13. That person, of the size of a thumb, is like a flame without smoke, Lord of the past and the future. He alone is even today, and will be verily tomorrow. This is verily That.
I bow to the Sage, who on getting up everyday, intones aloud the Omkara, who is an expert in propitiating the Lord Mrityunjaya, who is free from sins, who is wedded to truth and who disseminates the knowledge of Vedanta through his books among the peoples of the world.

I bow to the illustrious Sage who is endowed with a strong physique, who is free from the torment of cupid, who sings to the accompaniment of instruments sitting on the bank of the Ganges, who is a friend in distress and who entertains guests like the cloud.

I take refuge in the great and perfect Sage whose spiritual effulgence is fully developed, who is the swan sporting in the cluster of lotuses (mystic-centres), who is intent on bringing solace to the world, who tends the celestial Tree of Dharma and who is the helmsman par excellence in the ocean of misery.

I salute the Invincible one whose name acts as the fire for the jungle of sins, whose unique life is the ideal of the world, whose heart is compassionate to the destitute, who is worshipped by the learned and who has killed the (internal) foes through silence.

(To be Continued)
Salutations again and again at the Holy Feet of the great Sage, Sri Vyasa Bhagavan Sri Krishna Dwaipayana, who edited the Vedas, composed the Brahma sutras, and wrote the Mahabharata and the eighteen Puranas including the Srimad-Bhagavata; salutations to the Brahmavidya Gurus, all Saints and Sages of yore to the present day.

Jagad-Guru, Sri Sankaracharya, who was an Avatara of Lord Siva, delved into the precious wisdom of the Upanishads and brought out the most rare gem in the form of the unparalleled Advaita philosophy or the Monistic idealism which gives you, in a nutshell, the glorious truth that you are in essence Divine beings, ever perfect, free, full and blissful. This idea is contained in his famous memorable Sloka: ‘Slokardhena Pravakshyami Yaduktam Granthakotibhih; Brahma Satyam Jaganmithya, Jivo Brahmaiwa Naparah.’ This gives the very essence of all spiritual wisdom, and it is the last word in the transcendental realization expressed in the form of this famous Sloka. Bliss is to be found in the spiritual Reality which is within you. Realise this and be free.

Now this ultimate declaration has been given—well and good. But how to attain it? Because you know that in your actual experience of worldly pleasures, your mental impressions are, unfortunately, gathered through the instruments of the mind and the senses. So, when your entire experience of pleasure gives you a perception of Asat, Achit and Duhkha, how can you find the Satchidananda Atman? Everything in this world is fleeting in character. You do not find Chit (consciousness) anywhere but only the Jada (insentient) everywhere. ‘Sarvam Duhkham Vivekinah’,—according to this declaration there is only pain to be experienced in this world. If pain is constantly experienced by you, how can you find Ananda or Bliss? And in answer to this, seers and sages of yore have shown the way by which we have to reach our goal, step by step.

In the Vivekachudamani, there is a Sloka which runs as follows: ‘Durlabham Trayamevaitat Daivanugraha-hetukam; Manushyatvam Mumukshutvam Maha-purushasamsrayah.’—Three things are very difficult to obtain. Only through the grace of God the Jivas obtain them. To be born as a human being is no small privilege. It is a very precious gift given by God to the Jiva. Having got a human birth, to have an aspiration for liberation is the next difficult thing to obtain. So, if one obtains both these, one is indeed doubly blessed. But having been born as a human being, if you do not want to know, and yet even after knowing that, if you do not know the way, you are not fully blessed. Therefore, if you get the shelter of a Mahapurusha, one who has known what has to be attained and one who is in a position to show you the way, you can admit that you are thrice blessed. This
unique blessing has to be remembered always. Then alone will you be careful not to waste the opportunity. When you know the real value of a thing, you take proper care of it, and not otherwise.

The only thing that stands in the way of your spiritual realisation is your own mind, the ego, or call it by any name you like. It is precisely in order to see that this obstacle is removed and one gets at the ultimate goal of human life that one goes to the preceptor or Guru. The Guru has destroyed the limiting mind and he knows the method as to how one has to destroy it. Let us suppose that a man who is desirous of leading a spiritual life goes to a Guru and asks for his advice and guidance; and the Guru tells him, “Be good, lead a virtuous life, serve selflessly, love all, share with others what you have, purify the mind, meditate with one-pointed mind, etc.” But, if the man does not sincerely strive to follow the Guru’s advice, what benefit will he thereby derive? Absolutely nothing! He will be in no way better than what he was. It seems that one does not want to practise anything, but there is only the expectation of the result. What a sad state of affairs!

This life on earth is a halting place on the way to the achievement of the Goal of life. Earthly life is transitory, for it is seen that everything that is born dies. Death is not the end of life, since without a continuation of life there from the value of the deeds and experiences in this life would be rendered nugatory. There were births and deaths in the past, there will be births and deaths in the future, too, until Self-realization is attained. Life is a long chain of which the recurring births, planetary lives and deaths are links.

Birth is caused by desires and actions, and birth becomes the cause of further desires and actions. This present life is, therefore, meant to train the individual to qualify himself for a higher life, viz., to stop births and deaths ultimately. This life is not the goal or the end, even as the path is not the same as the destination. If earthly life were the final goal, none would have died here, there would not have been mutation, pain and sorrow, and there would be no sense of imperfection and no further urge or aspiration to transcend the present condition. The ever-changing world proves the existence of an unchanging imperishable Being.

Remember that you came alone to this world and also you will pass away alone from this world. None will help you except what you have done here in this life. Your deeds will search you out and follow you, as calves follow their mothers even in the midst of a big herd.

Your life is short and there are many obstacles to get over. Therefore, exert now with earnestness. Waste not precious time, but utilize every moment for the noblest of causes. Finish your journey quickly by practising right Sadhana (spiritual endeavour) with the guidance of a Guru or preceptor. Great shall be your glory and glorious shall be your success. May peace be with you on your spiritual path! May blessedness wait upon you in all your pursuits! May the Supreme Master, the Lord of all, shower His blessings upon you all!

Sivanandashram, 19th June, 1963.

* * *
SERVE TO PURIFY, KILL THE LITTLE “I”

(Sri Swami Chidananda)

Serve all. Love all. Service of humanity is worship of God. There is no greater Yoga than service of mankind.” These are the sterling utterances of Gurudev. He was an embodiment of Karma Yoga. He served his father and mother when he was young. He served his teachers during his student days. He served his patients as Dr. Kuppuswami in Malaya. Thus it was service all along. Even when he was a monk in absolute seclusion, not speaking to anyone, engaged in intense spiritual Sadhana—penance, meditation, introspection, study, silence he used to go and work one hour a day or more at a little medical dispensary in Laxmanjhula. Being an embodiment of selfless service as well as a qualified doctor, he was an ideal servant of the suffering and the sick, the Yatris and the Sadhus living nearby. And events are narrated how far he went to make his service one hundred per cent perfect and complete.

One of the earliest books that Gurudev wrote was The Practice of Karma Yoga. And from those earliest days till the very end of his life, he urged everyone to purify their heart through selfless service. He said: “The almost insurmountable barrier standing between the individual soul and God is the personal ego-principle.” In his short poem that begins: “Within you is hidden God. Within you is Immortal Soul. Within you is ocean of bliss. Within you is fountain of joy,” he adds the most significant words, “Kill this little ‘I’. Die to live. Lead the divine life.”

This means that the essence of divine life is the killing of this little “I”. The essence of divine life is a total renunciation of the self and dedicating oneself to selflessness—a total renunciation of self and selfishness and self-centred living and dedicating oneself to total unselfish service of one and all, seeing God in all. “Kill this little ‘I’. Die to live. Lead the divine life.” This is divine life—killing of the little “I”, dying to live.

Most significant is the simple prayer of Saint Francis who himself lived what he said in the concluding line of the prayer: “For it is in dying to the little self that we are born to eternal life.” Again: “Then shall I be free, when ‘I’ shall cease to be.” It is only when the “I” disappears that one can rise into the experience of real spiritual freedom.

All Gurudev’s life after Self-realisation, after becoming an enlightened sage and shining as a great light of the Himalayas, was a saga of selfless service—service of the poor, service of the suffering, service of the sick, service of the distressed, service of spiritual aspirants and seekers, service of all humanity, service of the whole
world. In diverse, numerous ways, his entire life was one great, continuous stream of selfless service. He had even forgotten how to think of himself; he could only think of others. He lived thinking of others: “In what way can I be of benefit, in what way can I serve?” That was Gurudev Swami Sivananda Maharaj till the very last days.

Gurudev declared in one of his eighteen handwritten autobiographical epistles: “I live to serve, to feed the hungry, to clothe the naked, to raise the fallen, to console the distressed. This is my mission in life.” And anyone who has known him, anyone who has lived with him, anyone who has seen him instantly recognised: “Here is a totally selfless, dedicated human being.” He fulfilled to the very letter the scriptural description of this type of realised soul, who having attained illumination, having done everything that has to be done, having no desires because all their desires have been fulfilled through God-realisation, are seen to be, in the words of the Gita, “intent on the welfare of all creatures.”

Rare it is to find a parallel to the type of life of lofty, sublime selflessness and total, wonderful, dedicated selfless service of all God’s creatures—that Gurudev was and placed before us as an ideal. It is to this embodiment of selflessness and selfless service, this great expounder of Nishkama-karma-Yoga, who boldly declared, “Service of humanity is worship of God,” that we pay our homage. May his blessings be upon us all!”

HOW GURU’S GRACE WORKS!

IF an aspirant sticks to the path tenaciously,  
This is the grace of the Guru.

If he resists when temptation assails him,  
This is the grace of the Guru.

If people receive him with love and reverence,  
This is the grace of the Guru.

If he gets all bodily wants,  
This is the grace of the Guru.

If he gets encouragement and strength,  
When he is in despair and despondency,  
This is the grace of the Guru.

If he gets over the body-consciousness  
And rests in his own Ananda Svaroopa,  
This is the grace of the Guru.

Feel his grace at every step,  
And be sincere and truthful to him.

