



# THE DIVINE LIFE

*Vol. LXXIII*

*MAY 2014*

*No. 2*

## KATHOPANISHAD

### CHAPTER II

#### *VALLI ii*

य एष सुप्तेषु जागर्ति कामं कामं पुरुषो निर्मिमाणः ।  
तदेव शुक्रं तद्ब्रह्म तदेवामृतमुच्यते । तस्मिंल्लोकाः  
श्रिताः सर्वे तदु नात्येति कश्चन । एतद्वै तत् ॥८॥

8. This Purusha who, building desire after desire, is awake when all sleep, is called certainly 'the pure', is called Brahman, is called even immortal. Upon Him all the worlds are found: no one goes beyond that. This verily is That.

## शिवानन्द स्तोत्रम्

### SIVANANDA STOTRAM

(Sri Swami Jnanananda Saraswati, Sivanandanagar)

(Continued from the previous issue)

अशिवविनाशन निश्चलमानस निर्मलनिस्तुलशीलनिधे  
 वशिजनमुख्य विशिष्टगुणान्वित विश्वगुणोत्तर भव्यनिधे।  
 शशिधरसेवननित्यपरायण नृत्यमनोगुण बोधनिधे  
 शिव करुणालय पालय मां श्रितमाश्रितवत्सल लोकगुरो॥१७॥

17. O world-teacher Siva, thou possessest a steady balanced mind and incomparable treasure of good conduct and character. Thou art a mine of wisdom and virtue. Thou art foremost amongst self-disciplined Mahatmas and delightest in constant worship of the Almighty Lord; hence thou art admired by the wise and adored by the whole world. O ocean of mercy that art gracious to those who look up to thee for succour, save me thy humble suppliant.

विशदशुचिस्मितशोभिमुखांबुज लोकशुभावह पूज्ययते  
 विशयविनाशनदीक्षित मोक्षद कांक्षितदायक पूतमते।  
 वशगतदिव्यविभूतिवशीकृतमानुषसंचय सत्यरते  
 शिव करुणालय पालय मां श्रितमाश्रितवत्सल लोकगुरो॥१८॥

18. O world-teacher Siva, thou lotus-like face is ever lit with a radiant gracious smile. Thou art pure in mind and delightest in truth. All thy activities are for working out the welfare of the world. By possessing divine glories in full, thou drawest to thyself hosts of earnest seekers of truth. Thou fulfilllest their desires, and clearing all their doubts conferrest salvation on them. O ocean of mercy that art gracious to those who look up to thee for succour, save me thy humble suppliant. **(To be continued)**

## WOMAN: THE MOTHER

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

Woman is the mighty work of God, the wonder of nature, the marvel of marvels, the abridgement and epitome of the world, the queen of the house, the real governor, the sweet companion and helpmate of man.

Woman is Chaitanya Maya. She is the energy-aspect of the Lord. She is the child of Adi Sakti. She holds the key of this world. She controls the destiny of children. She is the mother of Sankaras, Buddhas, and Janakas.

Woman is a mysterious mixture of softness, gentleness, and gracefulness. She is a compound of service, patience, and love. She is an emblem of beauty. She is full of sweetness. She is Maya's tempting charm and magic. She comforts and cheers up her husband, children, and guests. Even Brahma, the Creator, failed to describe her fully. She is some mysterious something that gives charm to this world. Without her, the house is a void. Without her, man is helpless. Without her, this world loses all charm. Without her, there is no creation.

Woman is a cheering companion for you in distress. She bears all

difficulties and sorrows patiently. She wipes your tears when you are smitten with grief. How patient and enduring she is! She spends sleepless nights in nursing the children. What a lot of pain she undergoes in childbearing and care for the child, and by submission to her husband? Have you ever thought of this seriously, friends? Without woman, the beginning of your life is helpless, the middle destitute of happiness, and the end would be without consolation.

The beginning of your life was in the mother's breath. Your first small words are taught from her lips. She is your first teacher and Guru. It is she who wiped your first tears. It is she who watches your last breath and last sighs, when men have shrunk from attending on you.

In the West, the woman is wife. In India, the woman is the mother. The mother is worshipped. In the West, the wife governs the home. In an Indian home, the mother rules. In the West, the mother has to be subordinate to the wife. In India, the wife has to be subordinate to the mother.

India recognises the ideal of motherhood as the highest for a woman. It is not for nothing that we worship the Motherhood of God in Kali and other goddesses, and our own country we call as Matrubhumi.

The idea that man and woman are equals is a purely Western concept. The Indian or Hindu concept is that man and woman, Purusha and Sakti, are one and indivisible. Wife is Ardhangini. She ever dwells in her husband. She occupies half the body of her Lord. Sita did not think herself a

separate entity. She was in and of Rama. The Indian woman always identifies herself completely with her husband in all domestic, religious, and social life. No religious ceremony can be performed by the husband without his wife. The Vedic hymns chant of her: "Be an empress to your father-in-law. Be an empress to your mother-in-law. Be an empress to your husband's brothers and sisters." She is the queen of the house. She illumines the home through the glory of motherhood.

### **BLESSED DEVI!**

You are my first Guru.  
 Everything man learns from you.  
 You are the Guru of Gurus.  
 You are the embodiment of  
 Patience, sacrifice and service.  
 Divine qualities are your innate nature.  
 You will attain God-realisation quickly.  
 Faith and devotion are your very nature.  
 The destiny of the whole world  
 Lies in your hands.  
 The future destiny of the world  
 Depends to a large extent  
 On the training you impart  
 To your children.

—*Swami Sivananda*

## TO ADORABLE AND DIVINE MOTHERS

(Sri Swami Chidananda)

### ***Om Namō Narayanaya!***

I bow again and again at the feet of all of you who are the very embodiment and symbol of the Almighty Mother. I am very happy to get this opportunity of giving this message in your service. Our most worshipful Master Swami Sivananda used to consider Indian women as the manifestation of the Universal Mother.

The key to the future development and progress of any nation is held by the women, because the mother is the first teacher of any child in every generation. Home is the elementary school for all children for inculcating good habits and higher values for the future development of the nation and the most effective element of education. Just as a potter or an idol maker takes hold of highly plastic clay and shapes it at will, likewise a mother shapes the character of a child by the manner of her speaking and conduct. Thus important and effective power is yours, and you have to keep this in mind while taking proper care and train the children in your family for building a strong future India.

The preservation of our culture is the responsibility of women and not men. Woman is the custodian of the culture of the land. Any soul born in a home gets initially conditioned and that too seriously by the atmosphere prevailing therein. The mother

influences the child far more than the father. The hand that rocks the cradle, rules the nation.

You should understand yourself. The real you is your imperishable soul. The real you is neither male nor female and has neither any name nor any form. Do not forget this truth even for a moment. To realise the great divine power of the imperishable Self is as much your birthright as it is that of men. This has been firmly established in the ancient culture of India. The country, which produced great realised sages, also produced great ladies, who could participate on an equal footing with those sages in the debates on the knowledge of the Self. The main amongst them were Gargi, Maitreyee, Sulabha, Chudala, Madalasa etc. You are directly connected with this tradition. Not just in the past, but in modern times also we have great realised ladies like Anandamayee Ma, Janaki Mai, disciple of Ramana Maharshi, Sati Godavari Mai, Ramadevi, Mata Krishnabai etc.

To consider women as the weaker sex is a retrograde view point. You are all very powerful. You have the power to uplift man from the state of incompetence and deficiency. You are the very embodiment of the all powerful Divine Mother. You will not find this elevating sentiment about women in any

other society. During marriage ceremonies in Bengal the bride is given a sharp knife, when the bridegroom and the bride come into the marriage pandal. This symbolises the liberating power which can release man from bondage. You should understand this well and preserve your exalted status bestowed on you by the Indian culture.

