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CHAPTER II

VALLI ii

नित्योऽनित्यानां चेतनश्चेतनानामेको बहूनां यो विदधाति कामान् ।
तमात्मस्थं येऽनुपश्यन्ति धीरास्तेषां शान्तिः शाश्वती नेतरेषाम् ॥१३॥

13. The wise, who behold the Self as the eternal among the transient, as conscious among the conscious, who, though one, grants the desires of many, as dwelling in their own selves, to them belongs eternal peace, not to others.

शिवानन्द स्तोत्रम् SIVANANDA STOTRAM

(Sri Swami Jnanananda Saraswati, Sivanandanagar)

(Continued from the previous issue)

अहो भाग्यमुत्कृष्टवेदान्ततत्त्वान्यहोरात्रमस्मान् समुद्बोधयन्तम्।
नवामन्दचैतन्यमुद्दीपयन्तं शिवानन्दयोगीन्द्रमेवाश्रयेऽहम् ॥९॥

9. Lucky are we having got the great Sivananda in whom we take refuge, who is always teaching us the Vedanta-philosophy and who is bestowing new energy upon us.

संसाराम्भोनिधिनिपतितान् तत्तटं प्रापयन्तं
कसारातिं कलुषशमनं सन्ततं चिन्तयन्तम्।
तं सारान्तःकरणममलं श्रीशिवानन्दमूर्तिं
पुंसां श्रेष्ठं पुरुगुणनिधिं पुष्टपुण्यं भजेऽहम् ॥१०॥

10. Prostrations to the great sage Sivananda who is engaged in saving those who are drowned in the ocean of Samsara, who is always meditating on God Krishna the destroyer of all sins, who is the foremost among men, who is the abode of all virtues, who is the embodiment of righteousness and who possesses a broad heart.

(To be continued)

Deepavali Message:

IT IS THE AVIDYA OR IGNORANCE THAT PRODUCES A SEMBLANCE OF DARKNESS*

(H.H. Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj)

All Hindu festivals have a deep spiritual import or high religious significance. All big Hindu festivals have religious, social and hygienic elements in them. On every festival day, the place of habitation and the surroundings are thoroughly cleansed and decorated; all the members of the family bathe early in the morning and wear new or washed clothes. Every Hindu will have to do Japa, Kirtan, prayer, Swadhyaya and meditation.

Man gets tired on account of hard and routine work. He wants some sort of change or variety or relaxation. He wants something to cheer him up. These festivals make him cheerful and happy and give him rest and peace.

The observance of Deepavali, Navaratri, Holi and other festivals goes a long way to protect religion, to destroy viciousness, to contribute happiness and to cultivate noble and virtuous qualities which will lead to attainment of eternal bliss and immortality. Hindu festivals and fasts are numerous. In every month there will be some sort of festival, Vrata or observance. There will be continuous round of religious functions and festivals all through the year. Every eclipse, solar or lunar, is of much significance. Perhaps no nation in the world rejoices with festivals (Utsavas) qualified by fasts (Upavasa) and vigil (Jagarana or keeping awake at night) as the Hindus. To get up at 4 a.m. and take

a bath, to do Sandhya, Japa, meditation before sunrise, to study Gita, Ramayana, Bhagavata and the Upanishads, is the strong ingrained habit of every Hindu. These festivals give ample opportunities for him to fill the heart with religious zeal and fervour and march forward in the path of Yoga. Every festival day reminds him the glory of God, necessity of Self-realisation, and thus goads him to soar higher and higher in the realms of eternal bliss and ultimately to merge himself in the Light of lights.

Diwali or Deepavali means a 'row of lights.' It falls on the last two days of the dark half of Asvina (Sept.-Oct.). Diwali is one of the numerous celebrations to which we are heir and which take us at once back to the thought of our own Godhead. This particular festivity has a deep significance in several ways. Waking up in the Brahmamuhurta (4 a.m. in the morning) is a great blessing from the standpoints of health, ethical discipline, efficiency in work and spiritual advancement. It is on Deepavali day that everyone wakes up early in the morning. Surely the Sages who instituted this custom must have cherished the hope that their descendents would realise its benefits and make it a regular daily habit.