—Swami Sivananda
Blessed immortal Atman. This is holy Sri Guru Purnima, the full moon day when the glorious rays of the spiritual moon shed themselves upon the inner lives of all people. May we know the grace of the Almighty on this holy Sri Guru Purnima day. This is also the sacred commencement of the Chaturmasya, the four months during which spiritual seekers observe intense austerity and practise inward discipline.

To us humble followers of Gurudev Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj, seekers of God, devotees of the Almighty, this is an occasion which is thrice blessed! To us humble seekers, this is not merely an occasion of the commencement of any temporal succession of personal efforts or activities, but an eternal remembrance of the fact of the awakening of the human soul to its universal destination.

These few words that I have uttered before you should be significant enough of the purpose of human life, of the beauty of man in general. In these few words I have tried to sum up the esoteric truth, the secret fact that human duty is inseparable from divine realisation—the fact that the creation of God cannot be separated from the being of God. The great truth that our activities in life are co-extensive and commensurate with our spiritual aspiration is to me, at least, the message of holy Sri Guru Purnima from Master Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj.

The great Guru that was Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj comes to us as an ambassador of the Absolute. He has not come to us as a bodily encasement, as a personality, as a Guru in the ordinary sense. People cry when the Guru passes away, but he is one of those rare specimens who came to tell us that the Guru never passes away because we daily repeat in our prayers that Guru is Brahma, Vishnu and Siva—which, again, has a double meaning and significance.

The Guru is the same as Brahma, Vishnu and Siva, or it may mean Brahma, Vishnu and Siva are the Guru. Both meanings apply to this famous verse: Gurur-Brahma Gurur-Vishnu Gurur-Devo Maheshwara Guru-sakshat Param-Brahma tasmai Sri Gurave namah. It is Parameswara, the Supreme Lord, in His various and glorious manifestations who comes as teacher—not only to mankind but to every created being—to accelerate the process of its evolution towards Himself.

Life is a process of evolution. Towards what? Towards that from which everything has come. Anandaddhyeva khalvimani bhutani jayante, anandena jatani jivanti, anandam prayantyabhisamvisanti (Taitt. Up. 3.6.1): From bliss Absolute we have
come, in bliss Absolute are we rooted, and to bliss Absolute are we destined, so that the philosophy and culture of our land is a philosophy and culture of ananda, or bliss. It is not a message of pain, agony and distress. Pessimism is unknown to our culture. It is a culture of exuberant positivity of approach to God, who is the greatest of positivities.

It is a movement from joy to joy that we call the evolutionary process of the soul. It is a movement from lesser truth to higher truth, which is a better way of putting things than to repeat the old opinion that we move from error to truth. In the glorious kingdom of heaven, which is within everyone, there cannot be error. Error is only misplacement of values. It cannot ultimately exist, and it cannot have an absolute value. Absolute error is unthinkable, and therefore, it cannot be. Absolute falsehood cannot exist. Everything exists as a relative representation of God’s perfection; therefore, everywhere—even in the so-called erroneous movements of material, psychological and social forces—there is an element of God present, urging all these processes towards His Supreme Perfection.

To our culture, which is the culture of God, the culture of Perfection, all the duties of life become manifestations of happiness. The glorious gospel of the Vedas, the Upanishads and the Bhagavadgita, which may be regarded as the tripod of India’s message to mankind, provides us with the hopeful exhortation that we can never be helpless at any moment of our life. Our culture is the blossoming full moon, the real ‘Purnima’ of hope after hope, aspiration after aspiration. May we recall to our minds, once again, the message of the saints and sages of all times and climes, who plumped into the depths of the Great Reality of the universe, that we exist in God, live in God, breathe in God, move in God, and perform the functions of our life in the kingdom of God.

The great message of Christ that “the kingdom of heaven is within you” should be a miraculous and revolutionary teaching to all those who think in terms of the temporal and always evaluate things from the historical point of view. A kingdom cannot be inside anyone. Can you imagine a kingdom being situated within anyone? And, yet, a great incarnation spoke this truth to mankind: “The kingdom of heaven is within you.” Either it is a contradiction in terms or it is a super-mundane fact which the human understanding cannot fathom. “That which is external is also the internal” is also a message of the Chhandogya Upanishad, which is echoed in the statement of Christ that the kingdom of heaven is within us.

The whole cosmos is vibrating within every cell of our personalities. Everything that is everywhere is also within us and is inseparable from us. This was the foundation of the doctrine of God’s supreme perfection also given to us by Acharya Sankara on the basis of the Vedas, the Upanishads, the Bhagavadgita, and the Brahma Sutras. Everything we need is in us. Everything required by us for our existence, every movement in evolution towards perfection, is implanted in our being. When we were born we brought with us everything that is necessary for us, and we carry all these
necessities with us wherever we move in this world. We cannot be separated from these needs or standing necessities; they are inseparable from our vital existence.

This is the spirit of true spirituality. There is the letter of the teachings of spiritual life, and also the spirit of these teachings. The letter of the teaching is what is generally practised by the masses in the world, but the spirit is missed. The letter is easy to understand, but the spirit is difficult to follow. What is the letter of the teaching of spiritual life? What does the letter of religion say? It says: You must love God, you must believe in the existence of God, you must speak the truth, you should be honest in your dealings with your brethren, and you should be living a life of purity, goodness and truthfulness. But the letter of the teaching has been so construed, on account of the very constitution of the human mind, that the life of the spirit, or the life of God, or the life of spiritual aspiration has been covertly, without one’s knowing what is happening, separated from the day-to-day activities of life, so that we are one thing in the street or the shop and another thing in the church or the temple. Thus, we have two ideals before us: the ideal for the marketplace and the ideal for the church or the temple. This is the traditional and organised creed of what we may call the church, which does not necessarily mean the Christian holy of holies, but the concept of the religious atmosphere in any so-called religious mind.

Religion today appears to be shaking from its very roots because the edifice of religion is built on a sandy basement; it has no substantial support at the bottom. The so-called religious man does not really believe in God. The religious mind has taken advantage of its apparent belief in God or concept of God as an instrument in the personal fulfilment of its wishes and ambitions. To most of us, God is an instrument, not the aim or goal of life. Our asking for God is not because He is all-in-all, but because He is a tool for the fulfilment of our ulterior motives. We have many desires in all the levels of our personalities. We are made up of desires: kama mayoyam purushah. We do not possess or have desires; we are made up of the desires. Every fibre of our being is constituted of desire alone. Therefore, this desireful personality contrives a tool in the form of the concept of a God in Brahma-loka, Vaikuntha or Kailasa, for its own fulfilment. God’s existence is travestied; it becomes a blasphemy of the very religious concept and the idea of God. We are told, again and again, that God is the goal of life and not a means to the satisfaction of the needs of the individual.

We now have to be taught the primary lessons of life itself. We are still in need of the initial educational process, which has to set right the very thinking method of our mind. There is something wrong with us at the very root itself. We think in terms of the body, the personality and its external relationships. These relationships subtly interfere with every activity of our life, including the ‘activity’ of the ‘practice of religion’. It is unfortunate that religion has become a sort of activity, a kind of duty among the many other duties in life.

The religious consciousness is not a work, it is not a function, it is not an action proceeding from our individual being, because the personality of the individual is an effect; it is of the nature of a process of
becoming, tending towards something else transcending it. And, therefore, any activity proceeding from this procession of individual existence cannot be identified with the religious consciousness which is the emblem of God’s Being.

God is Being. We call Him the Supreme Being. The human mind cannot conceive the meaning of true Being. We have a very wrong notion of even what ‘being’ is. When we say that something exists, something is, we associate ‘being’ as a kind of adjective with the object that is supposed to exist. A chair exists. When we say that a chair exists, the chair is the subject and its existence the predicate. We have conceived existence as a predicate of the chair, which is the subject. But existence cannot be a predicate of anything. It is the subject. It is presupposed by the notion of every other individual object in the world. Existence precedes even the notion of chair; it cannot be a predicate of it. On the other hand, when we understand the situation metaphysically, philosophically or spiritually, the chairhood of the so-called object is the predicate of the existence which precedes it. And because of a peculiar twist of character in human thinking, we also conceive God as a predicate to our temporal life. God is an appendage to all our needs, necessities and desires!

Therefore, God does not seem to be helping us, at least openly. We have misused our relationship with God. We have conceived Him as a kind of attribute to our individuality, which is a very sorry state of affairs. God cannot be an attribute. He is the Supreme Substantive. He is the Reality. The presupposition of even our thought of ‘being’ is the Supreme Being that God is. That is why we say that God cannot be thought through the mind. And if such an unthinkable presupposition even of all human understanding is the nature of God’s existence, what should be the character of religion, which is the way to God? It should be characterised by all the attributes which ‘being’ can have, though to a lesser degree.

So, the practice of religion is the practice of God-consciousness, in some degree or the other. It is to flood our personality with something supermundane, super-personal and super-individualistic. When we become religious seekers, we become non-temporal not only in our personal life but also in our social existence. To be a seeker of God is not easy. You cannot just receive initiation into a mantra from a Guru and think that you are a religious seeker. When you receive initiation, you are led into a new way of living and being. Your life gets transformed, and there is a complete transvaluation of values.

This is the message of Bharatavarsha, the message of India’s culture, the message of true spirituality, the message of Gurudev Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj, the message of all the mystics, saints and sages of the world, and the message of holy Guru Purnima. God bless you all! Peace be to the whole world!
For many years I have been reading the writings of Swami Sivananda, though I had the fortune of meeting him only a few months ago before he left this world. He has brought spiritual comfort to many afflicted souls both in this country and abroad. His services to the spiritual regeneration of our country are, indeed, very notable; and it is good that he has left behind a number of writings and a number of disciples.

After all, the glory of this country consists, not so much in military heroes or industrial magnates or political geniuses, but in these saints and seers.

Santo Bhunim Tapasa Dharayante. The saints, by their Tapas, sustain this world. They are the people who make the world go along. A saintly life is the highest expression of Eternal Truth.

People may discuss these things, may talk about them; but only they are entitled to teach others who have known It for themselves and who have practised It.