Even in the polluted atmosphere of today you can make home a heaven on earth. Conduct daily prayers in the home. Display pictures of great saints.

Read life stories of Sarada Devi, Meerabai, Madalasa and other female devotees and realised souls. Tell your children the stories of devotees, patriots, warriors and hermits. Stop all worthless talk. Your home itself will be converted into heaven if you maintain a sublime atmosphere in the home. Safeguard and perpetuate the flame of the lamp of Indian culture.

May God bless you all! Hari Om  
Tat Sat.

### **AKBAR AND THE BEGGAR**

Badshah Akbar held a great feast in which thousands took part. There was sumptuous feeding of thousands of rich and poor, of all citizens.

When a batch of people sat down in the Palace Hall to take their food, all of them, except one, sang the praises of the Badshah and shouted at the top of their voice "Akbar Badshah ki jai".

Akbar who was watching the proceedings from the balcony sent for the man who did not take part in this chanting and shouting. "Tell him that he shall not be given food here. Unless he joins in the chorus of my praise, and unless he says Akbar Badshah ki jai he shall not even be allowed to enter the Palace. Drag him out of the Palace and neck him out of the gates".

The Badshah's orders were instantly and ruthlessly carried out.

At night Badshah Akbar tossed about restlessly in bed. He could not sleep. Some mysterious voice was uttering the words: "Akbar! Though I am Almighty God whose glories are sung by millions of wise men. I do not deny My blessings and My protection to even the lowliest of low, the poorest of poor and wickedest of the wicked, who abuse Me, who deny My very existence! Will you refuse to feed the man who did not sing your praise! That man is a great saint and he is my Bhakta. He need not sing your praise; but if you feed him you will be blessed.

Akbar could not believe his ears; but the voice steadily grew in intensity and pitch and the entire bedroom was resounding with the words. At last Akbar was convinced that it was God's Voice.

At dawn Akbar sent all his messengers in search of the poor man. When he arrived, Akbar fell at his feet and asked for pardon.

The saint smiled and said: "Badshah! You have no need to ask for pardon. God can never be offended; so also his devotees. You are blessed: for, what you did, gave you an opportunity to listen to His voice and learn a lesson from Him".

**Swami Sivananda**

## THE SCIENCE OF MANTRA

*(Sri Swami Krishnananda)*

### Our Contact with the Gods

The gods are in the heavens. Our relationship with the gods is a daily affair. Not a moment passes when this relation is absent. Similar to an inverted tree, for instance, creation branches off into various degrees of subtlety until the great root manifests itself through the powerful trunk and then descends into the diversity of the branches, the tiny twigs and the leaves, down to the final tips of its lowest level of manifestation. The higher connections in this tree determine the functions of the lower manifestations, as the sap in the larger trunk would decide the way in which it sustains its further ramifications and the control it exerts even till the tips of its leaves.

The sap is tremendously concentrated in the root and the trunk. It is distributed in a proportionate manner through the gradations of further ramification, and the very same central oceanic sap which is the vitality of the tree feeds everything that it is made of. The only difference is the power, the intensity and the pressure of this sap manifesting itself, getting decreased and diluted as it comes further and further down, notwithstanding the fact that it is permeating through every last leaf of the tree.

The gods are in heaven as our subtle body is above this physical body and the

causal body is above the subtle body. Layers of our personality, several in number, do not merely overlap in a physical sense, but remain as succeeding and preceding elements, we may say, as effects and causes, in the scheme of the hierarchy of the manifestation of the cosmic power. There is a tremendous network of these relations. This universe is such a fabric of interrelated threads of power, tiny streams of force, whose determinations are guided by the extent of their transcendence or descent, as the case may be, in this scheme of the vast manifestation.

The determining power is more inclusive and intense in the higher regions. The higher gods are supposed to be greater than the lower gods. The distinction between a god in heaven and a person on earth is the distinction between the constituent material of the personality of the god or the human individual concerned. The physical element is stably sitting upon all inhabitants of the earth. Material constraint is all-in-all in every living being on this earth, but the higher ranges of being free themselves gradually from this involvement in material constraint; and the gods are supposed to be either predominantly watery, fiery or airy, or they can be even subtler than we can conceive in terms of these elements.

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The penetrating capacity of a divinity depends upon the subtlety of the matter that goes into the constitution of the divinity. The higher gods are higher in the same sense as space is higher than air, air is higher than fire, fire is higher than water, water is higher than earth. This gradation of something being higher is to be understood in the sense of the difference in the density of the manifestation of power, which is at once the density of manifestation of intelligence. Knowledge and power go together. The higher gods are more intelligent and more powerful; the lesser gods are less intelligent and less powerful.

To come back to our simple analogy of the branches of an inverted tree, the powerful branches have greater energy in them coming from the central roots or the trunk than the little twigs and the sagging leaves, though all of them have the benefit of receiving the sap in differently distributed proportions. This world is arranged in the pattern of several layers of power; and while this is so, there is also an arrangement of the diversity of these layers of arrangement. Therefore, there is a twofold way of envisaging this manifestation downward from the Supreme Being. There is a coming down gradually into the lower levels of comprehensiveness, inclusiveness, intelligence and power on the one hand; and on the other hand, there is a greater and greater tendency to diversification, as in the case with a tree and its branches. The tree becomes more and more diversified through its ramifications as it moves further and further onwards, downwards.

The gods, therefore, are our own higher nature. Sometimes we are told that the gods are residing in us, in our own selves. This is like saying the entire power of the tree is also in a leaf. To some extent, this is a great truth. The power of the government can be seen even in the lowest official; he may be a village head. It is manifest in a very little modicum, almost insignificantly present, incapable of functioning, as it were, but it is a little slumbering spark which can be ignited by circumstances that can raise it up to the capacity of connecting itself with the higher powers.

Thus is our interesting relation to the higher divinities. The gods are not imaginations of the mind. Heaven is not a concoction of the brain of a man. It is a supremely real, specific manifestation differentiated in two ways, as I mentioned: firstly, differentiated through the density in the process of the descent, and secondly, differentiated by the diversity that is characteristic of the manifestation, whereby a particular manifestation can be said to be either higher or lower, as the case may be.

These gods, being essentially mental in their nature, free from the shackles of the physical earth to which we are mostly bound, can be contacted only by intense mental concentration. The mind is the stuff of the divinity, though even the stuff of this mind varies in its intensity and comprehensiveness, as already pointed out. But the matchstick-like potentiality of divinity that is present in our own lowest level can also manifest from within itself that energy which can reach up to the highest divinity through the hierarchy of the gods.

***(To be continued)***

## WHERE LIES PEACE AND HAPPINESS?

*(Sri Swami Atmaswarupananda)*

If we say that we are seekers of the Divine, what is it that we are actually seeking? Through the ages seekers have frequently responded that they are seeking the truth. Why seek the truth? Jesus said, "The truth will set you free." Set us free from what? The scriptures say from ignorance, from illusion, from delusion.

What is the main impediment to our freedom? It is our attachment to ignorance. We are not prepared to easily let go of our illusions. We are convinced that we are one body and mind, and all our thinking is based upon that illusion. Our salvation is in being freed from that illusion by recognizing the oneness of all things.

But if all is one, then what happens to our specialness? We feel ourselves to be unique, to be special, maybe even superior. Oneness may be okay, but we don't want to give up our specialness. But that's what the spiritual life demands of us. Being special may give a certain feeling of happiness, but it puts us in opposition to everyone and everything else who we think are not so special, or are special in ways that are different than we are.