Every individual wears new clothes. Often for the poor, this is the only new cloth for the year. The well-to-do present

*Taken from Divine Life Magazine 1961

new clothes to their servants, and those who can afford, distribute clothes freely to the poor and the needy. Charity, especially in the matter of distribution of clothes, is freely resorted to, and thereby the heart expands. In a happy mood of great rejoicing, folks move about freely and mix with one another without reserve; all enmity is buried deep, people embrace each other in fond love. Diwali is a great unifying factor. The vibrations produced by the greetings of love which fill the atmosphere are powerful enough to bring about a change of heart in every man and woman. Alas! How different the attitude is these days? Only a continuous celebration of Deepavali can re-awaken humanity to the urgent need of turning away from the path to ruin.

Deepavali is just a day's reminder of Rama Rajya. Mythology has it that it is on this sacred day that Sri Rama returned to Ayodhya after destroying the demons and established Rama-Rajya. May this Rama-Rajya be ushered in once again in our land soon, when there will be complete absence of hatred, ill-will or self-aggrandisement. People's hearts will be filled with thoughts of love, charity, compassion, tolerance and unselfishness. When these come to stay in the Indian heart, I call that a perpetual celebration of Deepavali! India alone can do it at the present time, because it is in her soil alone that this seed has been left unscorched.

Traders and merchants turn over a new leaf on the Day of Diwali, the previous year's accounts are closed and fresh books are opened. How wonderful it will be if every Indian turned over a new leaf; close

the previous year's account of recrimination, reprisals, retaliatory schemes of hatred, ill-will and rancour, and open a fresh book of love and tolerance. With that will surely dawn a new Era of Peace!

On Deepavali day Goddess Sri Lakshmi is invoked and the devotees pray to Her to bestow on all Her choicest blessings, in the shape of prosperity, peace and goodwill. He surrenders himself at Her Lotus Feet and seeks protection there.

Every household is illumined on this day and everywhere you look there are myriads of twinkling lights. This is intended to remind man that his essential nature is Light; that the Atman, his own real Self is the Light of all lights, the Light that lends luminosity throughout the creation. It is the Avidya or ignorance that produces a semblance of darkness.

O Children of Light! On Diwali day worship Goddess Lakshmi the Abode of all virtues with faith and Bhava which will release you from the clutches of Maya or ignorance. Pray to live in unbroken remembrance of the Supreme Truth which is to remain always in the region of Light, far beyond Maya's reach. Feel always that Flame burning brightly within your own Self. See that Light shining through every face and form. Try to recognise the unmistakable Presence behind every phenomenon. One who lives this way never strays away from the Right, from Dharma. He never loses sight of the Truth. He never falls into Darkness. May you all attain this freedom which knows no bounds and rest in peace!

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Deepavali Message:

FAITH IS INDISPENSABLE IN ONE'S LIFE*

(Sri Swami Chidananda)

Festivals, periodical religious functions, ceremonies and rites have a twofold aspect and purpose. These are the external observances sanctified by long custom, and there is the inner truth which these functions are meant to remind us of and to rekindle in us. To keep fresh in mind and to readily recall the seven component colours of the rainbow, students are given the code word 'VIBGYOR'. In like manner each festival and ceremony is in the nature of a socio-religious keyword to remind you of spiritual truths. Unlike ordinary symbols that are silent, these ceremonies are 'symbols in actual enactment'. The truths which the different sacred observances symbolise are better understood and glimpsed when their scriptural background is impartially studied.

The Deepavali (or Diwali as more commonly termed) is a national festival in this country. It is a very joyous three-day affair. There is gaiety everywhere, cheerful faces, new clothes, bright colourful decorations and lamps, lamps and more lamps. Illumination is the main, prominent feature of the celebrations. There is something unique about Deepavali. Most festivals are held by us in honour of some particular aspect of the Deity. But Deepavali is a distinctive combination of three different celebrations falling under the same name. The first is Naraka-Chaturdasi (on the fourteenth day of the dark half); then is Lakshmi-Puja on the New Moon day; and the third day is Bali-Padya (on the first day of the following bright fortnight

The first day is the celebration of Lord Sri Krishna's victorious battle with the demon Narakasura. Srimad Bhagavata describes this incident in the 59th chapter of its 10th Skandha. Narakasura was a most formidable demon of terrible prowess. He was the son of Bhū-Devi (presiding deity of the Earth) and the Great Boar or Varaha Avatara. Seated upon Garuda, Sri Krishna slayed the Asura. The next day comes Lakshmi-Puja, the adoration of the mine and storehouse of all that is auspicious. The third day commemorates the great sacrifice of King Bali who never refused a suppliant. Danavira Bali is confined to the nether-world. On Bali-Padya day he is glorified.