Vichara comes first. We must know and try to find out what the Truth of things is. Achara must come next. We must be able to practise that which we preach. Only then can we enlighten others. Prachara is the third stage. Vichara, Achara and Prachara. Here, in Swami Sivananda, you had one who knew the Truth, practised It, taught others to understand It. It is these people who represent the quintessence of our great culture.

You find in the Mahabharata-Yudhisthira tells Vidura:

*Bhavadvidha Bhagavatah Tirthabhuṭah
Swayam Prabho
Tirtheekurvanti Thirthani Swantahsthena
Gadabhrita*

People like Bhagavatas,—devotees of God, Tirtha Bhootas,—those whose minds are as transparent as clear water, they make places sacred. A Tirtha is not sacred because someone lived there two thousand years ago; it is sacred because today there are people who embody the teachings of those who lived there.

* * *
IN MEMORIAM

His Excellency Sri V.V. Giri
(Ex-Governor of Kerala)

I have had the privilege of meeting the Swamiji some half a dozen times when I was Governor of Uttar Pradesh. Even before that I had the fortune of going through some of the writings of the Swamiji. The first meeting in itself had a magnetic effect on me; a few minutes in his august presence and listening to the pearls of wisdom which flowed from his tongue were soul-stirring. They evoked in me a consciousness of the great spiritual heritage of India and also of the untiring efforts of His Holiness in spreading the gospel of universal love, peace, and good-will, all leading to the ultimate goal of Self-realisation.

The charming countenance of the great one radiating a beaming smile was more than expression of love and kindness; it was a beckoning call to understand and realise oneself. It was in April 1960 for the last time I had the rare occasion of paying my respects to Swami Sivananda when he accorded me the unique privilege of inaugurating the Silver Jubilee of the Divine Life Society.

Swamiji never kept anyone off his mind—those that had the Darshan of His Holiness are included in the mailing list of the Society’s publications. Every devotee of the Swamiji, I am sure, is proud to know that the Philosophy of Sivananda and the work of the Divine Life Society are finding an increasing appreciation and a number of branches are being set up all over the world to propagate the message of Serve, Love, Meditate, Realise. The catholicity of outlook and broad-mindedness which pervade the entire Ashram has, in my view, greatly contributed to its growth. Selfless service is an essential part of the daily routine of the Sadhakas at the Ashram.

Personalities, however great, have only limited physical existence, but the teachings and the principles they have been espousing live forever. The physical presence of the Swamiji may not be there to guide the Society and the seekers, but I am quite sure the Society will carry forward the Mission of Swami Sivananda Saraswati.

* * *
Worshipful Gurudev Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj propagated the practical methods of Divine Life by writing nearly five hundred books and lived the life of Truth, Love and Purity as an example for others to emulate, is a well-known fact. By understanding the lack of time and proper discriminative capacity in the busy modern man, revered Swamiji Maharaj summarised the teachings of the scriptures of all the religions of the world in two phrases ‘Be good, Do Good’. To implement these two phrases in one’s life, is not so simple as it appears to be. If one sincerely and truly applies these instructions in one’s day-to-day life, he or she will be a true ‘Mahatman’, Divinity moving on this earth. Even in advanced stages of life spiritual, the sense of superiority, fault finding nature, and egoism asserts itself and blocks the dawn of wisdom. There are many instructive and illuminating stories in the religious books to serve as guide lights for the spiritual aspirants.

Once King Dharmadhwaja, also known as Janaka, was very proud of his spiritual attainments and always entertained a sense of superiority over the otherwise persons in his country. He learnt the knowledge of the Self from the great Rishi Panchasikha, but had not brought that knowledge into his personal experience through further Manana and Nididhyasana (reflection and deep meditation). Truth being non-dual in nature includes everything and excludes nothing from its purview. The knower of Truth will therefore never find fault with anything. When the king was sitting in his assembly of learned scholars and ministers, a female mendicant named Sulabha entered the hall. Refreshed and gratified by the hospitality of the king she took her seat in that great assembly. The king was declaring his adherence to the religion of Emancipation. To test whether king (Dharmadhwaja) has succeeded in attaining Emancipation by following the path of Nivritti, Sulabha, through her Yogic powers, caused her mind to enter into the mind of the King.

Knowing the intention of the female mendicant, through his psychic powers, Janaka said: O venerable lady, what path of Yoga are you devoted? Who are you? Where are you coming from? After finishing your business here where will you go? Know that I am truly freed from all vanity in respect of my royal umbrella and sceptre. Do listen to me as I speak to you on that topic of Emancipation, for there is none else in this world that can discourse to you on that subject. Notwithstanding the possession of sovereignty, one becomes cleansed of all sins by means of Knowledge alone, living all the while in the Supreme Brahman. The wearing of coloured clothes, shaving of the head, bearing of the Danda (triple stick) and the Kamandal (water pot)—these are the outward signs of one’s mode of life. They are not essentials to the attainment of
Emancipation. Knowledge alone becomes the cause of one's Liberation from sorrow. Adoption of mere emblems alone is useless. If, beholding the mitigation of sorrow you have adopted to the emblems of a Sannyasin, why then you do not see the same in the royal umbrella and sceptre which I have taken to myself? Liberation or Moksha does not exist in poverty, nor is bondage to be found in affluence. I have cut off all bondage with the sword of renunciation through the knowledge of the scriptures and realised the Self. I tell you that I have become freed in this way. O lady! of the mendicant order, I cherish affection and regard for thee. But that will not prevent me from telling you that your behaviour does not conform with the mode of life which you have taken to yourself. You have transgressed your limits. Listen to me as to what your transgression has been in consequence of your contact with me, having entered into my gross body with the aid of your mind. What reason you can advance for your entrance into my kingdom or my palace? At whose permission you have entered into my mind? You belong to the foremost of all the orders, being as you are a Brahmana woman. I am a Kshatriya. There cannot be any union for us two. Do not help to cause an inter-mixture of Varnas. You are practicing those duties that lead to Emancipation, whereas I live in the domestic order of life. You are not one with whom I may be lawfully united. There are many Brahmanas and learned scholars in this assembly. Is it proper on your part to enter into my body?

To such an unexpected behaviour of King Janaka, the wise lady said: O ruler of Mithila! Are you a knowier of Truth? I can mention hundred and thousands of faults that attach to kings like you who rule large kingdoms. What signs of Emancipation can exist in him who fails to have equal vision on the agreeable and the disagreeable, on the weak and the strong? Unworthy as you are, your pretension of Emancipation should have been put down by your counsellors! Your endeavour to attain Emancipation is like a patient taking medicines and indulges in all kinds of forbidden food and practices. Possessing a fault-finding nature, how can you dream of Emancipation? O King, enjoying sex and other sources of sensory enjoyment to which you are still attached, you profess yourself to have adopted the path of Emancipation, Nivritti Marga.

You are telling that I have entered your body. How is it possible? When I have no real connection with even my body, how can I be said to have contact with the bodies of others? You cannot charge me with having endeavoured to bring about an intermixture of Varnas. Have you heard the path of Emancipation in its entirety, from the lips of Sage Panchasikha together with its means, practices and conclusion? Really, if you have freed of all bonds and attachments, may I ask you, O King, how you still preserve your connection with this umbrella and these other insignia of royalty? I think that you have not properly listened to the scriptures, or you must have listened to them without any advantage, or, perhaps, you have listened to some treatises in the garb of the scriptures! It seems to me that you are possessed only of worldly knowledge, and that like an ordinary man of the world, you are bound by the objects of senses. If it be, true that you have been emancipated from all bonds, how can you say that I have done you harm by entering your person
with only my mind and not any part of the body. O great King, I am staying in you without touching you at all, even as a drop of water on a lotus leaf that stays on it without drenching it in the least. Alas, it is plain, you have deprived yourself from the happiness of life but you have not yet attained Emancipation which is so difficult to get. You stay between the two and pretend that you have reached the goal of Emancipation. How can light and darkness exist together! Even so, Emancipation and dualistic perception, fault-finding nature may not exist together. However, I appreciate your keen interest for Emancipation. Approaching a proper Brahma-nishtha Guru obtain the Knowledge of the Supreme. I am the daughter of the royal sage Pradhana and my name is Sulabha. It was found that no befitting husband could be obtained for me. Instructed in the path of Emancipation, I wander over the earth alone, observing the practice of asceticism and renunciation. Saying these words, pointing out the veil of ignorance in King Janaka, mendicant Sulabha disappeared from the royal assembly.

With effort one can become ‘great’, invincible like Ravana and other powerful demons described in the scriptures, but ‘goodness’ advocated by Sri Gurudev in his two immortal precepts ‘Be good’, ‘Do good’ is a quite different character altogether. This ‘goodness’ we find in the nature of Sri Rama and Sita in the great epic Ramayana. It comes to a person through the Knowledge of the Self. Sri Rama’s life is a life of goodness. He was goodness itself and he did what was good. On the day of coronation, he gladly accepted to go to forest. Every undertaking of his was free from selfish desire. He left his aged unconscious father and sobbing mother without the least change in his facial expression. This reveals his detached spirit of life. After defeating the powerful Vali and Ravana, he enthroned their brothers in their respective kingdoms which again shows his spirit of renunciation. In the end he banished his own beloved consort and leaves her in the forest keep his name untarnished among his subjects. Goodness is the manifestation of Self-hood in the individual.

In the famous epic ‘Raghuvamsa’, sage Kalidasa glorifies Hanuman and Vibhishana as ‘Kirti Shthamba Dvayamiva’;—two great monumental pillars of Ramayana. But such a devoted Hanuman wanted to take revenge of Rakshasis who tormented Sita at Ashokavana of Lanka. Here I remember a beautiful story narrated by Sita to Hanuman, which has a-moral lesson to all spiritual aspirants. After killing Ravana, Vibhishana was crowned. As per the orders of Sri Rama, Hanuman came to inform Sita that her good fortune had returned. Having conveyed it to Sita, Hanuman adds, “Now if you please, give me the order and I will torture these Rakshasis who tormented you all these days.” Sita, the embodiment of goodness and patience personified teaches a moral lesson to Hanuman even in that predicament condition. She said: “These women were not their own mistresses but were acting under the orders of a dreaded monarch. It is not just to be angry with them. They are not the cause of my misery. I have no doubt brought it on myself by former misdeeds. The law of Karma is inexorable. Do not, I plead earnestly, blame my misfortune on these poor
creatures. It is divine, dispensation, the decree of Fate. I pardon these slaves of Ravana. They did his bidding. Now he is no more, they will not torment me hereafter. Let me remind you a great moral taught of old by a bear.