Therefore, we feel uncomfortable, not at peace. And Pujya Swami Chidanandaji said that happiness

depends upon peace. So as long as we build our life on a belief that we are something unique and special, there can be no peace and no real happiness. Renunciation means renouncing the idea that we are special, so that we can find the oneness that we truly are where peace abides—and thus happiness.

All our spiritual practices are meant to encourage us to see oneness everywhere. We must look for it outside ourselves—see it in the Guru, see it in nature, see it in what we have in common with others. We must find it within by negating all the things that we are not, until we come to a point of oneness in the depths of our being. We must recognize that in that oneness lies peace and happiness and want that more than we want to be special.

If we want that peace more than we want to be special, then all the forces of the universe will come to our aid. So far they have been helping us to feel special because we thought that was where our happiness lies. We have to recognize the truth that happiness lies in peace, and peace lies in the recognition that Brahman alone is without a second—and that we are That. Peace, happiness, lie in finding the truth of oneness and leaving behind the illusion of specialness.

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## BUDDHA'S NOBLE EIGHTFOLD PATH <sup>1</sup>

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

**B**uddhism is the religion of analysis. It is the religion of earnest, undaunted effort. Buddhism was founded by Gautama Sakya Muni, the rebel child of Hinduism. It sprang up directly from Hinduism. Buddha never thought of founding a new religion. He made no new discovery. He was proclaiming only the ancient and pure form of religion which had prevailed before his advent.

The pure and noble religion of the Vedas and the Upanishads had degenerated into dead forms, unmeaning rites and ceremonies. The Brahmins claimed honour by virtue of their birth. They neglected the study of the Vedas and the practice of virtue. Much stress was laid on sacrificial rites, and in order that flesh-eating may have the sanction of religion, animals were slaughtered and sacrificed in Yajnas. Such was the state of society at the time when Buddha appeared. His tender and loving heart could not bear the shedding of so much innocent blood in the sacred name of religion. Buddha came to the world to show the path of righteousness, to destroy the path of error and to overcome sorrow. Buddhism is not agnosticism or atheism. Buddhism does not teach pessimism. It preaches wonderful optimism. Buddhism is not Nihilism. Buddha did not deny God. He only said, "Do not bother about questions like, 'Is there God? Do I exist?"

Is the world real or not?' Do not waste your time and energy in useless discussions. Become a practical religious man. Purify your heart, control the mind, lead a virtuous life, and you will attain Nirvana, emancipation or eternal bliss." The nature of Ultimate Truth is beyond the reach of mind and speech. If Buddha refused to define the nature of the Absolute, or if he contended himself with negative definitions, it is only to show that the Absolute or the Ultimate is above all definitions.

Buddha demands from you faith in your own Self, in your own latent forces. Without this faith nothing can be achieved. He says, "Be a light unto yourself, be a refuge unto yourself. There is no external refuge. All component things are impermanent. Work out your salvation in earnestness." The first words of Buddha after his enlightenment were: "Wide open are the gates of Immortality. Ye that have ears to hear, release your faith." Buddha did not want his followers to believe in his words, but to understand them and take them for starting their own investigations and experience. The gospel of Buddha is simple and yet wonderfully profound. He finds that everything here is mutable, changing, impermanent or transitory. There is suffering, disharmony, discord and discontent everywhere in life on

<sup>1</sup>From DL 1965

account of the transitoriness of things around. This universal experience of sorrow or Duhkha is the starting point in Buddha's thought. He emphatically asserts that there is a way out of sorrow and a haven of eternal bliss within the reach of every man. Buddha has presented, amongst other things, the eight steps in the way of life, which annihilate suffering of all kinds and lead to the attainment of Nirvana or emancipation.

The extinction of craving (Tanha) or Trishna (thirsting for sensual pleasures) can be achieved by the noble eightfold path, the absolute way to reach the goal of life. The eight steps in the path are classified under three main heads: (1) Sila or moral conduct which comprises right speech, right action, and right living; (2) Samadhi or concentration which comprises right exertion, right mindfulness and right meditation; (3) Panna or wisdom which comprises right belief or right understanding or right views and right aspirations. Buddha makes Sila or moral conduct the stepping-stone to the higher stage of meditation and wisdom. Buddha lays great stress on the way of life. He avoids the two extremes of self-indulgence and self-mortification, and prescribes the Middle Way.

What is this Middle Way? It is the Noble Eightfold Path which constitutes, so to say, the entire ethical code of Buddha. They are:

(1) Right view or right belief: Right view is the right understanding. Rejection of all uncritical convictions, superstitions and deluded belief

constitute right view or right belief or right understanding. The intellect is trained or disciplined to see things in their proper perspectives. Right understanding leads to the higher and purer aspirations towards renunciation, benevolence and kindness. Right knowledge of the existence of suffering, its cessation and the way towards the liberation from suffering constitute right understanding. Right views are undoubtedly essential before you can succeed in any attempt. Wrong views should be purged out. If the foundations are properly laid, the superstructure becomes strong and stable. Lack of right views has been the cause of persecution, misunderstanding and quarrels in the world.

(2) Right Aspiration: Right aspiration leads to the attainment of the Nirvana. It consists in keeping the goal before the mind's eye and attempting to achieve Nirvana, where there will be an end of all sufferings, sorrows and pains. Right aspiration must be strengthened by renouncing all momentary pleasures and developing dispassion. It is the right mental attitude, sympathy and selflessness.

(3) Right Speech: Right speech consists in uttering truth and speaking sweet, loving words and avoiding slander, abuse and gossip. Buddha said, "Let no one cause anyone to utter falsehood nor approve of those who speak falsely. Speech at the right moment, accomplished by argument, moderate and full of sense is like a treasure." Wrong speech is the cause of quarrels and unhappiness. It is very

important for everyone to cultivate right speech. Discipline of speech is Vak-Tapas.

(4) Right Action: Right action consists in abstaining from killing, stealing, adultery or unlawful sexual intercourse and drinking liquor. Buddha laid a strong emphasis on sexual purity. The monks were advised abstinence from thinking and talking or acting sexually. Service of the poor and the sick and all acts of positive good and kindness in general, also constitute right action.

(5) Right living: Right living consists in earning one's living by fair and honest means. Foul means of livelihood must be strictly avoided. One should earn his livelihood by the sweat of his brow. Buddha asks his followers to refrain from five trades: trading in arms, in living beings, in flesh, in intoxicating drinks or liquors. Hunting should be given up.

(6) Right Exertion: Right exertion consists in not allowing the mind to have evil thoughts, to eradicate those that have already arisen or become habitual and to cultivate good thoughts and good states of the mind, and to strengthen those good thoughts which have already arisen. To abandon evil and to develop the good is right endeavour. Right exertion is constant endeavour and self-examination, self-analysis and self-control.

(7) Right Mindfulness: Right mindfulness or right attention is to develop the quality of awareness. It consists in always remaining self-possessed, not being subject to hankering or defection or forgetfulness;

the consciousness is fixed on Nirvana and all sensations and perceptions are abandoned. Right attentiveness is alertness. You will have to keep your eyes wide open so that you may receive the correct impressions and profit by them and reject those which are pernicious and harmful.

(8) Right Concentration: Right concentration or right meditation or right Samadhi is giving the mind a proper direction in the four meditations. By right Samadhi, the four illuminations are realised and Nirvana is attained in perfect consciousness. This step is absolutely necessary for attaining Nirvana. This is the highest stage of development in the Buddhistic way of life through which one realises the eternal peace of Nirvana. It is a form of mind-culture which enables one to develop the latent spiritual forces in order to realize perfect knowledge.

