



THE DIVINE LIFE

Vol. LXXIII

APRIL 2014

No. 1

KATHOPANISHAD

CHAPTER II

VALLI ii

योनिमन्ये प्रपद्यन्ते शरीरत्वाय देहिनः ।
स्थाणुमन्येऽनुसंयन्ति यथाकर्म यथाश्रुतम् ॥७॥

7. Some Jivas enter the womb in order to have a body, others go into the inorganic matter according to their Karma and knowledge.

शिवानन्द स्तोत्रम्

SIVANANDA STOTRAM

(Sri Swami Jnanananda Saraswati, Sivanandanagar)

(Continued from the previous issue)

उदितदिवाकरतुल्यमहोयुत मोदितसज्जन योगिपते
 मुदितहृदन्तरवीक्षितशंकर संकटनाशन साधुगते।
 गदितशुभावहभाषितनाशितदुष्कृतसंचय दिव्ययते
 शिव करुणालय पालय मां श्रितमाश्रितवत्सल लोकगुरो॥१५॥

15. O world-teacher Siva, thou art the prince of Yogins, and the sole refuge, not only of the pious, but of the whole world at large. Thou art resplendent like the rising sun. By thy auspicious talks thou destroyest the accumulated sins of thy devotees and dispellest their woes. Thy heart is steeped in the bliss by the realisation of the Lord Siva and thou in turn delightest the pious and the good. O ocean of mercy, thou art gracious to those who look up to thee for succour; save me thy humble suppliant.

अभिमतसर्वफलप्रद सुप्रथ दीप्रमुखांबुज सुप्रकृते
 अभिहतशात्रवषट्क वषट्कृतिपूर्वमुपासितविश्वपते।
 अभिहितनैगमतत्त्व वशित्वविशेषनिशान्त निशातमते
 शिव करुणालय पालय मां श्रितमाश्रितवत्सल लोकगुरो॥१६॥

16. O world-teacher Siva, thou possessest a blooming face like the lotus. Thy sharp intellect, perfect self-control and sweet temper have made thee deservedly famous. Thou hast brought into perfect control the six inner foes and spendest thy time usefully in expounding the philosophy of the scriptures on the one hand and worshipping the Lord Siva through Havans on the other hand. Thou art the fulfiller of all desires of thy devotees. O ocean of mercy that art gracious to those who look up to thee for succour, save me thy humble suppliant. **(To be continued)**

**CELEBRATION OF BIRTH CENTENARY OF
WORSHIPFUL SRI SWAMI CHIDANANDAJI MAHARAJ**

My reverential Pranams at the holy feet of Sadgurudev Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj and Worshipful Sri Swami Chidanandaji Maharaj.

I consider it my great good fortune to have the rare blessedness of serving these two God-realised saints. Our Beloved Sadgurudev Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj sowed the seed of the Divine Life Society in 1936 to awaken the slumbering humanity to its divine destiny and exerted enthusiastically and indefatigably to lead everyone along the path of Divine Life. Worshipful Sri Swami Chidanandaji Maharaj came to Gurudev's holy feet in 1943 and dedicated his entire life as a devout offering to serve the Divine Master and His Divine Mission.

After Gurudev's Mahasamadhi on 14th July 1963, as His worthy successor, Sri Swamiji Maharaj endeavoured sincerely and assiduously till the last breath of his life to carry Sadgurudev's Mission to further glory. Sri Swamiji Maharaj travelled untiringly in India and abroad to propagate the sublime message of Divine Life and inspired the formation of many DLS Branches all over the world. Thus, serving his Adorable Master, Worshipful Sri Swami Chidanandaji Maharaj enshrined himself in the hearts of innumerable devotees with his simple and austere life, inimitable Guru Bhakti, unsurpassable humility, worshipful service of the poor and the sick, all-embracing love and compassion.

24th September 2016 marks the Birth Centenary of this beloved spiritual son of Sadgurudev. To celebrate this sacred occasion in a befitting manner, the Headquarters Ashram intends to organise suitable programmes at national and international levels. The matter was discussed elaborately in the meeting of

Board of Management held on 1st March 2014. The members presented various suggestions regarding Centenary Celebration Programme. Thereafter, the DLS Trust Board meeting was held on 3rd March 2014. Considering various suggestions of the members of Board of Management, the Trust Board decided to constitute an Organising Committee for the Centenary Celebration of Worshipful Sri Swami Chidanandaji Maharaj. Sri Swami Advaitanandaji Maharaj has been nominated the Chairman of the Committee and has been authorised to co-opt members from different parts of India and abroad to draw up suitable programmes for the Centenary Celebration. Some of the D.L.S. Branches (State Chapters) in India have already started Centenary Celebration Programmes in their respective States. The Organising Committee will co-ordinate all the State Level Programmes and also plan and conduct national and International programmes up to 24th September 2016.

We seek your valuable suggestions and cooperation to make the Centenary Celebration of Worshipful Sri Swami Chidanandaji Maharaj a glorious success.

May the divine grace of the Lord Almighty, Sadgurudev Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj and Worshipful Sri Swami Chidanandaji Maharaj be upon all.

Shivanandanagar
24th March 2014

Yours in the service of the Lord



Swami Vimalananda
President

THE LORD'S NAME IS THE SUPREME PURIFIER

(H.H. Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj)

The divine RAMA NAMA is a blessing which millions have treasured in their hearts since ages past. It is the supreme purifier of the mind of man, the bestower of perennial joy, the giver of peace, and the key to the door of immortality. Rama Nama, like the Mantras Ashtakshara or Dvadasakshara, is a powerful aid in destroying the animal passions in man. Passions are objective forces, and Rama Nama is a unifying force. When one adheres to Rama Nama with exclusive and genuine devotion, it becomes for one the destroyer of all pains. But one's faith must not be divided between two or more Mantras. One should stick to Rama Nama with full faith and confidence in it. The more the faith and concentration, the quicker does the Lord's Name destroys the evils in man.

The votary of Rama prays: '*Apadamapahartaram dataram sarvasampadam; Lokabhiramam Sriramam bhuyo bhuyo namamyaham.*' 'I prostrate myself again and again, before Sri Rama, the Saviour from all calamities, the giver of all prosperity, the delight of the world.' Such is the effect of Rama Nama, which bestows on one the beatitude of absolute independence or Kaivalya.

Rama Nama should not be used for the sake of obtaining worldly ends. Rama Nama is the saviour of man from the affliction of mortality itself. It raises man from all penury and exalts him to the

status of an undaunted sovereign over himself. The uttering of the Name of the Lord cures the disease of Samsara (painful worldly existence) itself; what to speak of lesser wants and turmoils. Therefore use Rama Nama as a Moksha Mantra and not as a servant to fetch you the glittering glass-pieces shining in the form of the objects of the world. Rama Nama is the guardian in your body, protecting you at all times against the attacks of sense-objects, preserving your purity and virtue and warding off the inimical urges of desire, passion and anger.

The repetition of the Mantra should be done with Bhava or deep feeling. A tremendous effect is produced when *Namoccharana* (recitation of the name) is attended with a *consciousness* of the relation of the Namoccharaka (reciter of the Name) to the Deity of the Nama. But this, however, does not mean that a mechanical repetition of the Mantra without feeling is absolutely devoid of all beneficial results. The Name is potent enough to cause a change in the psychological and the physical being of man even when it is mechanically repeated. Rama Nama is a Mantra, and a Mantra is formed by a group of significant letters, which, by the very fact of their being uttered, produce a result, even if this result may not be directly connected with the consciousness of the

chanter of the Mantra. There is a very peculiar process of physical and psychic transformation taking place at the time when the Mantra is repeated. Unconscious and mechanical repetition produces no direct psychic change, but causes biological changes through the nervous system which is immediately influenced by the vibrations set up by the chanting of the Mantra. And these biological changes indirectly bring about psychological changes, for these two natures in man are related to each other as effect and cause respectively; and the effects are so intimately related to their causes that any change in the effect will be felt by the causes and vice versa.

