha (Punjab): In addition to the daily evening activity of half-an-hour Japa of Mahamrityunjaya Mantra followed by Svadhyaya, the Branch held the weekly Satsanga and study of "Daily Svadhyaya" on Sundays regularly.

Nandini Nagar (Chhattisgarh): Regular Activities: Daily Brahmamuhurta prayer, meditation, Kirtan, recitation for 2-hours; daily evening Satsanga; weekly mobile Satsanga on Thursdays; Saturday Matri-Satsanga with Sri Sundarakanda Parayana; Sri Vishnu-sahasranama Stotra and Srimad Bhagavad Gita Parayana during the two Ekadasis Satsanga; and 6-hour Mahamantra Akhanda Kirtan on 3rd every month.

Special Activities: (1) Sri Maha Sivaratri: 12-hour Akhanda Kirtan of 'Om Namah Sivaya' Mantra; 3-hour Puja-Abhisheka in the afternoon; 3-hour Puja-Abhisheka, concluding with midnight Arati. (2) Branch revival: It organised special Satsangas at defunct Branches of Durg on 6th March and Shantipara on March 13 and 22.

Raipur (Chhattisgarh): The Branch held the weekly Satsanga on Thursdays, Matri-Satsanga on Mondays, and a Special Satsanga on 25th February on the visit of Revered Swami Devabhaktanandaji at the newly started Satsanga centre.

Rourkela, Steel Township (Odisha): The Branch arranged 7 mobile Satsangas in January, 4 in February and 2 in March. It also held two Sadhana Days with Paduka Puja. The Foundation Day of the Branch was celebrated on 24th January. It organised Youth Development Camp in the Government High School. Revered Swami Ramakripanandaji gave a talk to the students.

Salipur (Odisha): In addition to the daily

activities of Puja, recitation and meditation in the morning, and Puja, Satsanga with recitation of various Stotras as well as Yogasana session in the evening, the Branch had the Sunday programme of Srimad Bhagavad Gita Parayana on the first, Yogasana-meditation practice on the second, monthly Sadhana Day on the third and a special Satsanga on the fourth Sunday. Paduka Puja on Sivananda Day, Sri Sundarakanda Parayana on the second Saturday, and Swami Sivananda Charitable Health Service on Sundays (137 patients were treated) were the other regular activities. It also held 6-hour Akhanda Mahamantra Kirtan on 27th February, and imparted Yogasana training to 30 students.

Sunabeda (Odisha): The Branch held biweekly Satsanga with Svadhyaya on Thursdays and Sundays. On Vasanta Panchami Paduka Puja, Saraswati Puja and a special Satsanga were organised.

Vadodara (Gujarat): The Branch held Satsanga on Thursdays, and Mantra Japa and Paduka Puja on Sivananda Day and Chidananda Day. "Divine Youth Forum" was started on 16th February as a part of Platinum Jubilee programme. Revered Swami Dharmanishthanandaji, Revered Swami Tyagavairagyanandaji and Revered Swami Nirakaranandaji addressed the gathering and gave blessings. It also organised a talk on "Life Is Yajna" on 13th February Yogasana (in the morning), Pranayama and meditation (in the evening) camp in Baroda High School from February 14 to 18. Its social activities were Homoeopathic dispensary (4 days a week), Ayurvedic Dispensary (2 days), distribution of medicines to the poor, needy patients, distribution of biscuits to in-patients on Sivananda Day and Chidananda Day, and supplying dry ration to the poorest families.

Vikrampur (Odisha): The Branch had Puja and prayers in the morning and evening, and

2-hour weekly Satsanga on Wednesdays. Paduka Puja was performed on three occasions. On Vasanta Panchami, the Silver Jubilee of the Branch, it organised early morning prayer-meditation, Paduka Puja, Sri Saraswati Puja, special Satsanga, discourses and Prasad Sevan.

Visakhapatnam (A. P.): The Branch held daily one-hour Bhajan and Mahamantra Sankirtan, weekly Satsanga on Mondays with recitation of Sri Vishnu-sahasranama Stotram, Sri Laxmi Stotram, Sri Hanuman Chalisa, etc. Daily Yogasana class and free medical check-up on Mondays were the other regular activities. A free Medical Camp was organised at Sivananda Ashram on 27th February—200 patients were examined and given free medicines.