Once a hunter pursued by a ferocious tiger got up a big tree which was already tenanted by a bear. The tiger stopped at the foot of the big tree, looked up and advised the bear to throw down the hunter, for the man was the common enemy. The bear refused, saying that a guest must be protected by all means and he would not break the law of hospitality. With this high thought, the bear closed his eyes and slept comfortably on the tree. The tiger turned then to the man and asked him to push down the sleeping bear. This the man did. The bear, however, being used to such mishaps, caught another branch and saved himself. The tiger saw a fresh opening for his talent of persuasion. “Look at this man. Is he not to be punished? Push him down at once said the tiger to bear.” Quietly and in accounts of benignity, the bear enunciated the eternal code. “A righteous man ought not to be turned from the right by the sin of a sinner. The rule of honour is inviolable. Good men have only one jewel, their unblemished conduct, and they must guard it, come what may. Be they good men or bad, be they deserving of death, still they must be pardoned and treated with mercy by one claiming to be a knower of Truth. For no one is above error. So then let us give up the idea of retaliation or retribution and abstain from injury to all.”

“That man, who, by his actions, by his mind and by his speech is continually engrossed in the welfare of others, and who is always a friend of others, he alone, may be said to have understood that Morality (Dharma) is. That man with whom other’s interest has become self-interest is the best of good men.” says Mahabharata.

Lord Krishna again and again exhorted Arjuna to become possessor of his Self—Atmavan, so that every action he does may be good.

Sage Vyasa has declared: Asttadasa Purananam Saram Saram Samudhritam, Paropakaraya Punnyaya Papaya Parapidanam—doing good to others is meritorious and doing harm to others, sinful, this is the sum and substance of all the eighteen Puranas. Hence, to put in practice the teachings of Gurudev, ‘Do good and Be good’, the pre-requisite qualification is that one must be free from selfish motive and ever remain in the quality of Sattva (goodness), freed from the thoughts of negative thinking and fault-finding nature in others. To establish oneself in the Self one must put forth all efforts to be good and do good by abstaining from bad Habits, associating oneself with the wise and remaining in commune with the Lord by regulr study of religious books, Japa and meditation. Gurudev’s life itself is an open book placed before humanity to see good, hear good, talk good and thereby be good. By being good, one will do only good to others spontaneously. This is the glory of Divine Life. To live with this understanding in the midst of this busy world is the first and foremost duty of every human being on this earth. Then alone there can be real peace in one’s mind. Peace of mind is the pre-requisite qualification to have success in life and God-realisation.
Swami Sivananda’s “Divine Life” is a synthesis of the ancient and the modern. It is ancient in its governing principles and modern in its approach and application. Swami Sivananda has brought the philosophy that had for centuries reclined on the armchair into the household and business houses, into the factories and fields of other activities.

Life is divine in its origin, content and meaning. Life, divorced from philosophy, loses its aim and charm. When the horizontal being strives to look up and endeavours to reach an ideal, it becomes a vertical, standing human being. Man is different from beast only because he can and he ought to live for an ideal. It is man who can realise that life has a purpose and a meaning. He who eats in order to be able to labour and labours in order to be able to eat—he is no better than an animal: he exists but he does not live. Therefore Swami Sivananda wanted us to first of all understand and feel that we have a nobler mission than eating, drinking and sleeping—to use his own words.

Our mission in life is to realise that we are in truth immortal spirit encased in a mortal human sheath. There is a divine spark in everyone. It is the life of our life. It is in its light that our mind and intellect function. Various prophets of the world have given it various names, but a rose called by any other name smells sweet! We live, we think, we feel, we experience our contacts with the objects of the world, and we carry on the various activities only because that divine spark dwells in us. A recognition of this universal truth is the first principle in Swami Sivananda’s Divine Life.

We commence our journey with an intellectual understanding of this, but our destination is actual realisation or direct and immediate experience of it. Since this Divine Spark is the reality in us and since all our faculties exist and thrive in It, Swami Sivananda exhorted us to strive for integral perfection. Divine Life or Spiritual Life or Yoga, should not promote any single aspect of our personality at the cost of any other. This inner spiritual culture must simultaneously sublimate our emotions, purify our thoughts, strengthen our will, enlighten our intellect, control our mind and curb our senses. Our thoughts must be sublime, our speech noble and ennobling and our actions selfless and humanitarian. This is the second principle in Swami Sivananda’s Divine Life.

It is enough to ‘Do good’ in order to promote the welfare of society. Whatever be the personal life or the inner motives of a social benefactor, we honour him if
he does good to us. But unless at the same time he strives to ‘Be good’, the weeds of vanity, lust for name and fame and desires of various types will seriously hamper the inner culture of the soul. Garlands and glorifications might satisfy one’s vanity, but they cannot appease his hunger—only food can. The culturing of the soul demands that one’s entire nature must ‘Be good’. This integration of one’s inner life and external conduct is the third vital principle of Swami Sivananda’s Divine Life.

Social well-being is not opposed to individual salvation. In fact, they are the two sides of the same coin of Divine Life. It is when they who ought ever to have been the benefactors of humanity turned their backs upon society that the society, like a rudderless ship, headed towards the rocks of atheism, materialism and sensualism. Swami Sivananda emphatically declared that the world was not outside us, but it was within us! One should live in the world and yet be not worldly. This is the fourth principle of Swami Sivananda’s Divine Life.

Society is a training ground for the individual soul. Social contacts serve a twofold purpose. We are enabled to cultivate virtues. The suffering in the world around us gives us opportunities to serve others. At the same time our social contacts also test and evaluate our inner spiritual worth. We are saved from complacency and self-delusion. The first integration that Sri Swami Sivananda effects is the integration of Man and the World. Man is a part of society. He is a limb of the society. What happens when a limb is torn away from our body? That limb disintegrates and the body suffers from the loss. Similarly, if you and I cut ourselves away from society, if we shirk our duties in life, there will be a disintegration of our personality and the society too will suffer. Therefore Swami Sivananda exhorted us to “Serve all. Love all. Give or share with others what we have.” This is an amplification of his motto: “Do good”. By this he achieves an integration of Man and the World.

The second integration is that of the head, the heart and the hands of man. Swami Sivananda discouraged a lopsided development of the personality of the seeker after Truth. The forces of darkness must find no quarters in any part of our being. Work and worship, study and service, holiness and household duties, should all go hand in hand. One’s own heart must be converted into God’s Abode. It must be pure and God-loving. The Divine Light or the Light of the highest wisdom must illumine the “head” of man. Then, the darkness of ignorance, in which he sees himself as a distinct and separate entity whose survival depends upon his ability to deprive others of what he needs, will vanish. In the Divine Light he will have a vision. In that new vision he will perceive that all creation has but one cosmic soul. The influence that a pure heart and an enlightened intellect will have upon the hands of man is quite apparent. In his heart is love of God. In the light of a new understanding he perceives that God is all-pervading. Therefore, he will love all and serve all. He will share what he has with all. And, what is of greater
importance he will not feel proud of all these. The new vision and the new outlook make goodness his compelling nature. This is the vital advantage in this integration of the personality of man. There is no artificiality, hypocrisy or diplomacy. Goodness becomes natural, spontaneous and overwhelming. The vessel is prepared for the next stage.

The third integration is the integration of Man and God, if I may say so. Goodness paves the way to Godliness. Goodness enables man to approach the ideal closer. What he at first understood intellectually becomes ‘visible’ to the inner eye. He sees that the Divine Spark is the reality in him and in all beings of the world. Selfless service of humanity, with intense unselfish love and charity, has burnt up the gross evils that veiled the truth in his heart. The latent tendencies of past wrong actions are still there to deal with. They are destroyed by various internal purificatory practices like Pranayama, repetition of the Holy Names of God, study of scriptures and company of holy men. The ideal now becomes distinct. The veil becomes extremely thin and almost transparent. In two steps man reaches the goal. They are meditation and realisation. Concentrating the rays of the mind, he turns them within himself and focuses them on the Divine Spark within. The veil is now completely burnt. The truth is realised. This is an ineffable direct and immediate experience. Man realises that he is and has ever been God Himself in reality.

This is the goal. He who has reached the goal is the greatest benefactor of humanity, because he stands as a great inspiration for all mankind and as a beacon-light to guide the ship of society to the safe harbor of goodness. Swami Sivananda’s Divine Life ensures the salvation of man and the prosperity of the entire mankind.

May we all walk the path of Divine Life!

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**IN THE REALM OF THE REAL**

The goodness, the light, the pleasure and the beauty, of the world is not to be found there even in name. Even the splendour of the sun and the grandeur of the creator is superceded by the Absolute. That state is experienced when the senses ceases to work together with the mind and when the intellect does not move, and when there is nothing but Consciousness. When all desires that are lodged in the heart are liberated, then the mortal becomes Immortal. Here and now he attains Brahma.

—Swami Sivananda
CORRECTING OUR FUNDAMENTAL ERROR

(Sri Swami Atmaswarupananda)

The scriptures tell us that our fundamental error is wrong identification. We, who are the eternal Self, have identified with one body and mind. It is that that is the basis of all our problems. Obviously then, the fundamental solution is to change our identification back to the correct one.

We are aware of our ego. We feel that we must become aware of our true identity, indeed, become our true identity. And thus we begin a journey searching for our true identity. We can search everywhere. We can have an incredible variety of experiences—immense power, overwhelming love, bliss, harmony, any number of experiences of Gods and Goddesses—the whole world can disappear, the triad of knower, knowing and known can disappear. All these experiences we can have.

However, according to Ramana Maharshi, what has a beginning will always have an end. So, sooner or later, whatever experiences we are having will end, and we will be basically right back where we started—still fundamentally convinced that we are a body and mind. We may have tried to convince ourselves that we are not, that we are something beyond, some experience, but actually if we look at it objectively, our fundamental identification is still with the body and mind.