A devotee should not, in his ignorance, test the Lord by the chanting of His Name. For example, one should not use the Name as an excuse for the deliberate perpetration of evil acts. Yes, the Name can overcome the effects of even such acts. But the implications of such acts would be that the devotee who uses the Name thus has not a genuine aspiration and devotion to the Lord, and his mind is still being attracted to things other than those that pertain to the Lord and to His way. Hence the condition for chanting the Divine Name is well laid out in the following lines:

*Trinadapi sunichena tarorapi sahisnuna,
Amanina manadena kirtaniyah sada Harih.*

'He who is humbler than a blade of grass, more tolerant than a tree, who does not crave for respect, but respects others, is the one fit to take the Name of Hari'. God helps those who help themselves. The best possible effort that one is capable of exercising under the

intellectual circumstances provided by God should be put forth, and only beyond this effort should one seek the grace of God. Idleness is not self-surrender. Surrender of self to God becomes complete only when the individual consciousness is flooded over by love for the Divine. God's grace descends when the efforts exercised are found to be inadequate in the realisation of God.

Rama Nama has a transforming effect not only on the psychological but also the biological personality. Even the psychical ailments can be overcome by the chanting of the Divine Name. Rama Nama is unfailing in its action, infallible in its operations. Rama Nama, properly understood, is the same as Omkara, the symbol of the Absolute, the Brahman. And Rama, to the true devotee, is not merely the son of Dasaratha, or the king of Ayodhya, but the Absolute itself. Sri Rama is all-pervading; He is in the heart of all beings, as the Antaryamin or the inner Controller. What a power and glory should His Name possess; even ordinary names of things of the world have the power of stimulating a corresponding mode of consciousness in man. How much more powerful should the Name of God be! Saint Tulasidas says: "The Name is even superior to the Lord, because the Aguna and Saguna aspects of Brahman are tasted and realised by the power of the Name. Rama delivered a single woman, Ahalya, who had been transformed into a stone by a curse; while His Name has retrieved tens of thousands of wicked men from perdition. Rama gave salvation to two of his faithful servants, Jatayu and Sabari, but the

Name has been the saviour of countless wicked persons. Blessed is the son, and blessed are His parents, who remember Sri Rama in whatsoever way it may be. He who repeats Rama Nama even in dream may wear a pair of shoes made out of the skin of my body. Blessed are the outcaste and the Chandala (one of the grossest traits) who repeats the Name of Rama day and night. What is the use of high birth to one who does not repeat Rama Nama! The high peaks of mountains give shelter to snakes. Blessed is the sugarcane, the corn and

betel leaves that flourish in the plains and give delight to all.”

What a mighty power is latent in Rama Nama! Only those who are endowed with devotion know it. The scientists now declare that sound-vibrations have such a tremendous force that they can direct this power to silk fabrics and cleanse them of all dirt more thoroughly than a washer-man can. But they have yet to realise that vibrations produced by the singing of the Name of God will cleanse their very hearts, will remove all the invisible dross accumulated in them since many births.

JAPA SADHANA WHILE AT WORK

Regularity in Japa Sadhana is most essential. Sit in the same place, and at the same time. Japa must become habitual.

Carry on the current of Japa mentally even at other times, in whatever works you may be engaged. Give your hands alone to work, but give the mind to God—do mental Japa—, like the typist or the harmonium-player who types or plays and talks to you, or like the lady who knits clothes and talks and jokes with her comrades while she is walking along the road.

You can do Japa even in the latrine. But do it there mentally. Ladies can do Japa mentally even during their monthly periods. There are no restrictions of any kind in Mantra Japa for those who do it with Nishkama-bhava, for the attainment of Moksha. Restrictions or Vidhis come only when people repeat any Mantra with Sakama-bhava, to get fruits such as wealth, Svarga, son, and so on.

Remember the Name of the Lord with every incoming and outgoing breath. Form a strong habit of repeating the Name of the Lord. Even in dream you must be doing Japa. Then only it will be easy for you to remember Him at the time of death.

—*Swami Sivananda*

THE BIRTHDAY OF LORD RAMA GLORY TO HIS NAME

(Letter of Swami Chidananda dated 1st April, 1965)

Immortal Atma Swaropa!

Blessed seekers after Truth! Om
Namō Narayanaya!

Om Sri Rama Jaya Rama Jaya Jaya
Rama! I wish you all a very, very happy
and auspicious NEW YEAR. Upon the
commencement of the first month of
Chaitra, at the advent of spring when
you are about to celebrate the festival of
Yugadi, I send you joyous greetings and
my love and good wishes for your health,
happiness, prosperity, all-round
progress and success. May God grant
you all that is auspicious and blessed
throughout this New Year.

One of the wonderful facts about our
Vedic New Year is that it opens with a
most auspicious holy day of festive
worship. The month of Chaitra ushers in
Sri Ramanavami, the sacred Birthday of
Lord Rama, the Avatara who personified
Dharma in all its aspects and perfection.
The advent of this Avatara heralded the
resurgence of Dharma and the
establishment of the rule of
righteousness and the moral order. Even
as the divine Sri Krishna is the beloved
and darling of India, so too is Sri Rama
the ideal and hero of India. His Avatara
Leela is the thrilling indication of the
sublime heights to which the human
individual can attain and should strive to
attain. As an Avatara, He constituted an

approach to God-realisation, which is
the goal of your life. Devout worship of
Rama leads to God-consciousness. He is
a link and a channel between you and
the transcendental absolute reality. The
Lord of Koshala, the crest-jewel of the
royal race of Raghu, is the incarnation of
the Supreme Divinity, the Param-Atman
or the Para-Brahman of the Upanishads.
Rama Bhakti is an unfailing way to
eternal emancipation from the thralldom
of birth and death. His Divine Name
“RAMA” is the ark which takes us safely
across the turbulent ocean of Samsara to
the far shore of immortality and
beatitude. This Divine Name is verily the
inexhaustible mine of all
auspiciousness, the destroyer of the
impurity of this iron age, the holiest of
holy, the saviour of this world. It is a seed
of supreme satisfaction and a veritable
bestower of all boons. It is a gateway to
the kingdom of blessedness. The glory of
Rama Nama verily beggars description.
Its greatness is unfathomable. Human
speech and intellect ever fail to assess its
supreme unparalleled worth. Rama
Nama is the most precious jewel in the
treasury of our spiritual culture. I boldly
assert that it is this great Rama Nama
that is sustaining Bharatavarsha today.

O beloved children of India! Come,
come adopt the Rama Nama way of life.

Saturate yourself with Rama Nama. Bathe in the divine nectar that ceaselessly showers from Rama Nama. Rama Nama is the quintessence of Divine Grace. Rama Nama is your greatest benefactor, dearest friend and unfailing companion. Chant Rama. Sing Rama. Let the tongue repeat Rama Nama in an unbroken and continuous stream. Root yourself in Rama Nama. Enshrine Rama Nama in your heart and mind. Let Rama Nama resound from every cell and pore of your body. Let Rama Bhakti radiate from your entire being. Rama! Rama! Rama! Om Sri Rama Jaya Rama Jaya Jaya Rama! Let your heart throb with Rama Nama. Let your breath flow with the rhythm of Rama Nama. Let blood course through your entire being in tune with Rama Nama. Make your life a veritable joyous song of Rama Nama. Supreme blessedness shall accrue unto you. Freedom, fearlessness and joy will fill the entire being. In this age, there is no greater or more effective and unfailing method of God-attainment than the practice of the wondrous Divine Name. The Name of God is verily God Himself. Supreme Divinity is present here for you, as God's Name. Name and God are not two. They are one and the same. Name is God!