OVERSEAS BRANCHES

Hong Kong (China): The Branch organised various special activities on the Platinum Jubilee of The Divine Life Society as follows: (1) Blood Donation, December 1-31,—2010: It propagated “Give Blood” activities and the members donated blood to the Red Cross.

(2) 24-hour Akhanda Sankirtan of Mahamantra: from 10 a.m. on 1st January to 10 a.m. 2nd January with one hour session of Paduka Puja. On conclusion Arati, Prasad—52 participants.

(3) Daylong programme, 9th January; (i) 4 Training Classes in Yogasana, Pranayama, Meditation—116 participants. (ii) Chanting and recitation for one hour. (iii) 2 Video CD shown (for 2 hours): “Gurudev Swami Sivananda—Life and Teachings” and “A Message to New Initiates” (by H.H. Sri Swami Chidanandaji Maharaj). (iv) Arati, “Happy Face” song, Prasad—40 participants in the evening programme.

Cape Town (South Africa): The Branch conducted the following activities at Ananda Kutir Ashram, during the year 2010: (1) Public Satsanga on Thursdays and Saturdays. (2) Inter-faith Satsanga on Mondays. (3) Various Study groups: (a) “Yoga and Vedanta in Daily Life”: Insights into Bhagavad Gita, Upanishads and Patanjali’s Yoga Sutras by Revered Swami Parvathianandaji. (b) Lectures on Bhagavad Gita by Revered Swami Vidyanandaji. (c) Indian Christian Spirituality with Revered Mother Yogeshwariji and Tina Goodchild. (d) Sanskrit and Vedic Chanting class by Revered Swami Vidyanandaji. (e) Monthly Inter-faith Gatherings with Revered Yogeshwari Mataji and Tina Goodchild. (4) Special programmes on the Birth Anniversaries and Mahasamadhis of Gurudev Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj and Revered Swami Venkatesanandaji Maharaj and on important Hindu and Christian Festivals. 12-hour Akhanda Mahamantra Kirtan on 3rd December. (5) Meditation classes by Revered Yogeshwari Mataji. (6) Post Graduate Yoga Teacher Training Course—Raja Yoga and Integral Yoga.

(7) Daily Hatha Yoga Classes. (8) Weekly screening of spiritual talks on DVD and films. (9) Two week-end retreats and three Yoga Days were held. (10) Seva to the underprivileged people by providing fruits, sandwiches to TB and HIV patients, and also Christmas food parcels and toys. (11) The Divine Life Society Platinum Jubilee special programmes. (i) Guru Purnima: Regional Sivananda Conference; Alternative Health Camp; distribution of food hampers; Free Hatha Yoga classes for one week; daily Satsanga for one week. (ii) National Sivananda Conference: August presence and blessings of H.H. Sri Swami Vimalanandaji Maharaj. (iii) A pilgrimage to Sivananda Ashramam, Rishikesh.

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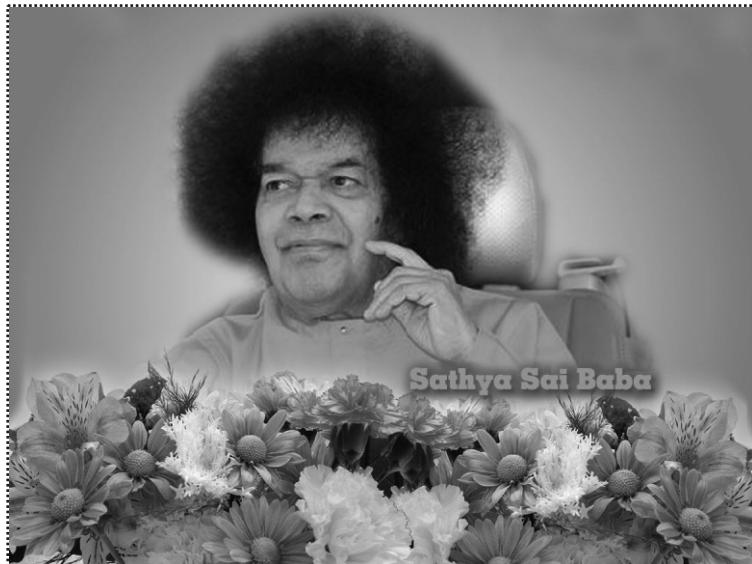
IN MEMORIAM

"To Live in the Hearts We Leave Behind is not to Die"

Sri Sathya Sai Baba, born as Sathyanarayana Raju in the year 1926 in Puttaparthi in the then Madras Presidency, passed away on 24th April, 2011 at the age of 85. Puttaparthi now falls under Anantapur district of Andhra Pradesh. He was listed by Watkins Review as one of the 100 most influential spiritual leaders in the world.