The Ever-perfect Self, becoming manifest in Maya and the Gunas (symbolised by the boar form) contacts with Samsara (Bhū-Devi) and out of this association is born the lower Asuric ego of the impure self in the individual, with its host of passions and evil tendencies (Narakasura and his Asuric forces). The Sattvic side in man (Devas) is overcome by Narakasura and man's faith (Aditi's earrings) is taken away by the latter. Sri Krishna (the Guru) riding upon Garuda (Yoga and self-control) destroys the lower ego of the seeker and restores his lost faith to him. The aspirant now adores Virtue and Righteousness (Lakshmi) and obtains all the auspicious qualities. But the rapid progress in virtue and success on the spiritual path endows him with a subtle higher egoism (Bali) which retards his further progress. This necessitates Divine

*Taken from Divine Life Magazine 1963

intervention again and the Lord's Grace disguised in the form of some experience (the Vamana form) lovingly removes the higher ego and thus blesses the Jiva. When the Lord's blessings come in disguise to the seeker, the latter's personal ego (Shukracharya) tries to prevent the seeker from receiving the divine guest. But the seeker should turn away from such promptings and surrender himself full to the inflow of Grace. Then he is accepted by the Lord as His own.

This is, in brief, the implication of the three-day celebration of the Naraka-Chaturdasi, Lakshmi-Puja and Bali-Padya, together observed as the Deepavali. May glory be to the ancient peers who sought to perpetuate the great truths through festivals and observances! All glory to the Omnipresent Lord Who inspired them to adopt this effective method. May you all celebrate this joyous Deepavali with all enthusiasm coupled with Sraddha or faith in the esoteric meaning of such festivities and, revising your outlook, try to lead a virtuous and godly life!

The giant intellect, Sankara, has laid down 'Sraddha' (faith) as one of the Shat-Sampats in the Sadhana-Chatushtaya which consists of Viveka (discrimination), Vairagya (dispassion), Shatsampat (sixfold virtues—Sama, Dama, Uparati, Titiksha, Sraddha and Samadhana), and Mumukshutva (intense longing for liberation). If everything could be understood by analysis and enquiry, then why did he stipulate 'Sraddha'? Without faith, an aspirant cannot practise even Sravana (hearing). If he has no faith in the scriptural injunctions and in the teacher, and considers that the teacher and the scripture are altogether in the wrong, how can he learn anything at all? Even in our daily life, faith is indispensable. Somebody cooks food and

we take that food. We do not doubt all the time that the cook might have put some poison in the food. We go to a doctor for medicine and take the medicine that he gives, without doubting that what he gives might be poison. In the spiritual realms, also, the same is the case. There have been sages who have plumbed the depth of Truth and given out their experiences. We repose faith in the words of persons who say that they have seen a far-off land. Similarly it is reasonable to repose faith in the words of those who have seen the Truth, because they say, "I have experienced the Truth, so you can also experience the Truth, provided you do what I have done in order to experience it. Experiment for yourself and then see whether you attain the same result or not." They give us the assurance that anyone can experience the Highest Truth by following the proper path.

Saint Tulasidas says that 'faith' is like the handmaid of a queen. If anyone wants to see the queen, he cannot be led by the servants of the palace to the innermost chamber in which the queen resides. Only till the gateway of the chamber can others lead, and thereafter one of the handmaids alone can take the person to the queen. All our reasoning, theoretical knowledge, etc. will take us only up to a certain stage. Beyond that they cannot help us, but only faith can help us in attaining the Supreme Experience. Faith is necessary for all aspirants, be they Raja Yogins, Jnana Yogins or aspirants in the path of Devotion.

On this joyous occasion, I greet you all and wish you a very happy Deepavali. May God's choicest blessings be upon you all, for happiness here and salvation hereafter!

* * *

PRAYER FOR DEPARTED SOULS: ITS PURPOSE AND PREREQUISITES

(Sri Swami Krishnananda)

Our salutations, adorations and prostrations to all those who have gone ahead of us, who have gained more experience and who are before us as ideal beacon lights in life. Today we offer our adorations to all those who are not visible to our physical eyes, but who lived on this earth-plane and who now experience a different state of consciousness. We offer our gratitude to all those who have gone before us and shown us the path.