What shall any one say about the power, the greatness and the glory of the Divine Name of Rama! The Divine Name will bring you face to face with God. It will grant you Mukti here and now. It will burn up all impurities. It subdues the turbulent senses. The power of the Divine Name calms the surging passions. It restrains the outgoing tendency of the mind and subdues its

restlessness. The scattered mind now becomes indrawn and one-pointed. Rama Nama tames the arrogant ego and renders it Satvic and holy. Purifying the heart, the Divine Name creates devotion and arouses divine Bhav within your heart. It drives the mind inward and leads to a state of meditation. Persistent Japa of the Divine Name cuts the veil of ignorance and brings on the resplendent experience of God-vision.

Have faith. Be simple and pure. Tread the path of truthfulness. Become selfless. Serve all. Develop noble character. Give up anger, hatred and selfishness. Overcome greed by generosity and sympathy. Overcome hatred by love and forgiveness. Overcome all restlessness through sincere belief and firm faith. Become rooted in Rama and Rama Nama. O seeker! Know that this entire world is verily the manifestation of Rama and His divine power and glory. Now sing with saint Tulsidas:

Siya Ramamaya saba jaga jaani

Karahun pranama jori juga pani

That is, "Knowing that the entire world is permeated by Lord Rama and His power, I salute everything with folded hands". Whatever you see, hear, touch, taste and smell, all is indeed the manifestation of Rama. Recognise all sounds to be Rama Nama in infinite variation.

Beloved and worshipful Gurudev Sivananda Swamiji Maharaj mentioned Namopathy as the unfailing treatment of the dire disease of Ajnana and Samsara. This is the literal truth. Believe and be blessed.

Blessed Sadhaks, come now, let us meditate upon Sri Rama. Set aside everything. Become silent. Sit on the Asana. Close your eyes. Behold Sri Rama with the inner eye standing before you, radiant and gracious. He pours his love, compassion and divine grace upon you now. Visualise Him vividly in the heart-shrine. Bask in the radiance of His spiritual presence. Repeat Rama Nama. Cast away all other thoughts and repeat Rama Nama. Forget the world and body, think Rama and Rama alone. Repeat Rama Nama in continuous, unbroken Japa and remembrance. Dwell in Rama and repeat:

RAMA RAMA RAMA RAMA RAMA RAMA RAMA
RAMA RAMA RAMA RAMA RAMA RAMA RAMA

(Ten times)

I leave you now silently and joyously in the glorious presence of Rama. May you be absorbed in Rama. May Rama Nama, Rama Prem and Rama Bhajan enrich your life. Om Sri Rama Jaya Rama Jaya Jaya Rama!

With regards, Prem and Pranams,
Ananda Kutir

Yours in Lord Rama,

Swami Chidananda

VRATAS OR VOWS OF AUSTERITY

Hindus observe various kinds of Vratas, such as Ekadasi Vrata on the eleventh day of each fortnight, Satyanarayana Vrata in honour of Lord Narayana, Varalakshmi Vrata in honour of Goddess Mother Lakshmi, Anantapadmanabha Vrata, Savitri Vrata, Janmashtami Vrata, Krishra Vrata, Chandrayana Vrata and Pradosha Vrata.

All Vratas aim at purifying the heart, controlling the senses, and cultivating devotion to the Lord. The worldly people are always busy in earning money and doing various kinds of work. At least during days of Vrata, they have opportunities to introspect, to worship, to do Japa and intense meditation, to study holy scriptures and to practise self-analysis.

Each Vrata has its peculiarities. Certain features are common to Vratas of different kinds. The aspirant observes Brahmacharya or sexual continence, fasts or takes milk and fruits or light diet. No fish or meat is taken.

—Swami Sivananda

(Buddha Jayanti Message 1976)

THE VISION OF BUDDHA

(Sri Swami Krishnananda)

Buddha Jayanti is celebrated today, and I have been requested to speak a few words on this subject of the adjustment of the mind with the conditions prevailing outside. This subject of meditation has been a great point made out by Buddha, a master who is said to have been born today, and his philosophy and teachings were nothing but this very, very particular theme.

Buddha does not ask us to meditate on God or the Atman, but on a particular psychological state of the mind. The whole of Buddhist philosophy is psychology and ethics, and controversies of a religious nature or a philosophical character are futile where the interest is spiritual. Our interest in Buddha or his followers is spiritual. It is not philosophical in a dogmatic sense, or in the sense of any cult or school of thought.

Buddha had a vision, and that vision was of the structure of the universe; that was all. And, when we are able to visualise the nature of things as they constitute this huge edifice called the universe, we will be taken aback, just as we will be taken aback if we see our own body through a powerful microscope. This is what Buddha saw through his intuitive eye. His mind itself was a microscope. It could see through things.

The complex nature of the universe and the ingredients that form these

shapes that we call objects were before his mind. We cannot have any kind of aesthetic feeling towards things when their true nature is seen. A rose petal is beautiful, but when seen through a microscope there are only small globules of matter revolving and rotating in a hectic manner for purposes not known to us. The whole universe is of that nature, including my body, your body, and every blessed thing in this world.

“Sorrow is the nature of this life, and contemplate on this sorrow,” the Upanishad tells us. Contemplate on the very meaning behind sorrow: how sorrow comes. Then you will have no sorrow. Sorrow has come because you do not know why the sorrow has come. If you know the cause of sorrow, perhaps you will avert its coming.

Sorrow of every kind comes to us on account of our not knowing our relationship with things. Neither do we know why this body has come—what our mental attitude or our relationship should be with our body—nor do we know what our social relationship should be with other people. We do not know what is good for us and what is not good for us. We do not know why we are living in this world at all, why we are working so hard from morning to night, and what the ultimate aim behind things is. Why is it that certain things give us pleasure and certain things bring us

sorrow? No one knows the answer to these queries.

Everything is dark in front of us, so we are in a state of utter ignorance. A peculiar sensation in our mind in respect of the body which it inhabits, and our social relationships, give us a kind of titillation of the nerves, and that brings us pleasure. It is not a pleasure born of understanding or of knowledge. It is born of subjection to instinct and being under the thumb of certain reactions produced by our own senses in respect of visible objects. This was discovered by Buddha.

To our horror, things are not what they seem. The world is not a compact solid object, as it looks. The solid stone before us is not a solid stone, really. It is a mass of small, insect-like atoms, molecules, etc. They are like flies running here and there in a brood, which looks like a mass or a solid object. If one thousand flies sit together, they would look like a hard black object, but they are only a bundle of flies, like atoms, electrons, running here and there for purposes which only they know.

These are the building bricks which are at the back of all these beautiful things that we see in this world. Behind all the beauty of things, there is a hidden ugliness. Behind the rosy petals that nature presents before us, there are thorns. This is what Buddha saw before his intuitive eye. He was really horrified. But why should one be horrified when one sees the truth? It is because we are disillusioned; we have been mistaken.

So, the illumination or the enlightenment of the Buddha was nothing but a disillusionment, ultimately. Anyone would be taken aback by this kind of discovery. "I have

been hugging an object to my heart's delight and satisfaction, and today I realise it is constituted of flies. It is not a solid object as I thought." It can be dismantled, as when the flies depart. The object is like a beehive, as it were. When we pull out every brick of the building, the building itself is not there. What we call the building is only a name that we give to a heap of bricks. There is no such thing as a building; it does not exist. Why do we not call it a heap of bricks? Why do we call it a building? We have only created further bondage by adding a name to a non-existent object. Though the world does not exist, we call it a world.