Lord Buddha presented this code of conduct which helps to overcome sufferings and leads to the attainment of Nirvana. The cultivation and acquisition as a habitual frame of mind, of these eight positive ideals ends in Bodhi, which is the Buddhist ideal of life. The noble eightfold path destroys lust, anger, greed, malice and other evils, and purifies the heart. Bodhi or enlightenment bestows perfect, everlasting peace, eternal bliss and Immortality.

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*Repeat Hari. Never worry. Seek and Find. Feel and Realise. Assert and Affirm. Aspire and Inspire. Move forward and Godward.*

**Swami Sivananda**

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## THE SAINT: A PERSONIFICATION OF BLAZING PURITY AND COMPASSION

*(Sri Swami Chidananda)*

We are human beings with all the shortcomings and deficiencies of human nature. Notwithstanding this, the ultimate aspiration of every human being is to become the Divine Being, endowed with infinite consciousness. That is the only purpose for which this human body is given. Souls embodied in subhuman forms do not have this privilege. It is to show that we can attain to this consciousness and having attained, how we may live a life of light, showering bliss, radiance and peace upon all—for that purpose saints have been sent by the Almighty. With their wonderful power they inspire all those who come into the magnetic circle of their divine presence. Whenever we feel discouraged or lose confidence in our struggle to tread the spiritual path, then the shining example of these saints comes to us as a flash of living inspiration, to wake us up, fill us with fresh courage and energy to go onwards.

The saints of all times and races have reached but one Goal; though widely differing were the Sadhanas through which they had this attainment, yet, in two respects all seeming conflicts in the lives of different saints are reconciled. Firstly, they all had but one idea: to attain union with the ultimate divinity, the source, the sustainer and the goal of the entire creation—God.

Secondly, in their fundamental nature saints have always been the personification of goodness, of purity, kindness, compassion and truthfulness. They provide for us an ideal pattern of how a man should live in order that he may reach to these heights. While recalling this to our minds and expressing our adorations to the saints and sages everywhere, let us consider what place the saints occupy in the civilisation and culture of our country. The waters of the Ganga are the snows of the Himalayan glaciers. Even so, the stream of the culture of Bharatavarsha is made up of nothing but the ideal examples set up by the saints that this country has produced right from the birth of her civilisation up to the present times. The firmament of Indian life is studded by the glittering stars of her saints, sages, men of God, who have steeped themselves in the bliss of divine consciousness and have glorified and immortalised the wonderful spiritual culture of this country. By drawing into our own lives this divine colour of saintliness, we shall also make ourselves beautiful exemplars of divinity. By regular reading or hearing the sublime lives of these saints, we imbibe their qualities of goodness and wisdom, and so the Bharatiyan consciousness is

continuously fed with this life-giving Manna of saintly idealism.

As Lord Krishna stresses in the Daivi-Sampat part of His Gita, the saint represents the personification of the godly qualities. Saints are the personification of blazing purity, absolutely free from the least taint of any impure element in their character. They are compassion-incarnate. The idea of causing the least harm or pain to even the tiniest creature upon earth is simply abhorrent to them, and they cannot think of it even in their dreams. They are examples of absolute truthfulness. In their presence falsehood does not exist. Their life is simple; there is no crookedness. Their ordinary daily actions are characterised by courtesy and kindness. Above all, they are the embodiments of continuous goodness. One of the interpreters of Lord Christ's life, having failed to measure up His life by any means, had ultimately to say: 'Christ was a good man, who went about doing good.' In this simple sentence a whole world of rich meaning is there for us to think over and realise. This pattern, you will find, describes all the great saints who have lived to light up our hearts and consciousness. All these characteristics in them were not deliberately exercised. They had so grown into their very nature that with them it was all spontaneous. Even as it is the nature of fire to burn, water to flow, wind to blow, the saint's nature flows through all his actions and words as a spontaneous force.

This is exemplified in the story of how a saint, on the bank of a river sees a

scorpion being carried away by the current. There is no hesitation, no thought; immediately he stretches out his hand and brings the scorpion out of water upon dry land. Even as he was doing this, the scorpion stings him, and he is made to drop it in a reflex action, and the scorpion is in the water again. Again the saint at once lifts it out to save it from its watery grave. Again another sting, but the saint does not desist from rescuing this ignorant creature, and he succeeds after several attempts and getting stung several times. Someone standing by observed this strange scene and queried why the saint could not have left the ungrateful creature to its fate. He gets the calm and dignified reply: "Brother, the scorpion is but manifesting its nature, and I am manifesting mine. It is its Dharma to sting, and it is my Dharma to serve." This is the special point which we have to note about the life of the saints.

It is now more than two thousand five hundred years since the blessed Lord Buddha walked and preached his message of compassion and the supremacy of ethics. Lord Buddha! What a wondrous picture of pure compassion he was and the incarnation of motiveless love, spontaneously issuing forth from every pore of his being! Truly, he preached the purest form of Hinduism as recorded in the Upanishads. Buddha spoke of Dharma and Sangha, but did not find much necessity to speak of God.

We have to study Buddha's life from all points of view; from the ethical point of view, from the philosophical point of view, and so on. It is a composite of

ethical principles, and all these were introduced for the purpose of solving the problems of human miseries. How best to adopt one's conduct so as to escape the evils, constituted the ethical side. Philosophically, it is an approach for the solution of the riddle of life. The questions 'why should man suffer?' or 'Why should he be born?' - point to the final question: 'How to escape misery?' The answer given is, by escaping birth. When one is born, one is bound to have misery. But, then, how to escape birth? By giving up the desire to be born. This desire for birth arises on account of the reaction of the mind to the pleasures of the world. Therefore annihilate desires. That is the way of getting rid of birth, and in short, that is the kind of philosophical approach to it.

Lord Buddha did not lay emphasis on theory, but his teaching was a composite of ethical principles. His approach to philosophy was only from the practical point of view. Buddha believed in the theory of Karma. There is no use blaming fate for one's own suffering and there is no use blaming God, as God is not responsible for it. One has to blame oneself, because the Karma (action) one does (good or bad) brings about results. Therefore, the best thing to do is to regulate one's life, so that one's actions do not affect one and bring about his or her reincarnation.

Buddha also wanted to give an ideal to the people, namely Nirvana. One way of translating Nirvana is, the attainment of painless peace, Shanti, where there is absolutely no desire. Whatever be the

state of Nirvana, it is a state where one transcends all miseries, and that ideal is reached by following and practising purity, compassion, truth, meditation, etc. He established a law of Dharma and founded a Sangha. He spoke about four meditations, the fourfold struggle against evil, the three Iddis or Siddhis, which one can attain. He spoke about the five moral powers, the seven kinds of wisdom and the eightfold path. These are his teachings in brief. Buddhism is a combination of psychology, philosophy and ethics.

The religion of Buddha is a path to Nirvanic beatitude; it is a way and not a creed. It is a scheme of spiritual development and not a set of doctrines. Nirvana is not utter annihilation. It is total extinction of all that is base in us.