By the remembrance of all souls, we mean the remembrance of everything that is created. It does not necessarily mean those who exist in a preta condition, in the astral body; those who have abandoned their physical body and who have taken another physical body also receive our prayers. Those who exist in Swarga-loka receive our prayers, those who live in Gandharva-loka, and all those who experience pain and suffering also receive our prayers. Our prayers reach up to Brahma-loka and the Surya-mandala, because our prayers are the expressions of our soul-consciousness.

We know there are various kinds of human beings. Similarly, there are various kinds of departed souls. Some people feel that it is very difficult to understand how the efforts of a person in

this world can influence the conditions and experiences of a person in the other world. This doubt arises on account of lack of understanding and lack of knowledge. We must know that the universe is an organic whole. It is not dead matter. It is vibrating with energy, life and consciousness. The universe is one whole. If anything happens to any part of my body, the whole body feels it. So is the case with everything in this universe. Every atom of this universe is connected with every other atom in this universe. Planes are only relative; they are not absolute values. They are valid only to individuals. Hence, an act or a thought or a feeling which originates at any point in the universe shall influence others also with that degree of intensity with which it is generated. If the prayer is intense, it will be felt there in a corresponding degree of intensity.

The act of sraddha is an example. When we offer foodstuff or other articles which are all used in the name of the departed soul, we mean they should be received by the person 'there'. In this world of materialism, people who have no belief in the higher values doubt the validity of this act. How does a physical act in this world influence a subtle body that is in another world?

This may be explained by a modern analogy. Take, for example, telegraphic conveyance of money. If a person wants to send a money order, he just pays the required amount to the post office in his own town and wishes that this amount should be received by the proper person at some other distant place. Now, that same money is not received by the other person. It is here itself. The post office in the other town receives the intelligence of the sender's wish. Only the feeling, the understanding, is conveyed, and that works wonders. The intelligence causes a corresponding action to take place there, and the person receives the amount at that distant place.

The same is the case with sraddha. It is the symbol of an internal feeling, of a bhava. Sraddha is something more than mechanical action. It is an act of prayer with bhava and feeling. We must not underrate our thoughts and feelings. Our thoughts are omnipotent. Every thought will fructify, today or tomorrow, in this form or another form. When we do charity in the name of a departed soul, this intelligence is conveyed to that person through the planes of consciousness. The pitris receive there what we give here, because we transmit an intelligence to those who are in charge of the person concerned that such and such a thing should be given to the person there. That great selfless act of sacrifice in the name of the departed soul gives wonderful benefit to him. This is possible on account of the unity of the universe, because of the omnipotence of God, because He is the Sovereign of the

universe, because He is the dispenser of justice with His Supreme Wisdom.

Just as there are various kinds of men, there are various kinds of departed souls, so various prayers of different intensities are offered. All human beings are not in the same stage of evolution. We have 'animal men'—those who have human bodies but animal qualities. Then we have men superior to them, ordinary men, who are not bad, but are not good either. That is the second stage. Thirdly, we have good men; they are virtuous. Superior to them we have saintly men who are not merely good; they have started to unfold the divine consciousness. Lastly, we have divine men or Godmen. These various kinds of people reach different conditions and have different experiences when they leave the physical body. Of course, those who are Self-realised are not in need of our prayers. They themselves are very powerful. Their Self-experience and knowledge are so powerful, so great and so valuable, that they will help themselves. But all are not saints; all are not God-men. Those who have not reached this stage require the help of others.

WEEP NOT FOR THE DEAD

We must remember that the pains which are experienced by departed souls are intensified by the sufferings and the grief expressed by those who are on earth. The scriptures emphatically say that, after the death of a person, no teardrop of grief from anybody's eyes

should fall to the ground. It does not in any way help the departed soul. On the other hand, even a soul which is about to enter heaven will be brought back if his people are crying here. No one should, therefore, weep or cry, but everyone must pray for the peace of the departed soul. The person who has left the body can be given whatever he needs from here. Study of scriptures is a great help; offering of prayers, performing havanas and doing charitable deeds, and even contemplation on God for his sake—all these are of great use. When a person meditates on God for the sake of the peace of the departed soul, it is said that it will be enabled to even attain moksha. The knowledge of the Guru is powerful enough to enter the heart of the disciple to dispel his ignorance; even so is the relation between the person existing here and the departed soul. For the sake of the departed soul we can meditate. It is possible to send our powerful currents of concentration and meditation to enable it to reach higher states of consciousness. For this sake, we must bear in mind that we are part and parcel of the universe, even as the departed souls are; and there is not much difference between the person who exists in a physical body and one who exists in an astral or some other kind of body.