Why does the world not exist? It does not exist in the same way as a building does not exist. But the world exists in the same way as a building exists. Do we not see the building? Yes, we see it. Do we not see the world? Yes, we see the world. But what is this building made of? It is made up of small pieces of earth called bricks, or heated masses of earth. If we remove the plaster, we can see the little pieces inside. We must remove the plaster of the world, the illusion that covers our eyes, the infatuation with which we look at things. This is the plaster that we put over the building bricks of the cosmos. When we remove the plaster, we will see the horrible sight of little pieces which constitute this solid so-called world which is before us.

Thus, there is a shaky foundation behind, or underneath, this so-called stable cosmos. We are insecure in life. There is insecurity behind the security of all the so-called pleasures of life. We seem to be seated on velvet cushions, but

underneath it there is an earthquake taking place, and we can go down at any moment. Such is the beauty of the world, such is the stability of things, and such is the security that these can give us.

All this illusion has been created on account of the attachment of consciousness to the mental structure. This is a Vedantic touch given to the discovery of the Buddha. The mind is as much a name as a building is, or as any object is. There is no such thing as the mind, just as there is no such thing as the building or any object, or the world at all. They do not exist. They are only heaps of molecules. They are heaps of transitory passages or phenomena; they are processes. They are only passing stages which look like a solid object, just as a cinematographic projection is nothing but an illusion projected before the mind by the quick movement of pictures. Solid things are not there. What is solid is only the screen behind them. Likewise, there is a screen of ego which substantiates the passages of the various phenomena which constitute this cosmos.

Finally, there is no such thing as the existence of anything; it is only transience of everything. There is a momentariness of objects. Everything passes, even our body and our mind, which also is a complexity of structures, of various impressions, or vasanās. Various thoughts put together constitute the mind. If the thoughts are pulled out, like threads from a cloth, the mind does not exist. Likewise, if we pull out every brick of everything, we will find that no world exists.

So what is it that you are working for? What is it you are asking for? Now

you understand why you are unhappy in this world. You have an illusion before you. You are caught up by a nightmare of the perception of the world. An incubus is before you, and this is the world perception. You are under a terrible misapprehension of things. This misapprehension is called avidya, which causes desire, or trishna as it is called in Sanskrit. In the language of Vedanta, it is avidya, kama, karma. Ignorance causes desire. Desire causes action towards the possession of the object of desire, which brings about a reaction, again, which is called karma—which brings rebirth. The wheel of life thus rotates; the samsara chakra moves endlessly, as it were, causing bondage after bondage.

What is the solution? It is the discovery of the cause of sorrow. The discovery of the cause of sorrow means finding out from where this misconception has arisen. It is in your own mind. You have got a wrong perception of things; therefore, you have to, first of all, practice a discipline capable enough to dissect the mind itself into its components so that it disintegrates and the personality vanishes because the personality is nothing but the working of the mind. There is an extinction of personality.

This extinction of personality by the disintegration of the constituents of the mind is called Nirvana. You are extinguished like a lamp that is blown out by the wind, and you reach Nirvana, a blessed state. What it is, Buddha did not say, and no one can tell you.

This is the message of the Buddha today, on Buddha Purnima. □ □ □

FINDING OUR TRUE SELF

(Sri Swami Atmaswarupananda)

In the Gita, Lord Krishna says that amongst all the people in this world, very few seek Him, and of those few that do seek Him, very few find Him. We can understand why very few seek the Lord. Our senses and our mind naturally go towards the objects of sense. We believe that we can get our happiness and satisfaction from successfully accumulating the pleasures and the rewards of this world. But why is it that of those few that do seek Him, very few find Him?

What does Lord Krishna mean when He says that very few find Him? There are many who have experiences that convince them that they have found the Lord. It can be any experience that expands their consciousness to a degree that they have never before experienced. The present identity is either blurred or disappears and they experience another reality. Even the world itself may disappear, or the ego and the subject-object relationship may totally disappear. And while these type of experiences are not common, neither are they unusual. So why does Lord Krishna say that very few find Him?

Perhaps Ramana Maharshi pointed us to a basic truth when he said, "Whatever has a beginning will have an end; therefore, it cannot be the eternal." He also said that if it is not in deep sleep, it is not the eternal. But what is in deep

sleep? We haven't the slightest idea. All we know is that we had deep sleep. This then pushes our mind and understanding to something that is beyond our normal experience.

Pujya Swami Chidanandaji said that the goal cannot be known, but it can be experienced. But this points us to an experience or an understanding that is beyond anything that can be described as being tangible. Even if the whole world disappears, but we're still left, that knowledge that we were still left can be classified as something tangible. Therefore, great ones anchor themselves beyond anything tangible. They rest in the *fact* that they know that they are aware. They don't know what knows, but they know that they know. That knowing never leaves them. They have found the eternal, but it is nothing that they can grasp.

Sometimes we wonder why we have to go through difficult periods that stretch us to our very limits. The truth is that in the spiritual life we tend to settle for something less than God, for some experience that gives us satisfaction and consolation. We have found consolation, but we haven't found what we are eventually meant to find. Therefore, these agonizing and difficult periods are meant to push us beyond ourselves, and it is beyond ourselves that we find our true Self. □ □ □

AN ANALYSIS OF THE UNIVERSAL PRAYER

(RAJAT KUMAR PRADHAN)

The famous Universal Prayer of Most Worshipful Gurudev Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj has been hailed by many as a quint-essential one with an amazing integral wholeness that is seldom found elsewhere and that is characteristic of the eternal Vedic culture based on the primacy of the spiritual pursuit. This short prayer has been likened to the Lord's prayer in the Christian faith and is liked by one and all the world over, cutting across boundaries of creeds, faiths and religions, for its authentic expression of the sincere feelings and simple-hearted supplications welling up from the depths of the human heart to the Supreme Almighty. Apart from the tremendous spiritual force of its celebrated self-realised author that makes its presence felt in every word of it and in its astounding completeness, we may do well to ponder over its structural and functional uniqueness that appeals to the inner man at the very first acquaintance, for gaining a little insight into the works and the workings of the purified intelligence of the spiritual masters that resonates with the Cosmic Being and revels in the perennial bliss of the Absolute.

The standard eighteen-line Universal Prayer of just fifteen earnest sentences is beautifully arranged in three stanzas, reminiscent of the three feet of the Holy *Gayatri Mantra* of the Vedas. Before elaborating upon the connections with the *Gayatri*, let's first note that, broadly speaking, the first stanza of the Universal Prayer is an invocatory one and is the *Sadhya pada* (the statement of the object of meditation), which is followed by the

middle one that is the *Sadhana pada* (the statement of the methods) and then follows the *Siddhi pada*. (the statement of the goal of perfection). In the first stanza *God is defined*; in the second, *God is desired*, while the last stanza is the statement of *God's descent* into the purified heart of the aspirant, as evident from the recurrence of the word "ever" in each of its six lines beginning with "Let". There is no sense of individuality (I, me or mine) anywhere in the Universal prayer, as it has only "us" and "our" throughout and this is also a characteristic feature of the *Gayatri mantra*.