Perhaps it is because we have been looking in the wrong direction. If our wrong identification is with a single body and mind instead of the eternal Self, the first fundamental fact is that we shouldn’t have to go looking anywhere else other than where we are right now for the eternal Self. By definition, if it is the Self, if it is eternal, it has to be here and now as part of our present experience. The problem is that it is not knowable by the mind. It can never be an object, and thus whatever else we have found may give us an experience of oneness, but it is not the eternal Self that we always are.

That eternal Self is not knowable by the mind, but the mind can know that it is unknowable and be prepared to rest in that truth. Thus, the actual practice is one of conviction, of accepting the declared truth of the scriptures that we are That. It is believing Gurudev and Pujya Swami Chidanandaji when they constantly declare You are Divine.

They didn’t say that it was knowable to the mind, indeed Pujya Swami Chidanandaji said that the Real is invisible and what is visible is unreal. Anything that we can know with our mind, including what we believe to be the universal Self, is part of the known, and, therefore, not the Real, not our eternal Self. Our Self can only be known when we let go, when we surrender, when we become a zero.

When that is accepted, when that is realized, then a shift from our present wrong identity to our eternal identity begins. And the progress we could not find previously takes place.

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THE DIVINE LIFE
JULY 2013
WHO WILL BE MORE BLESSED THAN YOU, THEN?
(Sri Swami Ramarajyam)

An old but very inspiring incident, which occurred in Puri (Odisha), is being narrated below.

A very beautiful boy, whose complexion was dark blue, knocked at the door of a house in which lived a poor Brahmin, known as Panditji. Panditji was not in the house at that time. The door was opened by Brahmini, his wife. She saw the beautiful face of the boy. She kept gazing at the beauty par excellence and lo! His body was bleeding profusely and was cut at several places.

The boy was carrying a bundle on his head. The load of the bundle was making him sink down. He unloaded the bundle from his head, kept it near the threshold and said to Brahmini, “Panditji asked me to bring this bundle here. Take possession of it.”

Brahmini, who was so sad to look at the bleeding body of the boy, asked, “Your body is bleeding. How come?”

“This question you should not ask me. Ask Panditji, replied the boy and went away swiftly.

The boy’s beautiful face and his bleeding body—both were imprinted on Brahmini’s mind.

“O my God!” sighed she.

She brought the bundle inside and untied it with eagerness. The bundle contained so many things—cereals, spices, sweets, delicacies and a pot of clarified butter. She squealed with delight. Since the last three days she had not cooked food as there was nothing left in the house to cook. Only a little while ago she sent Panditji to the houses of his clients. Panditji used to perform religious rituals on behalf of his clients to get something to cook. She began to muse, “How could he get so many things in such a short period of time? Where did he meet this boy? Why was the boy’s bleeding? Did he beat the boy?”

In the meantime came back Panditji and said sadly, “Nothing could I get anywhere.”

Brahmini said, “So much you got yet you say...”

Panditji looked at her and said in a dry voice, “Telling jokes on an empty stomach!”

Brahmini caught hold of his hand and took him where the bundle was kept. She said, “Look yourself. God has given us so many things, yet you say you got nothing! What will God think about you?”
Panditji looked at the bundle in wide-eyed amazement and began to murmur—“Who brought this bundle here? Who sent all these things?”

Brahmini said, “A short while ago a beautiful boy had come here with this bundle on his head. He told that you had asked him to deliver it to our house.”

“I asked! No, no,” said Panditji with a bewildered look on his face.

“I sense something is amiss. Don’t hide the facts. Tell me if you had beaten the boy. His whole body was bleeding.”

“I beat! I beat that boy,” muttered Panditji. Suddenly a thought flashed through his mind. He sat down on the floor with a dull thud and began to cry. Weeping tears of sadness, he said, “Yes it was I who beat him. This sinner, this wretched fellow beat that boy.”

Brahmini said, “Don’t talk in riddles.”

Panditji kept crying for some time. Then he said, “Brahmini! I am the greatest sinner on earth. This morning I was chanting the Gita. In that scripture Lord Krishna has promised at one place that He would give His devotees what they need and also would protect what He has given. While reading that it occurred to me that He Himself might not provide the needed things to all His devotees. He might be doing so through some other people. Then I deleted with my pen that particular line in the scripture which contains this promise of Lord Krishna. Now I realize my mistake.

The Gita is a limb of His body. By deleting that line I cut His body itself. That boy was none but Lord Krishna. That’s why his body was bleeding. And how graciously He has reacted to this misdeed to mine! He Himself carried the bundle and came on our doorsteps to tell us that He Himself satisfies the needs of His devotees. Brahmini! The Lord Himself came to our house. Why didn’t you catch hold of His feet? Why did you let Him go? I am a sinner. Fortunate, indeed, you are. You yourself saw the Lord! Oh! He Himself came to feed our hungry family.”

Having said this, Panditji began to cry again.

Dear children, this is a beautiful story which is replete with God’s love for His devotees. God very much loves His devotees. When they are grieved, He relieves their grief by all means. How gracious is He! He takes care of even those who do not have faith in His graciousness. He wards off their sufferings and gives them, with love, all what they need. Limitless are His grace and love for us. If you want that God should shower His grace on you, love you, end your sufferings and satisfy your need, you should truly and wholeheartedly love Him. Then He shall bless you with lots of His grace, saturated in sweetness of love. You will be overjoyed at your good fortune. You will become happiness personified. Who will be more blessed than you, then?

* * *
It is a very critical time we are now passing through. Last month, within a short interval of twelve days, two of the most illustrious sons of India, Swami Sivananda in the North and Swami Ramdas in the South, noble souls who have been trying for the illumination, ennoblement and emancipation of mankind for over 30 years, bade us goodbye and dropped their mortal bodies.

Nevertheless, they are with us, having become one with the universal Self. But still it is with a heavy heart that we meet. Now the question is, “What are we to do? How are we to pay homage to these illustrious souls?” The only and the best way is by trying to live up to their ideals and following the path that has been laid down by them both by their exemplary lives and their invaluable teachings. Swami Sivananda and Swami Ramdas, too, have laid down that the purpose of human life is twofold. One is ‘Manava-Seva’ and the other is ‘Madhava-Seva’, ‘Atmonnati and Manavajati-Samuddharana’. This double ideal of realising the Self and serving humanity is the objective of human life, and towards this end Swami Sivananda has given several beautiful practical instructions. A few of them only I shall mention.

He always says, in consonance with the teachings of Sri Krishna in the Bhagavad Gita, “Tasmat Sarveshu Kaleshu Maam Anusmara Yudhya cha”—“therefore constantly remember Me and fight the battle of life”. How are we to fight it? — ‘Taking the name of the Holy Lord’. That is our sure guide and protection. Constant remembrance of the Lord will save us from all sorrows, and as Sivananda was a physician both of the body and the soul, he used to say humorously: “The Panacea for all human ills is God-liver oil—not Cod-liver Oil but God-liver Oil. Start with a spoonful and gradually increase the dose, and repeat it as often as possible.” That is how you can maintain a constant unbroken remembrance of God. Sometime ago, I sent him some mango pickles which we, in Telegu, call “Avakay”. Acknowledging its receipt Swamiji wrote to me, “When you take ‘Avakay’ with your food, you not only relish your food better, but you are able to swallow more of it.” Likewise if you constantly take the name of the Lord while carrying on your daily round of activities, you will not only relish the activities, the mundane work, but you
will do it more efficiently and in a greater quantity. Swamiji always says, “Adapt, Adjust, Accommodate yourself to all circumstances in life. Bear insult, bear injury. This is the highest Sadhana. Attach—Detach. Attach yourself to God and detach yourself from the world, and that at no future date but DIN, DIN”. He would always ‘din’ into our ears. By DIN he means “Do it Now. Do it Now. Do not postpone for tomorrow, because tomorrow may never dawn.”

The Divine Life Society is the chief organ through which he has been functioning. By becoming members of it, we open our switch connection, so to say, with that Cosmic-Power-generating-dynamo, and when we carry on the Sadhana laid down by him, our bulbs, viz. our minds, will get illumined, and we will become a light not only unto ourselves but to others too. That is how we can work out our salvation. Becoming a member of the Divine Life Society does not mean enlisting ourselves in one of the branches and paying a monthly subscription; but all those men and women, irrespective of age, caste or community who try to practise in their daily life and conduct to the best of their capacity the three cardinal virtues of truth, non-violence and continence—Satya, Ahimsa and Brahmacharya—they automatically become members of the Divine Life Society. That is how we can maintain our intimate unbroken connection with Swamiji.

The whole spiritual course he has briefly summarised in three stages. The first is to try to develop moderation in all things. “Eat a little; drink a little; sleep a little; talk a little; walk a little; mix a little; do Asana a little, Pranayama a little; do Japa a little, and Sankirtan a little, etc.”

The next stage in the process of Sadhana as the soul evolves is summed up in three pairs of words: “Serve, Love, Give, Purify, Meditate, Realise”. ‘Service’ Swamiji has placed above meditation even, and serving humanity is a sign that we recognise our oneness with our fellow brethren. We regard them as the images of the one Self or as children of God whereby we all become brothers, and in this spirit we serve them disinterestedly and give food, clothing, books, money and what not. That was Swamiji’s lifework, both as a Sadhaka and as an adept, and those who visited him at Rishikesh know how much he was giving. Some of his devotees are often fond of calling him, perhaps very aptly, Givananda instead of Sivananda.

The last stage in the Sadhana is “Be good, Do good.” That is the acme or perfection of human life, and towards this end Swamiji has been leading mankind, working ceaselessly day and night, not at all caring even for his health. Now what remains for us is to open our intimate and unbroken connection with him. It is said: ‘Dhyanamulam Guror-murtih, Pujamulam Guroh Padam, Mantramulam Guror Vakyam, Mokshamulam Guroh Kripa’. Self-Realisation or Moksha can be attained only by the grace of God, or grace of the Sadguru. The grace of the Sadguru will dawn upon one who maintains an unbroken intimate connection with him through meditating
upon his form, constantly remembering
his name, making Puja of his feet, and,
last but not the least, following his
instructions closely. These are some of
the practical ways and means Swamiji
has pointed out. He says, “Money is
Vitamin ‘M’. Vitamin is an important
ingredient of our food, but it is not the
entire food. Though money is good as a
means, it is not the end of life. So give it
the proper place it deserves, no more, no
less.