GLORY OF PRAYER FOR ALL SOULS

Our prayers are capable of producing an effect immediately. Our prayers are expressions of soul-

consciousness. The prayers should be absolutely selfless. It is necessary that the idea of personal relationship should be removed when such prayers are offered. When such relationship is kept up, the prayer becomes slightly tinged with selfishness and loses its value. We must offer prayers for all souls with an impartial attitude. Only then will they be extremely powerful and bring the desired result. We offer prayers not because we want anything in return for the prayers, but because we wish to radiate peace in the universe. When collective sadhana is done, when all people sit together and pray for the sake of the departed souls, it brings peace to everyone in this world, even the person who has departed and taken birth again—in fact, all living people will be benefited. Everyone's life will become peaceful and everyone will lead a happy life on account of our charitable acts. It is really praying for the peace of the whole universe.

This offering of prayers is our attempt to bring peace to the universe and to realise in our practical life the oneness that is at the background of all phenomena. We are all one, whether we are in the physical body or astral body; each should be grateful to the other; each should pray for the other; each should wish the good and happiness of the other, so that the whole universe will be a heaven of peace, a resting place of divine consciousness.

* * *

SHAKTI IS VIDYA MAYA*

(H.H. Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj)

Parashakti or Devi or Maheshvari is the Divine Shakti or Power of the Supreme Being. The Supreme Lord is represented as Siva, and His power is represented as His Consort—Shakti, Durga or Kali. Mother Durga is the energy-aspect of the Lord. Without Durga, Siva has no expression; and without Siva, Durga has no existence. Siva is the Soul of Durga and She is identical with Him. Lord Siva is the silent witness, He is motionless and absolutely changeless, and He is not affected by the cosmic play of Durga Who does everything.

Siva is omnipotent, imperishable, non-active and is Pure Consciousness. Shakti is dynamic. The power or active aspect of the immanent God is Shakti, and She is the embodiment of power.

Siva and Shakti are related as Prakasa and Vimarsa. Shakti or Vimarsa is the power that is latent in the Pure Consciousness. Vimarsa gives rise to the world of distinctions or, in other words, Shakti is the very possibility of the Absolute's appearing as the many, of God's causing this universe. God creates this world through Srishti-Shakti (Creative power), preserves through Sthiti-Shakti (Preservative power) and destroys through Samhara-Shakti (Dissolutive power). There is no difference between God and His Shakti, just as there is no difference between fire and its burning power. Shakti is

inherent in God. Just as you cannot separate heat from fire, so also you cannot separate Shakti from God, the possessor of Shakti. Shakti is Brahman Itself. Siva and Shakti are one, and they are inseparable. Worship of Durga or Parvati or Kali is worship of Lord Siva.

Matter, Energy and Spirit: Mother Parvati is the creative power of the Absolute and She is symbolised as Cosmic energy. Energy is the physical ultimate of all forms of matter and the sustaining force of the spirit. Energy and spirit are inseparable and they are essentially one. Matter is reducible to energy. The Prasnopanishad says that Rayi and Prana, matter and energy, constitute the whole of creation. Matter is the outward index of the inward Power that is expressed by God. The Power that originates and sustains the universe is not the Jada Shakti or the electrical energy which is the ultimate reality of the scientists, but Chaitanya Shakti, the Power of the immutable Consciousness of Brahman. In fact, it is not a power which is of Brahman, but a Power which is Brahman.

The Divine Mother: Shakti may be termed as that by which we live and have our being in this universe. In this world, all the wants of the child are provided by the mother. The child's growth, development and sustenance are looked

*Taken from Divine Life Magazine 1963

after by the mother. Even so all the necessities of life and its activities in this world and the energy needed for it, all depend upon Shakti or the Universal Mother. The human mother is a manifestation of the Universal Mother. All women are the embryonic forms of the Divine Mother.

You are more free with your mother than with anybody else. You open your heart more freely to your mother than even to your father. There is no god greater than the mother. It is the mother who protects you, nourishes you, consoles you, cheers you and nurses you. She is your first Guru. The first syllable which almost every quadruped or human being utters is the beloved name of the mother—Ma. She sacrifices her all for the sake of her children.