Following the invocatory initial Om and the three *Vyahritis* (*bhuh, bhuvah* and *svah*), we find in the first foot of the *Gayatri Mantra*, the invocation of the Lord by the glorifying names of *Varenyam* (Adorable), *Tat-Savitur* (That supremely effulgent Lord) and the *Bhargo-deva* (The Lord of all benign transformations towards purity and perfection). Similarly also, we have in the opening stanza of the Universal Prayer, invocations of the Supreme through many glorious names and attributes that upon contemplation of their deeply significant meanings, thrill the heart of the supplicant immediately. The middle stanza of the Universal Prayer for purification of the heart and attainment of divine virtues so that it becomes a fit receptacle for the descent of the Lord, resonates perfectly well with the feelings expressed in the last foot, *Dheeyo-yo-nah Prachodayat* (May the Lord purify our intelligence!) of the *Gayatri*. Further, the last stanza of the Universal Prayer is an expression of the aspiration for establishment in the

ultimate state of perfection, wherein one continuously Abides in the Lord through incessant remembrance, constant singing of the Lord's names and His glories which is given potent expression through the very pregnant and powerful key-verb *Dheemahi* (let us continuously meditate!) of the Gayatri. The central aspiration that the Gayatri stands for purification which is to be achieved through the activity of *Dheemahi*, meaning "continuous collective meditation upon the Lord" that finally lands the aspirant in the supreme *sahajavastha* (easy state of uninterrupted God-consciousness), which is precisely the purport of the last stanza of the Universal Prayer.

A parallelism can also be established with the interpretation of the structure and function of the Bhagavadgita as reflective of the three stages of the evolution of the aspirant as indicated in *Tat-Tvam-Asi* (That Thou Art), one of the four *mahavakyas* or Sentences of great significance of the Upanishads. In this view, the first six chapters of the Gita correspond to the *Tvam-pada* (purification of the individual soul through selfless service or *Karma yoga*); the next six to the *Tat-pada* (God or *Ishwara* conceived as different from the individual soul as in the practice of *Bhakti yoga*) and the last six conforming to the *Asi-pada* (the establishment in the identity of the individual soul with the Supreme Soul or God in the path of wisdom or *Jnana yoga*). Similarly also, in the Universal Prayer the first stanza is the *Tat-pada*, wherein God is defined through a series of invocations starting from the very simple and popular ones to the deepest philosophical definition that the human mind can ever conceive of for the indefinable Absolute. The second stanza corresponds to the *Tvam-pada* that expatiates on the sincere urge of the soul towards a gradual divinisation through the cultivation of virtues and eradication of vices. The last

stanza corresponds to the *Asi-pada* or the state of God-realisation that is the ultimate fulfilment of life, the life in God, *Siddhi* or the very acme of perfection in Divine Life.

The Universal Prayer is a manifestation of the free-flowing Divine Grace of our Most Worshipful Sadgurudev to the aspirant world and forms an inseparable part of the lore of Divine Life. In "Light Fountain", it has been extolled by Paramapujya Sri Swami Chidanandaji Maharaj as a member of an important triad given by Gurudev, the other two being the "Twenty important spiritual instructions" and the "Science of the seven cultures". The Universal Prayer as such is meant to invoke *Daivi Kripa* (Divine Grace) upon the aspirants who are sincerely engaged in the *Sadhana* or *Purushartha* (self-effort) delineated in the other two. All three of them contain veritable lessons on the Divine Life *Sadhana*, and the Universal Prayer, in an impeccable manner embodies in its tiny frame, a most complete guide to everything that spirituality stands for, which could only have come from a Realised saint who has attained the Perfection that it enshrines and encourages the aspirants to strive for. This is the secret of its perfectly non-sectarian nature and its truly universal appeal such that when one has once uttered it, there immediately follows the soul-satisfying feeling that one's prayer is complete in all respects and that nothing more is left to be prayed for.

May we all partake of the grace of our Most Beloved and Worshipful Sadgurudev by the daily recital of the Universal Prayer and by the continuous striving for the attainment of the Goal through the path pointed out in it! May it continue to shine its light on the path of spiritual aspirants for ever and ever! May His Divine Grace guide us all! Glory to Gurudev! Glory to the Universal Prayer!

* * *

GANDHARVASENA

(H.H. Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj)

In the selection of rice you use your intelligence and select the best quality of rice when you go to a shop. When such is the case even in an ordinary worldly material affair how much more careful you must be in your Dharma. If you take by mistake a third class rice by paying a high price how much do you regret and repent. Even so if you lack in true discrimination you will repent later on.

In a certain country there was a washer-man. He had a donkey which he loved very dearly. He named him Gandharvasena. One fine morning the donkey suddenly died. The washer-man was drowned in sorrow. He lost all taste for food and gave up washing clothes. One of his well-to-do customers finding him very morose asked for the reason for his sorrow. He began to weep bitterly. He could not find out the reason for his sorrow. When he pressed the washer-man too much he said, "Gandharvasena died." "Who is Gandharvasena?" asked the newcomer. The washer-man simply wept. The new-comer thought that Gandharvasena was perhaps some saintly man. He also shared the washer-man's grief, shaved his head and moustache and wore black dress.

The news that Gandharvasena was dead spread like wild fire and every one carried away by the impressive name shared the grief by shaving the head, and wearing mourning dress like the previous man. In one day the whole city put on a mourning appearance. The minister who

came out for a walk in the street found this sight everywhere and asked the people what the matter was. They said "some great man, Gandharvasena has died." The minister also thought that he must also share the grief.

Thus the news reached the king who also followed his subjects and shared the grief. At night when the king entered the inner apartments, the queen enquired the cause of his unusual mourning and the king narrated the whole story. The queen asked, "Is Gandharvasena your father or mother? Why have you shaved your head? Who is this Gandharvasena?"

The king was brought to his senses, sent for his minister and questioned him. Even the minister could not satisfy the king. Then the subjects were summoned. In the open court the washer-man was commanded to give out who Gandharvasena was. After great pressure the washer-man said that Gandharvasena was his own ass. The king put his head down in shame and all the subjects did the same.

Therefore do not be foolishly led away into blindly copying the actions of each and every man you see. Use your discrimination before adopting a course of action. Dharma is subtle. Its real import is not so easy to understand. Any man's fanciful utterance or whimsical action is not to be impulsively imitated. Use your Viveka and avoid disgrace. *Choose the right path* by sitting at the feet of your Guru or by association with sage. □ □ □

HANUMAN'S LEAP

(H.H. Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj)

Hanuman resolved to travel through
the sky,
In quest of Sita.
He said to the Vanaras, "I shall reach
Lanka
With the speed of wind.
I shall uproot Lanka and bring
Sita."
The Mainaka hill Rose from beneath
And said, "O chief of the Kapis!
You have undertaken difficult work.
Please take a little rest on my peak."
Hanuman said, "O Mainaka,
I am going on an urgent task,
I cannot take any rest now."

Then the Suras and Siddhas said to
Surasa,
The mother of the Nagas, "O Goddess!
Assume the form of a Rakshasi,
And put some obstacles, in the path of
Hanuman.
We wish to test his prowess;
We want to find out,
Whether he will be able to do the work
of Sri Rama."
Surasa assumed the form of
a Rakshasi,
Obstructed Hanuman and said,
"I shall devour you today;
Enter the cavity of my mouth."
Hanuman said, "O Rakshasi!
I am in a great hurry now,

I swear to come back to you,
After giving information of Sita to
Sri Rama."
The Rakshasi said to Hanuman,
"I cannot wait any longer,
If you have strength, you may come out
of my mouth."
Hanuman said, "Open your mouth."
Hanuman expanded his body to ten
Yojanas;
The Rakshasi opened her mouth to
twenty Yojanas;
Hanuman extended his body to thirty
Yojanas;
Then Surasa gaped her mouth to forty
Yojanas;
Then Hanuman to fifty Yojanas, Surasa
to sixty;
Then Hanuman to seventy, Surasa to
eighty,
Then Hanuman to ninety, Surasa to
hundred.
Then Hanuman contracted his body,
Entered Surasa's mouth, and came
out of it.
He said, "O Rakshasi! I have come out
of your mouth,
Now I go to find out Sita."
Then the Rakshasi Simhika,
Followed the shadow of Hanuman.
She wanted to eat Hanuman.
Hanuman entered her mouth and tore
her into pieces,

GOD EVER REMAINED INDEBTED TO HIM

(Swami Ramarajyam)

Dear children, here is a beautiful gift for you in the form of a beautiful story of a devotee. He would always chant God's names and sing the songs of His glory. He did nothing other than that. He knew none except God. But he did not ask Him for anything—never asked Him a favour.