Babaji left behind a sprawling empire estimated to be worth Rs. 40,000 crores, managed and run by Sri Sathya Sai Central Trust. He also left behind millions of grief-stricken, ardent devotees and fans who were inconsolable when Babaji left his body in the Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Medical Sciences where he was admitted on March 28, 2011 for cardiac problems. Despite the best available treatment provided by the team of hospital doctors, his condition grew from bad to worse. Multi-organ failure set in sending a wave of panic amongst the team of experts treating him. The government of Andhra Pradesh sent in a team of its own experts to provide advice and assistance to the doctors attending on Babaji. When the Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Medical Sciences formally announced the passing away of Babaji, millions of his incredulous devotees thought there had been a mistake. Babaji, their sheet anchor, could not leave them. Some, however, bore the news stoically. His devotees included people from all walks of life. He was as much of a godman to the man on the road as he was a guide and mentor to the high-profile professionals, bureaucrats, politicians and international figures. His following spanned the whole of India as well as many other countries but interestingly, Babaji himself travelled out of India only twice.

It is well nigh impossible to define Babaji who rose to touch the dizzy heights of spirituality. Or, perhaps, it would be better to define him as a born saint. His devotees look upon him as an incarnation. He was a philanthropist and an educator who founded several educational institutions providing free education. These institutions aim at character building, imparting quality education. Moral study, social service and fitness are at the core of these educational institutions. Babaji also contributed to healthcare in a substantial way by starting two state-of-the-art super-speciality hospitals in Puttaparthi and Bangalore. These hospitals



cater to the needs of the poorest of the poor by providing quality medical treatment at no cost. Apart from these philanthropic activities, Babaji was at the helm of a series of water projects. In 1995, the Trust began work on a project to cater to the arid Rayalaseema region. River water was tapped and an extensive network of pipelines was laid in order deliver drinking water to villages through a network of reservoirs and pipes. In Medak and Mahabubnagar districts of Andhra Pradesh, water was provided to 320 villages. Over and above these water projects two other water projects were undertaken and completed to serve the city of Chennai.

His physical remains were interred in the Sai Kulwant Hall in Prashanti Nilayam where he used to give Darshan to his devotees. Anticipating large crowds, the government made appropriate police arrangements to avert any unpleasant situation. Large crowds of devotees thronging the town of Puttaparthi is a testimony to Babaji's popularity as a Spiritual Guru. The road leading to Prashanti Nilayam looked like a sea of humanity. The chaotic crowds seemed unmanageable in spite of the large number of policemen present.

Sri Sathya Sai Baba had a connection with the Sivananda Ashram also. He visited the Ashram accompanied by a large entourage in the year 1956/57 and was put up in Shiva Kutir. He enjoyed Sri Gurudev's hospitality for about one week and attended Satsang on all days of his stay at the Ashram. Gurudev accorded special status to Babaji by providing a special seat for him. Babaji used to speak in Telugu which was interpreted for the benefit of non-Telugu speaking audience by one Sri Kasturi and Sri Swami Chaitanyanandaji of our Ashram. Besides, Babaji was an excellent singer and a composer of poems. During the day time, Babaji used to meet people in his room and distribute holy ash. He had the power to materialize things such as ash, trinkets, watches and lockets out of thin air. Babaji visited the Ashram twice again after Gurudev had attained Maha Samadhi.

Babaji has left the physical plane but he will continue to live through all the myriad social welfare schemes that came into being under his direct guidance. He will continue to live in the hearts of millions of his devotees and others who have come to revere him. His teachings will be there to guide millions across the world. Babaji has left his physical body but his spiritual presence is more palpable than ever.

Asked for a message for mankind, Babaji replied, "**My life is my message.**" Again, asked why he preferred not to advertise his work, Babaji said, "**Every man who walks out of the hospital fit and capable of fending for himself and his family again is an advertisement.**"

When such a spiritual personality passes away, we do not pray for their Satgati (divine beatitude) or Atma Shanti (Supreme Peace). On the contrary, we pray to them for our peace and happiness, for they have attained all that and more even when they are in their physical bodies. Mankind will be ever grateful to Babaji for making their lives more beautiful and worth living. May Babaji's blessings continue to shower on one and all alike!

—THE DIVINE LIFE SOCIETY