Hatred can never be cured by hatred; it can only be cured by love. This is a lesson which the world has to learn again and again. Let us all take a solemn vow now to meet hatred with love, and malice with good-will and compassion. This is the best way to pay our homage to the great saint and seer, Lord Buddha, the apostle of love or Ahimsa, the saviour of the world. Glory to Gautama, the Buddha, the All-merciful, the Enlightened one who showed the way to attain Nirvana. \* \* \*

*Clean the dross of the mind. Purify  
the heart of all dirt and polish its  
chamber. Make the seat steady and  
invite the Lord to dwell in.*

**Swami Sivananda**

## YOU CAN ALSO BECOME A BUDDHA<sup>1</sup>

(H.H. Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj)

A raw untrained aspirant feels: "My preceptor is treating me like a servant or a peon. He is using me for petty jobs." He who has understood the right significance of Karma Yoga will take every work as Yogic activity or worship of the Lord. There is no menial work in his vision. Every work is Pooja of Narayana. In the light of Karma Yoga, all actions are sacred. That aspirant who always takes immense delight in doing works which are considered by the worldly man as menial services and who always does willingly such acts will become a dynamic Yogi. He will be absolutely free from conceit and egoism. He will have no downfall. The canker of pride cannot touch him.

In the West, cobblers and peasants have risen to a very great position in society. Every work is a respectable work for them. A boy, who applies polish to the boots in the streets of London for a penny, carries newspapers and journals in the afternoon for sale and works as an apprentice under a journalist during his leisure hours at night. He studies books, works hard, never wastes a minute and, in a few years, becomes a journalist of great repute and international fame. In Punjab, some graduates have taken to hair-dressing work. They have understood the dignity of labour.

A real Yogi does not make any difference between menial and respectable work. It is only an ignorant man who makes such a difference. Some aspirants are humble in the beginning of their spiritual career. When they get some name

and fame, some followers, admirers, devotees and disciples, they become victims of pride. They cannot do any service. They cannot carry anything on their heads or hands. That Yogi who carries the trunk on his head without the slightest feeling on the Railway platform amidst a multitude of his admirers, disciples and devotees without making any outward show of humility must be admired. Sage Jada Bharata carried the palanquin of a Raja on his shoulders without murmuring. Lord Krishna shampooed the legs of a Raja when his barber-devotee was on leave. Sri Rama carried a pot of water for the ablution of one of his devotees. Sri Krishna took the form of a menial servant as Vithoo and paid the money to the Nawab on behalf of his devotee Damaji. If you really want to grow in the spiritual path, you must do all sorts of service daily till the end of your life. Then only you are safe. Do not stop doing service when you have become a famous Yogi. The spirit of service must enter every nerve, cell, tissue and bone of your body. It must be ingrained in you. Then only will you become a real, fully developed practical Vedantin. Is there any greater Vedantin or Karma Yogin than Lord Buddha? He still lives in our hearts, because the spirit of service was ingrained in him and he spent his whole life in serving others in a variety of ways – a magnanimous soul; one without a second. You can also become a Buddha if you apply yourself diligently to selfless service with the right mental attitude. □ □ □

<sup>1</sup>From DL 1960

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## DESTINY FAVOURS THOSE WHO PERSEVERE

*(Swami Ramarajyam)*

This incident has been culled from Indian History.

Preparations were on for a war between two states. The kings of both the states were disciples of a saint—the same saint. Both of them visited the saint to pray for his blessing at different times.

When the king of one of those two states approached the saint and prayed for his blessing, the saint closed his eyes to get an answer from God. Thereafter he told him, “You will be victorious.”

The king of the other state also went to the saint. The saint closed his eyes to speak to God and then told the king, “It is doubtful that you would win.”

The king was not disheartened. He told the commander of his armies, “We are not sure of our victory, but that does not matter. We will fight until we die, come what may. Make thorough preparations. If the goddess of war wants us to sacrifice our lives to her, we are ready for it.”

The king, who was assured that he would be victorious, was extremely happy. His joy knew no bounds. He stopped thinking about war. He and his soldiers got lost in fun and frolic. They simply forgot that they had to fight a war.

One morning the war bugles sounded. Soldiers from both sides stood on the battlefield face to face. The war started.

The soldiers who were sure of their victory were not worried at all as they had been blessed by the saint. All of a sudden, they noticed that a white bull appeared on the battleground on the side of the enemy. That was a ferocious bull with long horns, fiery eyes and a huge body. Shaking his horns fiercely the bull ran towards them. They were elated by a feeling of their sure victory. They were not mentally prepared for the fight. They had not even made the necessary preparations for the war. They were few in number and had only a few weapons with them.

The bull caused havoc among those careless soldiers. They began to fall.

The soldiers of the other side got encouraged. The morale of these soldiers, who had come prepared to win or to die, was already high. That bull boosted their morale. They too started fighting fiercely.

The king, who was blessed by the saint, was defeated. The other king who knew very much about his probable defeat bravely won the battle.

The king, who was defeated, went to the saint and said, "What a blessing you had given me!"

The saint closed his eyes and spoke to God. After a little while he opened his eyes and said, "Dear

child, you were sure to win and your opponent was sure to lose, but you reposed your faith in your fate and made no efforts to fight. Your enemy had faith in his valour and in perseverance. In spite of being fully aware of their impending defeat, his soldiers prepared themselves for the war. That is why God came in the guise of a bull to help them. Who had forbidden you to make efforts?"

The king had nothing to say. He stood dejected before the saint.

Dear children, the one who perseveres can change even his destiny. Destiny favours those who persevere. The good luck of an idle man—who does not persevere—may well turn into bad luck.

### CONSTRUCT A WHEEL OF FORTUNE

Entertain holy desires. You will shine in Divine Glory. Under the security of the changeless law of cause and effect, a man can serenely proceed to achieve anything he desires to accomplish. Therefore entertain Divine thoughts. You are sure to succeed in your well directed efforts. In nature nothing is lost.

People of gigantic will have developed their will through Karma done in countless births. The potencies of these actions collect together and in one birth the struggling man bursts out as a giant like Buddha, Jesus and Sankara. Patient, indefatigable effort is needed.

—Swami Sivananda

## PARABLE OF THE PATIENT POOR MAN

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

There was a rich old noble who lived in a great palace. There also lived nearby a poor man in a dilapidated hut, who subsisted on crumbs of food cast away by others. But he was ever cheerful, and never complained of his ill-luck.

Once it so happened that the poor man had nothing to eat for a long while. So he went to the rich noble for help. The old noble received him kindly and asked what for he had come. The poor man said that for days he had nothing to eat and that he would be happy if he was given some food. "Is that all?" said the noble. "Come, sit down!" Then he called-out; "Boy! A very important guest has come to dine with me. Ask the chef to make ready the dinner at once, and bring some water to wash our hands."

The poor man was surprised. He had heard that the noble was a very kind man, but he did not expect such a ready welcome. He was all praise about his host. The noble at once interrupted him and said, "Don't mention it, my friend. Let us sit down for the feast." And the old noble began to rub his hands as if some water was poured on them and asked the poor man why he did not wash his hands.

The poor man found no boy or water but decided that he should do what he was told, and so he pretended to wash his hands likewise. "Now let us sit down

to dinner" said the noble, and began to order various delicious dishes. But there was no trace of any food or even a single bearer.

Then the noble said to the poor man, "We have such wonderful feast before us. Enjoy yourself, my friend. You must finish all these fine dishes". And the noble pretended to eat from imaginary plates.

The poor man was faint with hunger, but kept his wits. He did not allow despair to overcome him. He also pretended to eat from the empty table. The noble now and then exclaimed, "What a delicious soup! The curry is wonderful, isn't it my friend?" The poor man replied, "Sure, sure"! "Then why not have some more" and the noble pretended to dish out some imaginary curry. Likewise, he pressed more and more imaginary dishes on the poor man and asked him if they tasted all right.

Though desperately hungry, the poor man thanked his host profusely and said that he had never eaten such a glorious feast in his life. He did not betray a sign of remorse. He kept on maintaining the face cheerfully without the least affectation, as though everything was real.