And, God thought—what an extraordinary devotee he is! He remembers me, chants my name, calls out to me by singing love songs but never asks any favours from me. I want to favour him with whatever he wants but he should tell what he wants.

God waited for the devotee to ask for something—He waited a long time. But the devotee did not utter a word to ask Him any favours.

God told gods, "That devotee incessantly remembers me but does not ask for anything. That has made me indebted to him. I want to be free from the debt. I am ready to grant him an audience but he should say that he wants to see me. You should meet him and insist him to ask me for whatever he wants."

The gods met the devotee and said, "God is immensely pleased with you. He is ready to bestow on you whatever you wish to have. Do ask Him for whatever you want."

The devotee replied, "God is pleased with me. Hurray! He has given me

everything. What more can I want? What is left now to ask Him for? Kindly tell God I am very happy that He is pleased with me. I am saying a big thank you to Him."

Nevertheless, the gods insistently said, "Don't hesitate. Ask Him for anything you want."

The devotee said, "Okay, I want to ask God a favour."

The gods were very happy that the devotee had relented. They eagerly said, "Tell us about that, please."

The devotee said, "Kindly request God on my behalf to grant me a boon—that I would never ask Him for anything."

God was astounded by what the devotee had finally told the gods. He said, "Now I will never be able to repay him for his love for me."

And, God ever remained indebted to the devotee.

Dear children! Did you like this story? Love God, remember Him, but never should you ask Him for anything. Then God will always think about you for not being able to repay you for your love. That you will make Him think always about you is something great. This is very precious wealth. You will possess this wealth if you sincerely love Him and do not ask for favours from Him. □ □ □

NEWS AND REPORTS

NEWS FROM THE HEADQUARTERS

SEVA THROUGH SIVANANDA HOME

By the profound blessings of Gurudev Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj, the Divine Life Society Headquarter 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. It tries to make them as comfortable as possible.

Among the inmates and patients, there are often a few patients who are completely bedridden. To be bedridden means to stay on the bed permanently. To be bedridden means to be completely dependent on the people who come and visit or serve. But attending on a bedridden patient is not an easy task. Again and again the voice of Swamiji Maharaj echoes in our ears: "Put yourself in the place of the patient, put yourself in the place of the patient, put yourself in the place of the patient....and then see what she or he needs. The attendants in Sivananda Home are not only the people who serve the patients, but they are at the same time their brothers too, their sister, their mother, their near-ones, which they once had. But they were abandoned, or maybe he or she abandoned them. That does not matter. The past is over. And for each and everybody who enters the realms of Sivananda Home, something is over, and something new has started—a new hope, a new life, a new focus. And this focus is the only reality. To attend on a bedridden patient is not an easy matter. It confronts one with one's own incapacity, one's impatience, one's lack of empathy,

one's selfishness, one's forgetfulness of the NAME. To keep the mind continually on this FOCUS, that GOD has come in the form of this patient and that it is our privilege to serve Him only, is the only way to stay balanced for the attendant, to keep a cool mind, to detach, attach, detach, attach attach, attach...OM. OM. OM."

At this moment Sivananda Home shelters five bedridden patients. A young boy who suffers from bone TB together with TB in the lungs; a 32-year-old with a spinal injury which left him paralyzed; a mother suffering from terminal stage cancer in the mouth; a mother with a fracture of the hip bone; and a 40 year old woman with spastic syndrome, who most of the time lies down, curled up in faetus position.

Our prayer for all these patients, not only in Sivananda Home but all around the world, and for all of them who surround them, who attend on them and who live with them, to give them strength to bear, to keep harmony and to keep the heart open, to receive His LOVE, to experience His LOVE and to radiate HIS LOVE! May in this way the words of Gurudev come alive to us, live in our hearts, and be completely edged in our souls for ever: *"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 upon our lips. Let us abide in Thee for ever and ever."*

* * *

INAUGURAL FUNCTION OF THE 76TH YOGA-VEDANTA COURSE

To be initiated into the sacred science of Divine Life, thirty seven seekers joined the 76th Two month—Basic Yoga-Vedanta Course conducted by the Yoga Vedanta Forest Academy of the Headquarters Ashram. The Inaugural Function of the Course was organised on 1st March 2014 at YVFA Hall. H.H. Sri Swami Vimalanandaji Maharaj, President, DLS Headquarters and H.H. Sri Swami Yogaswarupanandaji Maharaj, Vice-President, DLS Headquarters graced the function by their august presence.

The function commenced with the Puja at the holy temples of Mother Durga and Dattatreya Bhagavan. After the

invocatory prayers, H. H. Sri Swami Vimalanandaji Maharaj inaugurated the Course with the lighting of the lamp and in his inaugural address apprised the students of the glorious life of Sadgurudev Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj and His sacred mission of dissemination of spiritual knowledge. H.H. Sri Swami Yogaswarupanandaji Maharaj in his blessing message inspired them to be regular in their classes and make the best use of their stay at the sacred abode of Sadgurudev. The function concluded with the worship of Mother Saraswati and distribution of Prasad.

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

BECOME THE KING OF KINGS

Be equal in pleasure and pain, in life and death, in praise and censure, in honour and dishonour, in gain and loss. Thus enter into the Infinite or the Supreme Silence.

Renounce all desires through detachment and discrimination. Renounce the objects of the world. Renunciation of desires will follow. Thereafter live happily wherever thou pleasest.

A distaste for the objects of senses is freedom and attachment to the objects is bondage. This is wisdom.

Blessed is he who is established in his own Satchidananda Svaroop. He is an Atmasamrat, (Self-King). The whole world will pay homage to this sage.

The mind in a Jivanmukta ceases to function. He is free from delusion and inertia. He experiences indescribable state of wisdom, and immortal Bliss.

O Mokshapriya! Attain wisdom of the Self and become a Jivanmukta now and here. Be sincere in your endeavour.

—Swami Sivananda

REPORTS FROM THE D.L.S. BRANCHES

INLAND BRANCHES

Ambala (Haryana): Regular Satsang activities were carried on. A special Satsang was held on 5th February on the occasion of 10th Punyatithi Anniversary of H.H. Sri Swami Premanandaji Maharaj and concluded with Jnana Prasad and distribution of sweets. Mahasivaratri was observed on 27th February with the Japa of "Om Namah Sivaya" mantra for one hour and fruits were distributed to all those who attended. Free Jalseva and Nishkam Homeopathic Seva at Sri Gurugranth Sahib continued in which 45 patients were treated and were given free medicine.

Ankoli (Ganjam-Odisha): Apart from regular Satsang and mobile Satsangs, Akhanda Mahamantra Kirtan was organised at Ankoli village for 24 hours from 31st December to 1st January and concluded with Prasad distribution. Sri Hanuman Chalisa chanting (108 times) and also a Satsang were held on Makar Sankranti day on 14th January and concluded with Prasad Sevan.

Aska (Ganjam-Odisha): Satsang activities were continued regularly on every Thursday and Sunday of the month. A one-day 'Sadhana Divas' was observed on 23rd February and Maha Sivaratri was celebrated with Paduka Puja on 27th February and also a special Satsang with the chanting of Panchakshari Mantra and Maha Mrityunjaya Mantra 108 times.