A child is more familiar with the mother than the father, because the former is very kind, loving, tender, affectionate and looks to the wants of the child. Whenever the child wants anything, it runs with outstretched hands to the mother, rather than to the father. If she hears the cry of the child, she leaves her domestic work and runs immediately to attend to the child. In the spiritual field, also, the aspirant or the devotee (the spiritual child) has more intimate relationship with Mother Durga than with the Father Siva. Lord Siva is quite indifferent to the external world. He is a Tyagi and a Virakta. He wears the garland of skulls of His devotees, rubs the whole body with Vibhuti or holy ashes and remains in the crematorium

in an intoxicated state. He is absorbed in contemplation of the Self, and remains in a state of Nirvikalpa Samadhi. He has handed over the power of attorney, so to say, to His consort Sri Durga. It is Mother Durga who looks after the affairs of the world. Lord Siva gazes at Durga, His Shakti, and by virtue of this fact, She is able to engage Herself in creation, preservation and destruction.

Durga-Lakshmi-Sarasvati: The Divine Mother manifests everywhere in triple form and is endowed with the three Gunas, viz., Sattva, Rajas and Tamas. She manifests as Will or Ichha-Shakti, Action or Kriya-Shakti and Knowledge or Jnana-Shakti. She is Brahma-Shakti (Sarasvati) in conjunction with Brahma, Vishnu-Shakti (Lakshmi) in conjunction with Lord Vishnu, Siva-Shakti (Mahakali or Durga) in conjunction with Lord Siva. Sarasvati is cosmic intelligence, cosmic consciousness, cosmic knowledge. Lakshmi does not mean mere material wealth like gold, cattle, etc. All kinds of prosperity, glory, magnificence, joy, exaltation or greatness come under the sway of Lakshmi. Appayya Dikshita calls even final liberation as Moksha-Samrajya-Lakshmi. Mahakali is the transformative power of Divinity, the power that dissolves multiplicity in unity. The Devi assumes many aspects according to the tasks to be performed by Her—sometimes, sweet and tender; and at other times, terrible and devouring. But, She is always kind and gracious to Her devotees. Arjuna, the Pandava hero,

worshipped the Goddess before starting the fight against the evil-minded Kauravas. Sri Rama worshipped Durga at the time of the fight with Ravana, to invoke Her aid in the war. The battle was won through Her grace.

The Navaratri: During the Navaratri or the Nine-Nights, the whole of India adores the Mother and worships Her with great devotion. Dussera, Durga Puja and Navaratri are one and the same. On the first three nights, Durga or the Destructive Aspect of the Mother is worshipped. On the succeeding three nights, it is the Creative Aspect or Lakshmi that is adored. And on the last three nights, the Knowledge-Aspect or Sarasvati is invoked. The tenth is the Vijaya Dasami Day or the Day of Victory over evil forces.

There is a special significance in this arrangement. When Sri Devi is worshipped by a devotee in this order, as Durga, She destroys the evil propensities that lurk in the mind. Then as Lakshmi, She implants therein the Daivi Sampat or the divine qualities conducive to spiritual unfoldment. And lastly, as Sarasvati, She bestows true Knowledge on the devotee. The tenth day commemorates the victory of knowledge over nescience, goodness over evil. It is the day on which children are usually admitted into schools. Aspirants are initiated on this day. On this memorable Vijaya Dashami Day, all tradesmen, such as the carpenter, the mason, the tailor, the tinsmith, the artist, the

songster, the typist and all technical workers do Puja (worship) to their instruments and implements. This worship is named Ayudha-Puja. They behold and recognise the Shakti or power behind these instruments, and worship the Devi for their success, prosperity and peace.

Worship of Devi or the Universal Mother brings not only prosperity, but liberation from all bondage. It leads to the attainment of Knowledge of the Self. The story of the Kena Upanishad, known as Yakshopakhyaana, supports this view. Uma taught the Truth to the Devas.

For the sake of continuance of Her Divine Play here, She Herself, as Avidya-Maya, has veiled the Truth from you and bound you to this Samsara. When She is propitiated through the practice of sincere devotion and unconditional self-surrender, She, as Vidya-Maya, removes the veil and enables you to perceive the Truth. No one can free himself from the thralldom of mind and matter without Mother's grace. The fetters of Maya are too hard to break. If you worship Her as the great Mother, you can very easily go beyond Prakriti through Her benign grace and blessings. She will remove all obstacles in the path and lead you safely into the illimitable domain of eternal bliss, and make you absolutely free.