Today we have all met here to pay
our homage to those two great souls,
Swami Sivananda and Swami Ramdas.
What else can we do but open our close
and intimate connection with them by
trying to follow their footsteps? By
becoming lights ourselves, let us
illumine the path of others. Now, let us
pray that those noble souls, who have
departed from us in flesh and blood, but
who are still with us as the all-pervading
universal Spirit, may shower their
blessings on us. Let their grace be on all
of us who have assembled here. We feel
very happy that the foremost man of
India, our venerable President, Dr.
Radhakrishnan, who is not only
President, but a Philosopher-President,
has been in our midst and has given us a
very illuminating talk which takes us far,
I am sure. He has given not only the
essence of Swami Sivananda’s teachings
but the teachings of all saints and sages,
in fact, the teachings of all religions.
Therefore it behoves us all to open our
intimate connection with these Saints
and thereby merit the grace of God. I am
quite sure that the souls who are moving
around us, who are in us and outside us,
will continue to guide us, shed their
radiance and lustre upon our spiritual
path, and ultimately take us to the final
destination or the goal of human life,
namely liberation.

**FITNESS FOR LIFE DIVINE**

Just as the coloured water penetrates freely and nicely a
piece of cloth when it is pure white so also the instructions of
a sage can penetrate and settle down in the hearts of
aspirants only when their minds are calm, when there are no
desires for enjoyments and when the impurities of their
minds are destroyed. That is the reason why an aspirant is
expected to possess the qualifications of Viveka, Vairagya,
Sama, Dama and Uparati before he practises hearing of
Srutis, reflection and meditation. Discipline and purification
of the mind and the Indriyas are the prerequisites of an
aspirant in the path of Truth and Self-realisation.
DIVINISE YOUR LIFE

(H.H. Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj)

To shed the animal in man, to sublimate the human in him into the Divine, to express his Divinity in daily life—this is Divine Life. Sensual life is the road that leads to hell. Divine life is the road to Immortality.

Divine Life is life in the Eternal Spirit or the Transcendental Being. Life without lust, egoism, greed, anger, pride, is in itself divine life. Try to lead a life of purity with a spirit of sacrifice. Lead a divine life. See that the balance-sheet of life shows an increasing profit every year. Increase the profits by investing all available energies in Divine work.

There is Divinity inside you. Show that Divinity in your entire behaviour in life. Lead the Life Divine as prescribed by your Guru, saints and scriptures. Lead the Life Divine and attain God-realisation, here and now. Lead the Life Divine first and then teach it to all. A life full of service, love and devotion is Divine Life.

Cultivate Nishkama (selfless) love in life. Embrace all. Mix with all. See God in every face, in every form. Love all. The life of Light will follow. The Life Divine will come apace and in plenty. Be good. Do good. Serve the Lord in all; love all. Pray. Meditate. This is the key to a real Divine Life.

Divine Life is above time and all the limitations of time. Heal and cool yourself in the stream of Divine Life by practising Japa and Meditation. Divine is not divorced from mundane life. Change the angle of vision. Spiritualise all activities.

You are not leading the Life Divine. You have not controlled the senses and the mind. You are running hither and thither. You do not find where to find the Peace everlasting. Lead the Life Divine. You will achieve this.

One who spends his life in mere eating, drinking and sleeping is really a dead man. O Man! Years have come and gone! You are yet the same man with brutal instincts. Renounce, serve, love, meditate. Become God—this very moment

Worry not. Live the Divine Life. Reach the peak of perfection and Bliss. Every difficulty will become a stepping stone to higher Divine Life. Attain the eternal Bliss of Atma through purification of your lower nature and building up the superstructure of higher Divine Life.

Sharpen the intellect. Thin out the ego. Let the Light Divine shine in you in all its splendour through leading constantly the Divine Life. Prostrate yourself before all. This will enlighten your life. Cultivate the spirit of love and humility, compassion, and tenderness.
which filled the hearts of Lord Buddha and Lord Jesus.

Bear no ill-will towards anyone. Even if someone behaves rudely towards you, be kind to him. Serve him with Divine Bhava. Then alone will you have self-purification and enjoy peace:

Divine Life is not possible without self-control, and self-purification. Self-control augments energy, vitality, vigour and mental strength. Divine Life is the simplest thing, the most natural life that every man should lead. But artificial conditions created by advancing materialism—Kali—have blurred the vision of man, who is led astray in spite of himself.

“Serve, Love, Give, Purify. Be good. Do good.” Here is a definite principle of life, behind all human efforts, aspirations and thoughts. Wherever Divine Life is, there are success, happiness, harmony, peace, strength and courage. In every aspirant who leads the Life Divine there is an infinite power, which progressively unfolds itself as he expands in the Divine Life.

Lead the Divine Life. Help the cause of the Divine Life. If you co-operate and help to further the Divine Life, you would be indeed laying a brick in building up once again the glorious monument of Bharatiya culture, our heritage of universal peace and well-being.

Strive; continue to strive to spread the message of Divine Life to all. Spread the message of Divine Life. Work together harmoniously for the spread of Divine Life.

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**INEFFABLE NATURE OF THE HIGHEST SPIRITUAL EXPERIENCE**

Spiritual experiences cannot be described in words. Language is imperfect. They are to be felt and realised by the aspirants. Experiences vary. A devotee, a Yogi and a sage have different spiritual experiences in the beginning. Ultimately, the highest experience is one and invariable. The highest experience is that in which you become identical with the Absolute.

There is neither darkness nor void in this experience. It is all-light. You become a Sarvavid or all-knower. You know the mystery of creation. You get immortality, higher knowledge, and eternal bliss.

In meditation, new grooves are formed in the brain, and the mind moves upwards in the new spiritual grooves. When the mind becomes steady in meditation, the eyeballs also become steady. A Yogi whose mind is calm will have a steady eye. There will be no winking at all. The eyes will be lustrous, red or pure white.

When you enter into very deep, silent meditation, the breath will not come out of the nostrils. There may be occasional, slow movement of the lungs and the abdomen.

In profound and continued meditation, thinking ceases. There is only one idea of “I am the Infinite”, “Aham Brahmasmi”. When this idea also is given up, Nirvikalpa Samadhi ensues. Just as salt melts in water, the Sattvic mind melts in the Brahman, its Substratum.

—Swami Sivananda
NEWS AND REPORTS

NEWS FROM THE HEADQUARTERS

SEVA THROUGH SIVANANDA HOME

By the profound Blessings of Sri Gurudev, 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 and care.

This month two of the inward patients were diagnosed with cancer. One of them was earlier admitted, having a huge swelling in the neck region. After consultation with the doctor, and on his advice a sample was taken at the local laboratory and sent for investigation to the pathology lab. The swelling was an open ulcer and dressing was done on daily basis, together with the prescription of the medicines. The other person was an elderly female patient, with a tumor growing inside the mouth. As she was mentally challenged too, she hardly ever talked a single word, though her understanding was quite clear. No complaint, no indication of pain she ever expressed, just quietly bearing everything. Medical treatment was started as prescribed, with prayers for their health and well-being. Om Sri Satgurudevaya Namah.

Among the other new patients this month was a person suffering from a chronic skin disease, culminated in open rashes and severe itching over the whole body, literally from head to toe; and a patient with an acute attack of allergic asthma, who too was treated with medicines and oxygen supply. By His Grace, all are doing well, and we pray for the welfare and well-being of all these brothers and sisters, who suffer throughout the day, due to ill health, and for all those who are bereft and desolate due to calamities and other disastrous conditions.

“May the Lord bless us and keep us.
May the Lord make His face to shine upon us, and be gracious to us.
May the Lord lift up His countenance upon us, and give us Peace”.

(A Judeo-Christian Blessing)

“Let us behold Thee in all these names and forms. Let us serve Thee in all these names and forms. Let us ever remember Thee. Let us ever sing Thy glories. Let Thy Name be ever on our lips. Let us abide in Thee for ever and ever.”

(Swami Sivananda).
CELEBRATION OF EIGHTY NINTH SANNYASA DIKSHA ANNIVERSARY OF SADGURUDEV SRI SWAMI SIVANANDAJI MAHARAJ

There is no greater glory, there is no greater joy, than that of a life of renunciation and perfect Tyaga.
—Sadgurudev Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj

1st June 2013, the blessed day of Eighty Ninth Sannyasa Diksha Anniversary of Sadgurudev Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj was celebrated with great devotion and prayerfulness at the Headquarters Ashram. The programme commenced with a special worship to the sacred Padukas of Sadgurudev in the holy Samadhi Shrine wherein Sannyasins, Brahmacharins and devotees of the Ashram participated to offer their love, devotion and gratitude at the lotus feet of the Beloved Master.

During the night Satsanga, H.H. Sri Swami Vimalanandaji Maharaj, H.H. Sri Swami Padmanabhanandaji Maharaj, H.H. Sri Swami Advaitanandaji Maharaj and H.H. Sri Swami Yogavedantanandaji Maharaj delivered short talks on the inspiring life and teachings of the Divine Master. Thereafter, floral Archana was offered to Sadgurudev to the chant of Ashtottarashatanamavali. Nine books were also released to mark this sacred occasion. The Satsanga concluded with Arati and distribution of special Prasad.

May the blessings of the Lord Almighty and Sadgurudev be upon all!
SHOWERS OF SRI KRISHNALILA KATHAMRITA 
AT THE SACRED ABODE OF SADGURUDEV

Revered Sadhvi Sri Muralika Sharmaji of Barasana along with her Katha Mandali visited the Headquarters Ashram on 4th June 2013 and blessed the devotees with Sri Krishnalila Kathamrita during the night Satsanga at the holy Samadhi Shrine.