The noble was a generous person. He was a man of charitable disposition. He wanted to test whether the poor man

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would give way to despair. He had heard of his reputation that he never lost patience. He thought that such a contented, cheerful person as this poor man should not starve and suffer from poverty. But he had his doubts. So he himself wanted to test him. Now he found that all was said about him was true.

The noble then clapped his hands and a retinue of servants came in with all the delicious dishes he had been mentioning. An elaborate dinner was laid on the table. This time the poor man did not have to pretend. He now ate heartily with the noble.

After they had finished their meals, the noble said, "Friend, you are a man of infinite patience. You know well how to make best of everything and bear adversity cheerfully. You are the man I was looking for to manage one of my farms. You should live with me hereafter". Thereupon the poor man did not have to suffer any more from poverty.

This story has several lessons for the common man to learn. When the poor man went to the rich man, he did not ask for any charity so that he might dispense with begging for some days. This shows that he was not greedy. He lived in the present. He wanted some food and he asked for only that. Now, if he had asked for some money, he would have got it, and would have spent it in a few days, only to revert back to his former poverty. He did not ask any more than what he needed immediately, and this paved the way for his good luck in being employed in the rich man's farm.

When the poor man was harassed by his host with imaginary dishes, he did not lose his patience in spite of his extreme hunger. If he had done so, he would have been asked to get out and would have lost his dinner as well as his unforeseen appointment. He did not either complain about his ill-luck or bewail his misfortune as an ordinary beggar would have done before a rich man.

Hence the moral is that one must be patient and make the best of everything. One should learn to bear adversity cheerfully, do one's best, pray to God, and trust in His grace. One should never complain about one's misfortune. As one soweth so one reapeth. Hence there is no use in bewailing ill luck. One must learn how to master courage and build one's destiny through self-effort.

Patience is golden. Without patience life will be a total failure. One important point in this story is that when one goes to somebody for any favour, one should be prepared to nod to his tune if anything is to be expected from him.

Greed and the grace of God cannot live together. Where there is greed, there good luck can hardly exist. One should learn to live in the present, and ask for nothing more than one's due. With patience, cheerfulness, contentment and amiable disposition one should learn to make the best of the circumstances one is situated in.

O man, beware of wrong company. Have Satsanga. You will be spiritually elevated.

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**SRI GURU PURNIMA, SADHANA WEEK AND  
THE SACRED PUNYATITHI ARADHANA OF  
GURUDEV SRI SWAMI SIVANANDAJI MAHARAJ**

The Holy Sri Guru Purnima will be observed at the Headquarters Ashram on the 12th of July, 2014, and the 51st Anniversary of the Punyatithi Aradhana of Gurudev Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj will be celebrated on the 20th of July 2014.

In between the above two sacred functions, there will be a Spiritual Conference, known as Sadhana Week, for seven days from 13th to 19th July continuously, with programmes every day.

Devotees who intend to participate in the above programmes, are requested to write to us, giving full details of the number of persons arriving so that the information may reach us not later than the 15th of June, 2014.

Persons with any kind of physical handicap, or health problem, may consider to avoid the strain of this concentrated programme and visit the Ashram at some other time. Further, this being Shravan month there will be large floating pilgrim population in the whole of Uttarakhand, disrupting traffic.

The period will be in the monsoon season when there is likelihood of heavy rains in this area. As such, devotees who are coming for the celebrations may kindly bring with them necessary requirements befitting the season, such as an umbrella, a torch and the like.

Due to difficulty in accommodating large number of persons, the Ashram has to request for rooms from neighbouring Ashrams. Guests may kindly bear with these difficulties and adjust themselves, lovingly. Devotees are requested kindly to come one or two days earlier only and also not to extend their period of stay in the Ashram beyond one or two days after the function is over.

May Sri Gurudev's Blessings be upon all!

Shivanandanagar

25th April, 2014

—THE DIVINE LIFE SOCIETY

## SERVICES THROUGH CHIDANANDA CENTENARY CHARITABLE DISPENSARY AT GAHAM, ANGUL (ODISHA)

Swami Sivananda Charitable Trust, an organ of the Divine Life Society Branches of the Dhenkanal and Angul, Odisha has commenced its services to the poor and destitute through Chidananda Centenary Charitable Dispensary from 1st March, 2014 after the inauguration of the Dispensary on 20th

February, 2014. During the month of March, 549 needy patients were examined by Dr. R. N. Panda, Dr. C. S. K. Mishra and Dr. D. K. Sahoo and were provided free medicines.

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

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## ANNOUNCEMENT

To inculcate moral, cultural and spiritual values in the young generation of our country, the Headquarters Ashram and various DLS Branches organize Spiritual and Personality Development Camps for the students of schools and colleges every year. The Headquarters Ashram has organized a number of camps during the last few years. The students of Rishikesh and other parts of the country have attended these camps and found them immensely beneficial. The Audio Visual Department of the Ashram has prepared DVDs of some of these students' programmes as given below:

1. ZDO—028 Spiritual Camp for Students 2010
2. ZDO—051 Students' Personality Development Camp 2013
3. ZDO—052 The Divine Life Society Children's Branch Panchkula, Chandigarh
4. ZDO—053 Children's All Round Development Camp Kechala-Koraput, Odisha—2013

We consider that these DVDs may be a great help for the DLS Branches in organizing Camps for children and youth in a meaningful and successful way. The DLS Branches who wish to use these DVDs as a model may obtain them free of cost from the Headquarters Ashram on request.

### CULTIVATE GOOD MANNERS

Manners are minor morals. They are the shadows of virtue. They are a passport to regard. They are the blossom of good sense and good feeling.

Pride, ill-nature, want of sense, arrogance, impatience are the great sources of ill-manners.

Good manners are a part of good morals. They are a rare gift. They easily and rapidly ripen into morals.

Be silent as to yourself. Say little or nothing about yourself.

—*Swami Sivananda*

## SEVA THROUGH SIVANANDA HOME

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

One of the female patients passed away this month. She had been sick for a while and was earlier diagnosed with cancer in the mouth. When she was admitted in Sivananda Home, she was brought from the side of the road, where she was sitting and crying loudly. Immensely neglected was her body, full of dirt and flies, with multiple bleeding wounds on her scalp and body, and she was scratching like a wild cat, her skin being affected with severe scabies. Besides her bodily suffering, she was very scared of any human approach. All along at the time of her admission in Sivananda Home, she would scream by bouts, when she would feel that she had lost herself, that something would happen, something she could not foresee. But overall, she slowly started to feel at ease more, and when a hesitating smile would appear on her face, or a soft word from her mouth, everybody would be happy. Her last days were difficult and painful, and the ongoing Bhajan alone would ease her struggle. She could only drink juice and water and she gradually faded away in a coma. May the Almighty Lord

grant her eternal Peace and Bliss. Om Shanti.

For a younger girl staying in Sivananda Home, anxiety is also an issue; she has to deal with every single day of her life. It remains a challenge for her to adjust with others, after living on the road-side all alone. Harassment, humiliation, ridiculing, being looked down upon, and being abused have left deep scars inside her, and when any insecurity occurs, her mind goes back to those occasions and she grasps whatever comes in front of her and hits whosoever comes in front of her. She is not a violent person. She is a sweet and softhearted girl. It is just an impulsive reaction. Though she remains on the brink, she has improved a lot through the daily routine and under psychiatric treatment, and the sharp edges are slowly softening. Her place is a small alcove, where there is just enough space for her alone, a place where she can withdraw into herself, where she feels safe and secure. *“In the world, but yet not of the world.”*

Our prayer to the Almighty Lord that we do not let the world make us hard, that we do not let pain make us hate, that we do not let bitterness steal our sweetness.