Aska (College Square Branch-Odisha): The Branch conducted weekly Satsangs on Thursdays and mobile Satsangs on Saturdays of every month regularly. Sri Guru Paduka Puja was performed on Maha Sivaratri with a special evening Satsang.

Bangalore (Karnataka): Satsang activities on Thursdays and Sundays were held regularly with Bhajan, Kirtan, Paduka Puja, Swadhyaya from Sri Gurudev's books, and distribution of Jnana Prasad. Devi Puja was done on every Friday with the recitation of Lalita Sahasranama, Vishnu Sahasranama and readings from Sri Gurudev's books on Devi Mahatmyam. Akhanda Mahamantra Kirtan, and chanting of Sri Guru Gita were conducted on 16th February. Maha Sivaratri was celebrated on 27th February.

Bargarh (Odisha): Regular Satsang activities were continued. Consecration ceremony of Lord Vishwanath Temple and installation of Deities and inauguration of the Temple were held in the august presence of H.H. Sri Swami Nirliptanandaji Maharaj, Vice-President, DLS-Headquarters from 3rd to 5th February. A monthly magazine 'MAHAT VANI' was released by Sri Swamiji Maharaj to commemorate the occasion. Revered H.H. Sri Swami Sivachidanandaji Maharaj, H.H. Sri Swami Brahmasakshikaranandaji and Sri Swami Atmanandaji Maharaj were also present on the occasion and all the Swamijis delivered 'Ashirvachan' to the assembled devotees in the Satsang. H.H. Sri Swami Nirliptanandaji Maharaj performed "Rudrabhisheka" of Lord Vishwanath and distributed Prasad. Sri Swamiji Maharaj visited the villages Kusanpuri, and Bhatli and accompanied the Idols of Lord Jagannath, Balabhadra, Subhadra and Sudarshan in a grand procession to the newly constructed Jagannath Temple in the village. Sri Swamiji Maharaj delivered 'Ashirvachan' to thousands of devotees assembled for the function.

Bellary (Karnataka): The Branch conducted daily Puja and Satsang on

Sundays with Paduka Puja and Ashtottara Archana. Maha Sivaratri was celebrated with Rudrabhishekam and Brahmabhishekam to Sri Lord Manjunatha Swami and Archana to Pujya Sri Gurudev. All these above functions were concluded with chanting of Mahamrityunjaya Mantra, Shanti Mantra and prayer for world peace, Mahamangalarati and distribution of Prasad.

Bilaspur (Chhattisgarh): Weekly Satsang, mobile Satsang and children Satsang continued regularly. A special Satsang was conducted on Saraswati Puja to mark the Annual Day celebration of the Branch.

Bhanjanagar (Odisha): Satsang activities continued regularly. Sadhana day was observed on 12th January, 7th and 17th February with Bhajan, Kirtan, Sri Guru Paduka Puja, Arati, Shantipath, Pravachan and Prasad Sevan. Srimadbhagavata pravachan was organised from 16th to 22nd February with daily discourses. Mahasivaratri was celebrated on 27th February.

Brahmapur (Ladies Branch, Lanjipalli, Odisha): Besides regular Satsang activities, the Branch also conducted Bhagavata and Gita Chanting on 11th and 27th January and Sundarakanda Parayan on Sankranti day on 14th January. A blood donation camp was organised in collaboration with a local youth association on 26th in which 31 units of blood was collected. Narayan Seva for about 70 needy and poor was arranged on 16th January and Sattvik food was distributed to them. Mobile Satsang was started from this month and conducted in the residences of the devotees.

Bhubaneswar (Ashoknagar- Odisha): Regular Satsang activities continued. The Branch rendered health services in Homeopathy and Allopathy treatment with

free medicine to 26 and 16 patients respectively. A special Satsang was conducted on the New Year's Day (1st January). 14th Punyatithi Aradhana Divas of Brahmalin Swami Devananda Saraswati Maharaj was observed with gaiety and devotion. The inaugural function of Swami Chidananda Janma Satabarshiki Mahotsav programme was held with great enthusiasm from 25th to 27th January and was attended by about 6000 delegates. The function was held in the august presence of H.H. Sri Swami Nirliptanandaji Maharaj, Vice-President, DLS-Headquarters and Pujya Gajapati Maharaj Sri Divya Singha Deb of Puri, Hon'ble Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalamji, Ex-President of India, Jagadguru Shankaracharya of Govardhana Peetha, Puri and also by the representatives of Islam, Christianity, Buddhism and Jainism.

Chatrapur (Odisha): The Branch conducted weekly Satsangs (5 Nos.) and special Satsangs (9 Nos.) besides 'Jayanti day' on 8th and 24th January with Paduka Puja of Sadgurudev Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj and H.H. Sri Swami Chidanandaji Maharaj. On the occasion of 'Makar Sankranti' on 14th January a special programme of reciting 'Sundarakanda' of Shri Ramcharita Manas was started, keeping in view the Golden Jubilee Function of the Branch.

Chennai (Annanagar-Tamilnadu): The Branch held the 14th Spiritual Conference on Gandhi Jayanti day. DLS flag was hoisted on that occasion. Meditation, Pranayam and demonstration of Yogasanas by 28 people were conducted. The members took out a procession around the Branch premises by carrying the Paduka of Sadgurudev Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj and also offered Pushpanjali to the statue of Sadgurudev at Madras University

 Campus. The session concluded with lectures and Prasad.

Dhananjayanagar (Bhanjanagar-Odisha): Weekly Satsangs were conducted regularly with Japa, Bhajan, Kirtan and Prayers for all. Annual function was held on 5th January at Siva temple with a discourse on Srimad Bhagavata by a devotee. On Republic Day (January 26th) fruits, biscuits and sweets were distributed to the patients of the local Sub-divisional Hospital.

Imphal (Manipur): The Branch celebrated 'The Divine Luminaries Day' from 31st December, 2013 and 1st January, 2014 with devotees who participated in 'Harinam Kirtan', Bhajan and Kirtan. A talk on "The mode of life, a disciple of Swami Sivananda should follow" was the highlight of the programme. The audience listened to and enjoyed the message of Sri Swami Pavitrananda Saraswati Maharaj of DLS Head- quarters. The programme concluded after Arati and Mahaprasadam.

Jeypore (Odisha): Regular Satsang activities went on with 11 Satsangs in the month of February. Sivananda Day was celebrated on 8th of the month. Special Satsangs on 1st and 14th January (Makar Sankranti) were held with Puja, Archana and recitation of Sri Vishnusahasranama and concluded with Holy Prasad. A mobile Satsang on 16th and Sri Hanuman Chalisha recitation (108 times) on 19th February were also held. The Koraput District Charitable Homeopathic Dispensary treated about 800 patients free of cost as arranged by the Branch.

Kanpur (U.P.): Apart from daily Satsang activities with Arati, Bhajan, Kirtan on Ekadashi, the Branch conducted recitation of Sundarakanda Ramayan and Gita on 1st February in its 'Monthly Satsang' and concluded with the distribution of Prasad. 'Ratri Jagaran' with

108 times Mahamrityunjaya Japa, Bhajan, Sankirtan, Arati and Havan was held on 27th February as celebration of 'Maha Sivaratri'.

Khatiguda (Odisha): In addition to two times Puja everyday and weekly Satsang on Thursdays, the Branch observed Sadhana Day on 2nd February and Ekadashi Satsang with Sri Vishnu-sahasranama chanting. Maha Sivaratri was celebrated with Sivabhishek, Guru Paduka Puja and a special Night Satsang.