Revered Muralikaji narrated the nectarine stories of playful pranks of Lord Sri Krishna in His childhood and also explained the sublime import of each Divine Lila of the Lord. The inimitable unique style of her narration and the use of Brij Bhasha transported all to the sacred streets of Vrindavan to see the divine sports of Bala Krishna. All felt immensely blessed and blissful being drenched in the showers of Sri Krishnalila Kathamrita.

The Satsanga concluded with the felicitations of Revered Muralikaji and the members of her Katha Mandali, Arati and distribution of Prasad.

May the blessings of Lord Sri Krishna and Sadgurudev be upon all!
THE HEADQUARTERS ASHRAM PROVIDES SUCCOUR TO THE NEEDY BRETHRENS OF RISHIKESH

Gladden the heart of the weary. Remove the sufferings of the afflicted. Help your fellow beings in the hour of need.

(Sadgurudev Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj)

On 16th and 17th June 2013, cloud bursts and heavy rains wrought havoc in entire Uttarakhand causing disastrous situation especially in Kedarnath valley. As water level rose in Ganga, low lying areas of Rishikesh were also flooded. There was 4-5 feet water in Gurudev Kutir, Audio Visual Studio and Ashram rooms situated at the bank of Mother Ganga. On 18th morning, water receded leaving behind mud and slush up to 4 feet. By 19th June, these places were cleaned and restored to normal functioning.

The houses situated in Sheesham Jhari area of Rishikesh were also filled...
with muddy water and slush up to 4 feet making the lives of poor inhabitants miserable. Seeing their pathetic condition, the Headquarters Ashram immediately initiated relief measures. H.H. Sri Swami Padmanabhanandaji Maharaj, H.H. Sri Swami Adwaitanandaji Maharaj along with other Sannyasins and Brahmacharis of the Ashram visited the affected area and consoled the afflicted families. The Ashram supplied food to the affected families from 18th to 20th June. H.H. Sri Swami Adwaitanandaji Maharaj also conducted a detailed survey of the area to ascertain the extent of damage caused and to identify severely affected families. Dry rations are being supplied to such needy families. The members of afflicted families felt deeply touched by this noble gesture of timely succour and the loving kindness of Ashramites and their faith in the divine grace of the Lord got strengthened.

May the blessings of the Lord Almighty and Sadgurudev be upon all.
THE DIVINE LIFE SOCIETY, CHANDIGARH BRANCH CELEBRATES ITS 35TH FOUNDATION DAY

The Divine Life Society, Chandigarh Branch celebrated its 35th Foundation Day by organising a Two Day Sadhana Shivir on 8th and 9th June 2013. About 200 devotees from Chandigarh, Panchkula, Mohali, Patiala, Nabha, Rajpura, Ahmedgarh, Kalka and Jammu participated in the Shivir. The gathering was a happy mix of children, youth, adult and old persons. H.H. Sri Swami Padmanabhanandaji Maharaj, General Secretary, the Divine Life Society Headquarters graced the celebration as the chief guest. Sri Swami Ramarajyamji Maharaj along with Sri Swami Bhaktibhavanandaji and Sri Swami Sadashivanandaji accompanied Sri Swamiji from the Headquarters Ashram. Swami Vedanandaji Maharaj from Jalandhar, Swami Anupamanandaji Maharaj, Secretary Ramakrishana Mission, Chandigarh and APN Pankajji, a keen exponent of Ramacharitamanas also blessed the celebration with their holy presence.

As a prelude to the celebration, a special programme of Sankirtan was organized by children of Ashiana Home and Ananda group at Ashiana Children’s Home, Panchkula on 7th June 2013. These children, in all their purity and enthusiasm and guidance from Sri Sandeep Sharmaji, Yogacharya, had formed a Divine Life Society Children’s Branch. H.H. Sri Swami Padmanabhanandaji Maharaj very graciously declared the Children’s Branch open on 7th June 2013 amongst the cheers of the children and also blessed the key office-bearers who were unanimously elected by the children.

The Shivir started on 8th June with early morning prayers and meditation by Sri Swami Ramarajyamji Maharaj imparting very useful tips for preparation and for achieving success in meditation. This was followed by Paduka Puja which H.H. Sri Swami Padmanabhanandaji Maharaj conducted with the chanting of holy Stotras and Mantras. The inaugural session commenced with the formal welcome of the Chief Guest, other saints,
guests and all the participants by Sri F. Lal Kansal, President DLS, Chandigarh Branch. The theme of the Shivir ‘Bhakti’ was introduced by Sri Swami Ramarajyamji Maharaj. In his inaugural address, H.H. Sri Swami Padmanabhanandaji Maharaj beautifully explained Bhakti as practised from time to time starting from Bhagawan Ved Vyas to Gurudev Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj and emphasized the importance of Kirtan in Kali Yuga.

In the next session, Sri Swami Anupamanandaji Maharaj explained the Bhakti as practised and preached by Paramhamsa Ramakrishna Dev. Thereafter, H.H. Sri Swami Padmanabhanandaji Maharaj in his talk on ‘Bhakti Sadhana in Srimad Bhagawat Mahapurana’ explained with absolute clarity the complexities and seeming contradictions in the concept of Bhakti in this great scripture and soulfully brought out its essence quoting Slokas, incidents and stories of many devotees.

In the afternoon session, Sri Swami Ramarajyamji Maharaj spoke on ‘Techniques for fixing the mind in God’ and suggested many methods for making Nama Japa a potent Sadhana. Sri APN Pankajji gave a very interesting exposition of ‘Bhakti in Ramcharitamanas’. Then, Swami Vedanandaji in his talk expressed the importance of laughing and remaining always happy and cheerful.

In the evening, all Swamijis along with some devotees went to Chandi Kushta Ashram where H.H. Sri Swami Padmanabhanandaji Maharaj unveiled Gurudev Swami Sivanandaji’s portrait in the temple and distributed milk and fruits to the inmates of the Ashram. Swamiji took a lot of interest in the living conditions of the inmates talked to them and visited the residences of some of the inmates. The day ended with an enlightening video discourse of Param Pujya Guru Maharaj Sri Swami Chidanandaji Maharaj—Be up and Doing’.

On 9th June, after morning meditation by Sri Swami Ramarajyamji, H.H. Sri Swami Padmanabhanandaji Maharaj in his discourse on ‘Bhakti in Bhagavad Gita’ beautifully explained the
35 qualities of a Bhakta, whom God loves, as enumerated by Lord Krishna in the last eight verses of twelfth chapter and expounded that Bhakti begins with Karpanya Bhava – the feeling of utter helplessness but its fullest culmination lies in total surrender to the Lord—Sharanagati.

Swami Ramarajyamji, in his discourse gave practical guidelines for the practice of the Nama Japa and stressed its importance in daily Sadhana. He also methodically showed how Japa with rosary should be done, which was followed by a 10 minutes practice by Japa Malas by all present.

In the concluding session, Sri Swami Padmanabhanandaji Maharaj presented the characteristics of a few great Bhaktas of yore—Kapil Muni, Shankaracharya and Appaya Dikshitar to bring home the message of true devotion. Sri Swamiji emphasized on building a personal, one to one relationship with God and then to daily talk to him. By the end of Swamiji’s discourse, all the devotees were fully immersed in the Bhakti Ganga brought about by Swamiji.

Two new books prepared and printed by the Branch, based on Gurudev’s teachings, titled ‘Bhakti Sadhana’ in Hindi and English and ‘Spiritual Sadhana’ in English were released on this holy occasion by Sri Swami Padmanabhanandaji Maharaj and Sri Swami Ramarajyamji Maharaj. Another book ‘Bhakta Shrimani Prahalad’ in Hindi written by F. Lal Kansal, President DLS, Chandigarh Branch, was also released by H.H. Sri Swami Padmanabhanandaji Maharaj.

All the sessions were interspersed by Bhajan, Kirtan and chanting of Divine name. Sri Swami Bhaktibhavanandaji provided refreshing interlude between the Pravachans through spirited Bhajan and Kirtan in his melodious voice. Collective chanting of Mahamrityunjaya Mantra and Japa of Narayana Mantra was also conducted by him and Sri Swami Sadashivanandaji on both the days.

The Shivir concluded with a vote of thanks by Dr. Ramneek Sharma, Secretary of the Chandigarh Branch and distribution of all the three newly released books as Prasad to all the devotees. Dr. Vibha Taluja conducted all the proceedings of the Shivir very competently and systematically. The two day Bhakti Sadhana Shivir proved to be very elevating, enlightening and blissful experience for all the devotees.

A Sage is a sustainer of the world. He is a source of perpetual inspiration. He is a radiator of peace and happiness. He is an instrument, through which divine Grace is transmitted to the unenlightened, unregenerated men. Become a Sage.

—Swami Sivananda
REPORTS FROM THE D.L.S. BRANCHES

INLAND BRANCHES

Ambala (Haryana): Regular Satsanga activities continued in the Branch with Maha Mrityunjaya Mantra Japa, Swadhyaya, prayers, Arati and a video show on 2nd Sunday of the month and on Tuesdays-Hanuman Chalisा, Sri Sankat Mochan Path and Sri Ram Charita Manas Path. 94th Birthday of Sri Swami Premanandaji Maharaj was celebrated. Jnana Prasad was distributed. Jalseva is continued as usual. Services through Free Homeopathic Dispensary are continued.

Bellary (Karnataka): Apart from daily Pooja, the Branch conducted Satsanga regularly and on all Sundays Paduka Pooja with Ashtottara Archana, Maha Mrityunjaya Mantra, Shanti Mantras and prayer for world peace, and distribution of Prasadam after Maha Mangalarati.

Bangalore (Karnataka): Regular activities of Satsanga continued in the Branch. Paduka Pooja on Thursday, Swadhyaya of Gurudev’s literature, Devi Pooja on every Friday with Lalita Sahasranama and Vishunu Sahasranama and study of Devi Mahatmyam. On 19th May 2013, Akhand kirtan of Mahamantra was conducted followed by chanting of Guru Gita and Maha Mangalarati. Yogasana classes were conducted on all Sundays at the Satsanga hall.