*“Come! O, Come again! Whoever,  
whatever you may be, come!*

*Even if you have broken your vows a  
thousand times, come!*

*Our door is the door of hope, come!*

*Come like you are!” (Rumi).*

*“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).**

## REPORTS FROM THE D.L.S. BRANCHES

### INLAND BRANCHES

**Ambala (Haryana):** Regular Satsang activities were carried on. A special Satsang was conducted on 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> March with a discourse on Sri Ramayana and releasing of a book of Bhajans and concluded with Jnana Prasad and distribution of Prasad. On 25<sup>th</sup> March a special Satsang was conducted on the 17<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Branch. Free Jalseva and Nishkam Homeopathic Seva at Sri Gurugranth Sahib continued.

**Balangir (Odisha):** Daily Puja activities and weekly Satsang activities on Thursdays and Sundays continued. Sivananda Day was observed on 8<sup>th</sup> of February with Guru Paduka Puja. Mahasivaratri was celebrated at Lord Vishwanath Temple inside the Ashram campus with Akhanda Panchakshara Mantra Japa, Jagaran with Prahara Puja and Rudrabhishekam which was attended by 66 devotees. The Chidananda Dispensary run by the Branch treated 338 patients during the month.

**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 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 16<sup>th</sup> March and concluded with Mahamangalarati. A Satsang was conducted on 23<sup>rd</sup> March with Divine chantings.

**Barbil (Matkambada-Odisha):** Satsang activities continued regularly. Agni Utsav was celebrated on 14<sup>th</sup> February. A Sadhana Day was observed on 24<sup>th</sup> of the month. Around 650 Patients have been given free Homeo treatment at Sivananda Charitable Homeo Dispensary run by the Branch. Balvihar classes for school-going children were conducted on every Sunday.

**Bhishmagiri (Odisha):** Besides regular Sunday Satsang activities, the Branch also conducted special Satsangs on 4<sup>th</sup>, 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> February and celebrated Vasanta Panchami, Kumbha Sankranti and Magha Purnima with Sahasrarchan (Om Namoh Bhagavate Sivanandaya). Mahasivaratri and Pratishtha Divas of the Branch were celebrated on 27<sup>th</sup> with Paduka Puja, Swadhyaya, chanting and sahasrarchan, and also Narayana Seva.

**Brahmapur (Ladies Branch, Lanjipalli, Odisha):** Besides regular and mobile Satsang activities

including Gurupaduka Puja on Thursdays, the Branch has also conducted Bhagavata and Gita chanting on Ekadashis on 10<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> February and Sundarakanda Parayan on Sankranti day on 13<sup>th</sup> February. A blood-donation camp was organised in Baragam Village on 13<sup>th</sup> February in which 31 units of blood was collected by Red Cross Blood Bank MKCG Medical College & Hospital Brahmapur. Narayan Seva for about 60 needy and poor was arranged by the Branch and Sattvik food was distributed to them.

**Chandigarh (Haryana):** Regular Satsang activities including Narayana Seva in the form of feeding to 250 to 300 poor and needy people, and free medical consultation and medicines to 50 to 80 patients on Sundays, and financial assistance of about Rs. 7000/- per month to a patient of renal transplant and to other deserving patients continued during the month of February. A special Satsang was organised on 5<sup>th</sup> to observe the Punyatithi Aradhana of Brahmali H.H. Sri Swami Premanandaji Maharaj. Mahasivaratri was celebrated on 27<sup>th</sup> February with traditional Puja, Abhishek and Archana of Shivalinga with chanting of Om Namah Shivaya and Vedic mantras.

**Chatrapur (Odisha):** The Branch conducted weekly Satsangs (4 Nos.) and special Satsangs (14 Nos.) besides 'Jayanti day' on 8<sup>th</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> January with Paduka Puja of Sadgurudev Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj and H.H. Sri Swami Chidanandaji Maharaj. Recitation of 'Sundarakanda' of Shri Ramcharita Manas, was held on Mina Sankranti.

**Dhananjayanagar (Bhanjanagar- Odisha):** Weekly Satsangs were conducted regularly on Sundays with Japa, Bhajan, Kirtan, Gita Parayan, Shanti mantras and prayers for all.

**Digapahandi (Odisha):** Apart from regular Satsang activities, the Branch has also conducted Gurupaduka Puja on Sivananda and Chidananda Day's and a special evening Satsang on Sankranti Day. Mahasivaratri was celebrated on 27<sup>th</sup> February with Puja for Lord Siva with Abhisheka, Archana, Bhajan, Kirtan, Arati and Pushpanjali.

**Gurgaon (Haryana):** The Branch has organised a free eye checkup on 21<sup>st</sup> March, with the active cooperation of the Dr. Rajendra Prasad Centre For Eyes (AIIMS) New Delhi. About 200 patients were given free consultation and medicines, and retina affected cases were referred for further follow up and free lenses and operation at AIIMS. The Sivananda Charitable Health Centre of the Branch is also running a

homeopathy clinic and giving physiotherapy treatment besides organising periodical health camps with the expertise of renowned hospitals.

**Ghari (Manipur):** In addition to regular Satsangs, the Branch organised a special Satsang on 14<sup>th</sup> February by Sri Swami Dharmanishthanandaji Maharaj of DLS, Head quarters. On 28<sup>th</sup> February, Sri Swami Purnabodhanandaji Maharaj visited the Branch. Sivaratri Puja was conducted with a discourse on Shiva Mahimna, Bhajan, Kirtan, Japa, Shanti mantras and concluded with Prasad sevan for 150 participants.

**Kapileshwar (Odisha):** Regular Satsang activities continued. A free medical camp was organised in the remote area of Birol on 16<sup>th</sup> March in Cuttack District. About 170 poor and needy patients were treated and free medicines were given to them in which five renowned Doctors of various Branches rendered their services.

**Khurda Road (Jatni-Odisha):** Besides regular Satsang activities, the Branch observed the Punyatithi Aradhana Day of Brahmalin Sri Swami Devanandaji Maharaj with a special Sadhana Day on 7<sup>th</sup> January with Gurupaduka Puja, Bhajan, Kirtan, Shantipath and Arati and followed by Narayanan Seva (Poor feeding) and Prasad sevan for the devotees. On 30<sup>th</sup> January poor feeding for 50 Leprosy patients was organised which was sponsored by the E.Co.Rly Women's Welfare Organization and plastic mattresses were also distributed to them. Financial help to the victims of the houses burnt on fire on 1<sup>st</sup> February (Rs.1000/- each) to seven families and plastic mattresses, sarees, bedsheets, lungi and towels were also distributed through the kind donations of the devotees.

**Khatiguda (Odisha):** In addition to two times Puja everyday and weekly Satsang on Thursdays, the Branch observed Sadhana Day on 2<sup>nd</sup> March with Narayan Seva and 12 hours Mahamantra Kirtan and Ekadashi Satsangs on 12<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup> February with Sri Vishnu-sahasranama chanting. Mobile Satsangs (2 Nos) were conducted on 17<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> February.