Lanjipali (Odisha): The Branch conducted Hanuman Chalisa recitation (108 times) on the auspicious day of 'Basant Panchami' on 4th February. An Ayurvedic and Yoga Camp was organised on 5th February. 23rd Annual celebration of the Branch was observed from 6th to 14th February with Sri Ramacharita Manas Parayan. A cultural programme by the Saraswati Shishu Vidya Mandir students was organised. Mahasivaratri was observed on 27th February with 'Rudrabhisheka' and 'Om Namah Sivaya' Mantra chanting by the members of the Branch.

Lucknow (U.P.): Satsangs were held on 9th and 23rd February with Jai Ganesh Kirtan, Guru Stotra, Shanti Path, recitation from Srimad Bhagavad Gita and readings from Sri Gurudev Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj and Sri Swami Chidanandaji Maharaj. Bhog and Arati were offered to the Almighty Lord and Sadguru Bhagavan. Devotional songs were sung by the devotees.

Madhavapatnam (A.P.): Regular Satsang activities were carried on along with free medical camps on 1st & 3rd Sundays and Narayana Seva to 25 to 30 poor and needy people everyday. 18 Branch members from Kakinada visited the village Kakarapalli and conducted Satsangs with prayer, meditation,

Yogasanas, Ganapati Puja, Rudrabhishekam and discourses on Gurudev's teachings and talks on Ramayana and Bhagavad Gita. Jnan Prasad was distributed to all the devotees who attended the Satsang and a framed photograph of Sadgurudev was given to the new Satsang.

Madurai (Tamilnadu): 36th Annual day celebrations of 'Sivananda Vidyalaya' were held on 16th March and the Children of the school received blessings from H.H. Sri Swami Swaroopanandaji Maharaj.

Nandinagar (Chhattisgarh): Daily Brahmamuhurta Satsangs, evening Satsangs, weekly mobile Satsangs, Matri Satsangs and Ekadashi Satsangs continued regularly. Mahamantra Kirtan was conducted on 3rd March for 6 hours. On the occasion of Mahasivaratri celebration, chanting of Panchakshari Mantra and Shiva Abhishek were performed at midnight along with Bhajan & Kirtan. Sivabhishek was also conducted at Bhilai on the request of devotees.

Panchkula (Haryana): Satsang on Sundays was held regularly. 16th chapter of Bhagavad Gita was chanted by the members, Yoga class and evening Satsangs were held and Prasad was distributed to all the children. Motivational & mythological movies were shown to 150 children every Tuesday, followed by Prasad distribution.

Rourkela (Odisha): Weekly Satsangs and mobile Satsangs were held regularly along with Yogasana, Pranayama & meditation classes daily at the Ashram premises. Paduka Puja was conducted on every Thursday and also on 8th & 24th of the month. Mahasivaratri was observed on 27th February with Akhanda Panchakshari Mantra Japa in the evening. 'Sivasahasranama Deepa Yajna' was held in the presence of more than 150 devotees. Free medicines were distributed to poor &

needy persons. A special Sadhana day was observed on 23rd February at Chhend with Paduka Puja, Abhisheka & Archana and concluded with Prasad distribution to all the guests and devotees.

Raipur (Chhattisgarh): Weekly Satsangs on every Sunday went on regularly. On every "Mas Sivaratri", Rudrabhishekam for Lord Vishwanath is being performed with Namakam-Chamakam and Purush Suktam Chanting. Sri Vishnu-sahasranama, Ekadashi Ramayana and Sri Hanuman Chalisa are recited on both the Ekadashis. Mahasivaratri was celebrated on 27th February with Rudrabhishekam and 'Om Namah Sivaya' mantra chanting by the devotees to the specially decorated 'Guru Gaddi & Lord Siva' and concluded with Arati and distribution of sacred Prasad.

Surendranagar (Gujarat): Apart from the daily Satsang and also Matri Satsang, the weekly Sundarakanda Parayan and discourses on Ramayan continued. Srimad Bhagavat Katha by a saintly person from Vrindavan was organised. Providing provisions to the needy families and Jeevaseva continued along with animal-bird-insects feeding.

Sunabeda (Odisha): Weekly Satsangs on every Thursday and Sunday continued with Bhajan, Kirtan and Swadhyaya from Guru Maharaj's literature, Japa, Puja & Arati. Mahamantra Kirtan began from 1st Jan for one hour daily. Special Satsangs with Paduka Puja were conducted on the Diksha day of some of the members of the Branch on 1st and 9th January. Yogasana classes were continued.

Sunabeda Ladies Branch (Odisha): Regular daily and weekly Satsangs were carried on. Narayan Seva on Thursday noon and Sri Vishnu Sahasranama Parayana with Abhisheka continued. A Sadhana day was observed on 16th February. Maa Saraswati Puja was

performed with the children of 'Shishu Bikash' and Maha Sivaratri was celebrated with Paduka Puja, Havan, Akhanda Japa and Prahar Puja.

Salipur (Odisha): In addition to regular Satsangs, a Sadhana day on 19th January and Sivananda day on 8th were conducted with Gurupaduka Puja. Health services were continued by the Swami Sivananda Charitable Hospital every Sunday in which 90 patients were treated and given free medicines. Yoga training for local School/college students/staff was held in which 30 staff members/students participated.

Special activities: A special Satsang was conducted on 1st January to celebrate the New Year. Divine Life Society Foundation Day was celebrated on 13th January and Akhanda Mahamantra Japa was held on 26th for 6 hours.

South Balanda (Odisha): Everyday two times Puja and Friday's evening Satsang went on regularly. 'Shri Swami Sivananda Diwas' and 'Sri Swami Chidananda Diwas' was observed on 8th and 24th of the month with Gurupaduka Puja and a special Satsang. Ekadashi Satsang on 10th February for ladies, 'Sankranti Diwas' special Satsang on 13th, and Akhanda Mahamantra Sankirtan on 15th February for the sake of world peace were conducted by the Branch. "Maha Sivaratri" was celebrated on 27th February with 'Om Namah Sivaya' Mantra chanting for 12 hours. Gita Parayan and Yajna were organised from 22nd to 26th February.

Steel Township Branch (Rourkela-Odisha): A mobile Satsang was organised in the residences of the devotees and Gurupaduka Puja was performed on every Thursday morning. Mahasivaratri was celebrated on 27th February. A Sadhana day was observed on 4th February with

Gurupaduka Puja, Bhajan, Kirtan, Hanuman Chalisa, Gita Path, and Mantra Chanting and concluded with Prasad Sevan by the public.

Varanasi (U.P.): On the holy 'Makar Sankranti', dry ration was distributed to a 'Leprosy Ashram' residents. The Branch held Satsangs on 9th and 23rd February at 'Vridha Ashram' with Bhajan, Kirtan, Japa, Swadhyaya, and Mahamrityunjaya Mantra, Shanti Mantra, Devi-stuti and Vishwa Prarthana etc., were chanted. Satsang was concluded after Arati and distribution of Prasad to all those who participated.

OVERSEAS BRANCH

Hong Kong (China): The Branch conducted Satsang every Saturday with 1 hour Mahamantra chanting in both North Point Yoga Centre and Cheung Sha Wan Yoga Centre, and in monthly Satsangs reciting of Hanuman Chalisa followed by a talk on Gurudev's teachings. Regular Yogasana classes based on 'Practical Guide to Yoga' with essential Yoga exercises, breathing techniques, and meditation were continued (12 new classes with 125 participants).

Special Activities: on 7th December 2013, the Yoga Teacher's Co-ordinating Group of the Branch organised a gathering 'To welcome The New Year-2014' (20 participants). Bhajan practice continued on fourth Saturday of every month. The Branch provides Yoga Teachers who volunteered to serve in the Yoga Classes organised by the China Development Bank for the Bank staff. The Branch was invited to participate in "Anniversary Gathering" held by the Hong Kong Family Welfare Society on 15th December.

* * *