Bhishmagiri (Odisha): The Branch conducted weekly Satsangas on every Sunday. Special activities:- Bhagavad Gita Path was conducted on 13th May on Akshaya Trutiya, on 23rd May, Nrusingha Chaturdasi, and on 25th, Baisakha Purnima.

Bhuj (Gujrat): During the Satsanga on Saturday a Gujarati translation of “Cultivate and intensify the spirit of oneness”, an article on speech given by Gurudev was read and a talk on “God in Indian Poetry”. 8th being the birth date of Sri Sadgurudev a special Bhajan programme was organised.

Badhausta (Odisha): Apart from regular activities, the Branch organised the Fourth Pratishtha Mahotsav with three days programme. Everyday began with Brahmamuhurt Sadhana, Guru Paduka Pooja, Nagar Sankirtan, Nama Sankirtan, Sundarakanda Parayana, Arati, 108 Brahman Bhojan, Narayana Seva and ended with night Satsanga, and Jnana Prasad was distributed to all the devotees.

Chatrapur (Odisha): Daily Satsanga activities continued in the Branch, besides 5 weekly Satsangas in the evening and 3 special Satsangas. Gurupaduka pooja was conducted on 8th and 24th of May, being the birth dates of Sadgurudev Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj and H.H. Sri Swami Chidanandaji Maharaj, with special Archana. On the occasion of Brusha Sankranti, Sri Rama Charita Manas, Sundarakanda Parayan was held.

Digapahandi (Odisha): Regular Satsanga activities were continued. A special evening Satsanga was held on the day of Sri Adi Shankaracharya Jayanti and also on 25th May, being the Baisakha Purnima.

Deogarh (Odisha): Regular Satsanga with Bhajan Kirtan at “Swami Chidananda Ashram” is continued on every Sunday evening for two hours. Apart from these activities special functions like Jammashtami, Sivaratri, Gita Jayanti are conducted with Maha Mantra chanting. The Branch held its annual function on 24th March for the whole day and concluded with Prasad sevan.

Kantabanji (Odisha): Regular weekly Satsangas continued every Sunday with the reading of Gita and each devotee speaking on
Khandagiri (Bhubaneshwar – Odisha): Daily Satsangas, weekly Satsangas on Sundays and Matri Satsangas on all Mondays continued. Maha Shivaratri was observed on 10th March and Sri Ram Navami on 20th April was celebrated with the Parayan of Sri Ram Charita Manas by the members on all the nine days. Seventyfifth Birthday of Sri Swami Shivachidanandaji Saraswati Maharaj was celebrated on 12th May. A free health checkup camp was organised on 7th April to mark the World Health Day and 626 patients were treated by 14 Specialist Doctors and free medicines were distributed to the poor and needy.

Lanjipalli (Odisha): In addition to the regular weekly Satsangas on Sundays, a Free Eye Camp was organised and more than one hundred patients have been treated, advised by the well experienced Specialist Doctors of the town.

Lanjipalli Ladies Branch (Odisha): Daily Satsanga activities continued. A special Satsanga week was conducted from 15th to 19th May to mark the 12th Anniversary of Foundation Day of the Branch. Narayan Seva was arranged for about 130 poor and needy, offering sattvic food and clothes.

Lucknow (U.P.): Regular Satsanga activities were carried on with Jai Ganesh kirtan, Guru Stotra, Shanti Path, recitation from Srimad Bhagavad Gita and reading from the literature of Gurudev Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj and H.H. Sri Swami Chidanandaji Maharaj, with Arati and offering Bhog to Lord.

New Delhi (Vasant Vihar Branch): Weekly Satsanga activities continued on all Sundays with meditation, reading from Gurudev’s books, Sri Ram Charita Manas, Bhagavad Gita, Universal prayer, and prayer for world peace and a talk by a saint, and concluded with the distribution of Prasad.

Nayagarh (Odisha): Apart from regular Satsanga activities, the Branch observed Maha Shivaratri with chanting of “Om Namah Shivaya” and Sri Ram Charita Manas Parayan was done by the devotees of the Branch. A Gita Jnana Yajna was performed on 10th Feb and 31st March for world peace. Sri Hanuman Jayanti and Sri Ram Navami were celebrated with Puja, Bhajan, Kirtan, Arati and concluded with Prasad sevan.

Nimapara (Odisha): Weekly evening Satsangas continued. 22nd Annual Utsav of the Ladies Satsanga Kendra was held on 14th. Sri Rama Navami was celebrated on 19th April and Sri Hanuman Jayanti on 25th April with Pooja, Archana, Arati, Bhajan Kirtan Shantipath and Prasad Sevan. Srimad Bhagavat Saptah Parayan was conducted from 29th April to 05th May.

Nandini Nagar (Chattisgarh): Daily Satsangas, weekly mobile Satsanga and Matri Satsangas on Saturday were continued in the Branch. The Branch organised a Special Residential Youth and Spiritual Camp from 4th to 11th May, wherein 40 youths participated from Ahiware, Bilai and Nandini Nagar Branches. It included Bhajan, Kirtan, Asana and Pranayama, the message of Sri Ram Charita Manas, harmonium training, talks on Ramayana and on the Philosophy of Swami Sivanandji Maharaj and concluded with Arati and Prasad Sevan.

Panchkula (Haryana): Regular activities continued with Gita Path, Shanti Mantra, and Bhajans and Swadhyaya which includes the Brahma Sutra (Vedant Darshan) with Commentary by Sri Gurudev. Sunday Satsangas were arranged at the residences of the devotees and a combined Satsanga at
Sivananda Ashram Sector 29 Chandigarh on last Sunday of the month.

Rourkela (Odisha): Daily, weekly Satsangs continued in the Branch besides mobile Satsangs at the residences of the devotees and members. Paduka Pooja, Abhisheka, and Archana were done on 8th and 24th of every month with a special evening Satsanga at the Branch. A Sadhana day was observed on 14th May with the participation of many devotees, with Sarvadeva Vandana, Guru Stotram, Shanti Mantra, Shanistotram, Aditya Hridayam and Gita Chanting etc., and concluded with Arati and Prasad Sevan.

Sunabeda Ladies Branch (Odisha): The Branch continued its regular Satsanga activities, together with Children’s Satsanga on Sunday afternoon, Narayan Seva on Tuesday noon and Abhishek and Vishnu Sahasranama Parayana on every Ekadashi, Mahamrityunjaya Japa on Chidananda day and Sundar Kanda Parayan on Sankranti evening. Mahashivratri was observed on 10th March.

Surendra Nagar (Gujarat): Daily Satsanga and Matri Satsanga continued. There was Ramayana Navahna Parayan for 9 days in Chaitramas. A Maun Mandir started for meditation. The Branch started two “Water Huts”, one in Joravarnagar and the other in a nearby village to help the people in the hot climate of the area. The Jivaseva activities continued.

Sunabeda (Odisha): Regular Satsanga activities continued. On the occasion of Sri Rama Navami the Branch organised Sri Ram Charita Manas Parayana from 10th to 18th April, and on 25th April Sri Hanuman Jayanti was celebrated with Sundararakanda Parayana and recitation of Hanuman Chalisa. Yoga classes for ladies continued at the Branch.

Steel Township Branch (Rourkela-Odisha): Four mobile Satsangs held at the residences of the devotees and Sadhana day was observed on 2nd May. Punyatithi Aradhana of Sri Swami Sivananda Gursevananda Saraswati Maharaj was observed on 6th May with Narayana seva and Prasad sevan.

Salipur (Odisha): Regular Satsang activities continued. Sivananda day was celebrated on 8th April with Guru Paduka Pooja. Health services were rendered through Swami Sivananda Charitable Hospital on every Sunday in which 95 patients were treated and free medicines were distributed. Yoga training both theory and practicals was imparted in the local school/college in which 37 students/staff members participated. On the sacred occasion of Sri Ram Navami, Akhanda Rama mantra Japa was conducted for 6 hours.

South Balanda (Odisha): Everyday two times Pooja in the morning and evening and general Satsanga on every Friday evening continued regularly. Paduka Pooja was done on 8th and 24th of every month on the occasion of Sivananda Divas and Chidananda Divas and there was a special Satsanga in the evening. On 25th May, Akhanda Mahamantra Kirtan for 3 hours was arranged for the sake of world peace and Universal brotherhood.

Vishakhapatnam (A.P.): Free Yoga and Meditation classes were conducted by the branch every morning. A Sadhana Sibir was organised on 7th April. Special Satsangs were held on every Monday morning with the chanting of Sri Vishnu Sahasranama and Lalita Sahasranaama, and Mahamrityunjaya Havan on every Trayodashi and Ganapati Havan on full-moon day. There were Sri Rama Sankirtana on 17th April, and a lecture on Sri Ramayana, and Sri Sita Rama Kalyanam was celebrated with the participation of 200 devotees and concluded with Prasad Sevan.

Varanasi (U.P.): Mobile Satsanga was conducted at the residence of a devotee on 5th
and 19th May. On 12th and 26th May, Satsanga was held at Vriddha Ashram with Bhajan, Kirtan, Gita Parayan, Mahamantra Japa etc., and after Arati Prasad was distributed to the participants.

OVERSEAS BRANCHES
Cape Town (South Africa): Twice-a-week Satsanga on Thursdays and Saturdays, Hatha Yoga classes in the morning and evening, guided meditation class and discourse on The Yoga Sutras of Patanjali and discourses on Yoga and Vedanta in daily life are conducted by the Branch regularly. Indian Christian Spirituality gathering is held weekly, and Integral Yoga for Children and Karma Yoga were also part of the Satsanga conducted by the Branch.

Hongkong (China): Regular Satsanga activities continued in both the Cheung Sha Wan and North Point Yoga Centres of the Branch. A talk on the teachings of Gurudev (Yoga Vedanta Sutras) was arranged with 38 participants. Regular Yogasana classes based on “Practical Guide to Yoga” were continued.

Special activities: the Yoga Teachers Coordinating Group of the Branch organized a class on “First Aid License Renewal” held on 7th April and also Bhajan gathering on 27th April.

SPECIAL ARADHANA CONCESSION
From 1st JULY 2013 to 30th SEPTEMBER 2013
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