**Kakching (Manipur):** Satsang activities went on regularly in the Branch. On 8<sup>th</sup> February, Sri Swami Dharmanishthanandaji Maharaj of DLS Headquarters Ashram, visited the Branch and two special Satsangs were conducted with Gurupaduka Puja, Siva Puja and Arati at Vishwanath Mandir. Yoga demonstration was held by the students in which Sri Swamiji delivered a speech on Yoga to the students and members of the Branch. And in the afternoon session, Samuha Prarthana, Bhajan, Kirtan were held and Sri Swamiji delivered a speech. On 27<sup>th</sup>, Sri Swami Purnabodhanandaji Maharaj of DLS Headquarters

Ashram visited the Branch and a special Satsang was held. Mahasivaratri was celebrated on 28<sup>th</sup> February with Puja, Abhisheka, Archana, Bhajan and Kirtans and concluded with Arati and Prasad Sevan.

**Lucknow (U.P.):** The Branch celebrated its Annual Function on 14<sup>th</sup> March. Sri Swami Akhilanandaji Maharaj of DLS Headquarters Ashram stayed for one week and guided and motivated the devotees through elevating discourses on various topics on Sadhana in different parts of the city. Sri Swami Dharmanishthanandaji Maharaj of DLS Headquarters Ashram was the chief guest in the function on 14<sup>th</sup> March and conducted Paduka Puja of Sadgurudev Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj with Bhajan and Kirtan and also gave a talk on various aspects of Sadhana. Some booklets and a sticker of Gurudev Sri Swami Sivananda were released by Swamiji for the Birth Centenary Celebrations of H.H. Sri Swami Chidanandaji Maharaj in which more than 110 devotees participated. Bhog and Arati were offered to the Almighty Lord and Sadguru Bhagavan and the function was concluded with Prasad sevan for all the gathered devotees.

**Madhavapatnam (A.P.):** During the month of March, the Branch conducted Satsangs on Wednesdays at Sivananda Kshetram Sarpavaram, on Fridays in 2-town Kakinada Sri Rama Temple, and on Sundays at Sai Mandir Madhavapatnam, free medical camps on 1<sup>st</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> Sundays, and Narayana Seva to 25 to 30 poor and needy people every Sunday.

**Nandininagar (Chhattisgarh):** Daily Brahmamuhurta Satsangs, evening Satsangs, weekly mobile Satsangs, Matri Satsangs and Ekadashi Satsangs continued regularly. Mahamantra Kirtan was conducted on 3<sup>rd</sup> March for 6 hours. On the occasion of Chaitra Navaratri 33 Akhand Jyoti Kalas were lighted in the newly constructed 'Jyoti room' at Sivananda Bhajan Mandir on 31<sup>st</sup> March with Bhajan, Kirtan and Satsang with 50 devotees' participation.

**Panchkula (Haryana):** Satsang on Sundays was held regularly. Children are given Prasad. Yoga class and evening Satsangs were held everyday in which Bhajan, Kirtan are done and Shlokas from Srimadbhagavadgita are chanted and Prasad is distributed to all the children. Motivational & mythological movies were shown to 150 children every Tuesday, followed by Prasad distribution and children were taught Sanskrit lessons daily.

**Raipur (Chhattisgarh):** Weekly Satsang on every Sunday went on regularly. On every "Mas Sivaratri", Rudrabhishekam for Lord Vishwanath is being performed with Namakam-Chamakam and

Purusha Suktam chanting. Sri Vishnu-sahasranama, Ekadashi Ramayana and Sri Hanuman Chalisa are recited on both the Ekadashis with Puja of Lord Vishnu by Sahasra Tulsi Dal followed by Arati and Prasad distribution. Shifting of Ram Darbar to Vishwanath Temple which was earlier beside the Vishwanath Mandir was held according to the Vedic procedure.

**Surendranagar (Gujarat):** Apart from the daily Satsang the weekly Sundarakanda Path & Bhagavat Katha by a saintly person from Vrindavan was continued. Providing ration 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 and Mahamantra Kirtan for one hour daily. Saraswati Puja on 4<sup>th</sup> February was celebrated with Paduka Puja, and Archana, and Narayana Seva for 300 people was arranged on 23<sup>rd</sup> and Vastradan. Mahasivaratri was celebrated on 27<sup>th</sup> with Prahara Puja, Bhajan, Kirtan and Akhanda Panchakshari Mantra Japa, Arati and concluded in the early morning. Yogasana classes were continued.

**Sunabeda Ladies Branch (Odisha):** Daily Mahamantra Sankirtan for 1 hour, one chapter of Gita Patha, and Mahamrityunjaya Mantra Japa for 54 times were held regularly. General Satsang on Sunday evenings including Sivananda study circle and Children's Satsang in the afternoons, Narayan Seva on Tuesday at noon, and Wednesday and Saturday Satsangs in the afternoons continued. Sri Vishnu Sahasranama Parayana with Abhisheka continued on every Ekadashis. Chidananda day was observed on 24<sup>th</sup> with Mahamrityunjaya Mantra Japa for 12 hours. Sundarakanda Parayan was held on every Sankranti evening and Sadhana day was conducted on 2<sup>nd</sup> March.

**Salipur (Odisha):** In addition to regular Satsangs, Sivananda day on 8<sup>th</sup> February and Sadhana day on 16<sup>th</sup> were observed with Gurupaduka Puja. Health services were continued by the Swami Sivananda Charitable Hospital every Sunday in which 81 patients were treated and given free medicines. Yoga training for local School/college students/staff was held in which 26 staff members/students participated.

*Special activities:* Akhanda Mahamantra Japa was held on 23<sup>rd</sup> February for 6 hours and Akhanda Om Namah Sivaya Mantra Japa was conducted on the Mahasivaratri day on 27<sup>th</sup> 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 8<sup>th</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> of the month with Gurupaduka Puja and a special Satsang. Ekadashi Satsang on 12<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup> March for ladies, 'Sankranti Diwas' special Satsang on 15<sup>th</sup>, and Akhanda Mahamantra Sankirtan on 11<sup>th</sup> March for the sake of world peace were conducted by the Branch.

**Steel Township Branch (Rourkela- Odisha):** Mobile Satsangs (4 nos) were organised in the residences of the devotees and Gurupaduka Puja was performed on every Thursday morning. A Sadhana day was observed with Gurupaduka Puja, Bhajan, Kirtan, Hanuman Chalisa, Gita Path, and Mantra Chanting and concluded with Prasad Sevan by the public.

**Varanasi (U.P):** The Branch held Satsangs on 9<sup>th</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup> March at 'Vriddha Ashram' and mobile Satsangs (2 Nos) at the residences of the devotees on 15<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> March which were concluded after Arati and distribution of Prasad to all those who participated.

## OVERSEAS BRANCHES

**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 (total 43 participants for the month). Regular Yogasana classes based on 'Practical Guide to Yoga' with essential Yoga exercises, breathing techniques, and meditation were continued (13 new classes with 150 participants).

*Special Activities:* The Branch organised a special Bhajan-kirtan Satsang with a talk on the Essence of Bhagavad Gita on 22<sup>nd</sup> February (45 Participants) and also celebrated the Chinese New Year with a gathering at the Cheung Sha Wan Yoga Centre of the Branch (42 Participants). The Branch provided Yoga Teachers who volunteered to serve the elderly in Yoga Classes organised by the Hong Kong Family Welfare Society-Elderly Centre (One course of 8 sessions with total 12 participants).

**Cape Town (South Africa):** Satsangs are held twice a week on Thursdays and Saturdays in the Branch. Hatha Yoga classes are conducted both in the mornings and evenings. Guided meditation, discourses on The Yoga Sutras of Patanjali and Bhagavadgita, and also Jnana Yoga were held. Monthly Children's Integral Yoga days and Fortnightly Integral Yoga for the Youth in the evenings were organised. Sandwiches are made 3 times a week as a part of Karma Yoga and distributed to Clinics.

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