May Parashakti Devi, the Universal Mother, bless you all with wisdom, peace and immortal bliss!

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WHAT MAKES SWAMI CHIDANANDA SO SPECIAL!

(Sri Swami Paramanandaji Saraswati)

In Ananda Kutir, even a few of the important workers who are in charge of the Divine Life Society, Forest University and other major institutions, do not mix with others much. Sri Swami Sivananandaji Maharaj has started hundreds of sections of work to suit the taste and temperament of various types of Sadhakas; and the workers or inmates are too busy to move closely with one another. The real beauty in the method of work of Sri Gurudev is that hundreds of aspirants can come and stay in the Ashram for any period, and work in any of the departments without a hitch or misunderstanding. All the departments are inter-dependent and yet people can work independently to their capacity without any contact with anybody and maintain beautifully the peace of the Ashram and evolve nicely in Sadhana of their own choice or collective Sadhana, the daily routine of the Ashram.

Only a person with great spiritual powers can run this mighty organisation with such a strange method and policy. What a dynamic personality! Sri Gurudev is able to watch the moods and temperaments of the people, give them suitable work and watch the progress in all sections. Thus he has made the Divine Mission as a powerful society of members devoted to the spiritual path, who work for the peace and prosperity of the whole world in a mysterious manner

and satisfactorily devote their time to their own personal evolution.

This is the main reason why the inmates are not able to know the merits of each other fully. There is no chance for any to freely mix and move with others. All are extremely busy in their own field of service, as directed by Gurudev. Hence the 200 workers in the Ashram and the numerous visitors do not know Sri Swami Chidanandaji well. Many have no occasion to see him also for days and months. But I was very anxious to know how Swami Chidanandaji has become the most beloved disciple of Swami Sivanandaji and has been chosen for the most important offices as the General Secretary of the Divine Life Society and the Vice Chancellor of the Forest University.

The Master teaches his lessons and gives his advice for all persons in a uniform manner, takes great care of their health and spiritual progress, loves all and encourages them in any field that assures the individual's spiritual evolution. He ignores the faults and defects in others and gives better chances for them to grow. I am sure that Gurudev has not given any special Magic Pill or secret initiation to Sri Swami Chidanandaji that enabled him to become the foremost among the

thousands of disciples, Brahmacharis and Sannyasis.

The man who delivers fiery lectures ignores selfless service and cares not to give a cup of water to a dying person. The name of the Lord in Japa and Kirtan, produces headache for the selfless Karma Yogi. A Vedantin is ashamed to practise a few Asanas and Pranyamas for the maintenance of a high standard of health or to wear a Japa Mala around the neck. Persons who have read much in philosophy consider Bhaktas as of the inferior type. A man of Sadhana never cares for the society and the suffering humanity. Those who are devoted to any of these, never think of the welfare of Gurudev or the progress of the Divine Mission. Sri Swami Sivanandaji is a hard task master. He says that he is of the aggressive type to reform people. He wants that the aspirants should become adepts in all the above lines and also to dance and stage a play during spiritual conferences. Among thousands who have come in close contact with Gurudev, it is only Sri Swami Chidanandaji who has so far given perfect satisfaction to Gurudev by his sincere service in all the sections. So this is the main reason why Sri Swami Chidanandaji has become the central figure in the Ashram.

I have seen him feeding and serving cats, dogs and monkeys. Even when the Ashram is in a financial crisis he spends a lot in treating a sickly dog with costly injections. When hundreds of letters are waiting for reply, he will be giving Upadesha to boys and girls of the locality and entertaining them with sweets,

biscuits and fruits. Even when he fails to attend to his personal affair, he will be spending hours in satisfying a sick person or in admiring an insect or a lovely flower. In the midst of such distracting routine of work, he can give fiery lectures on any subject in the most convincing and impressive manner, in any language, sing melodious Kirtans and transform even atheists and will not leave a person until the doubts are completely cleared and problems solved.

In his Kutir I have seen the pictures of Lord Jesus, Lord Buddha, Sankara and others besides Swami Sivanandaji's. A close observation reveals that he has tremendous devotion to the Lotus Feet of the Master. The master's word is LAW for him. Even for little things, he needs the Master's orders. It is quite natural... some of the inmates desire to plunge themselves in deep Sadhana in seclusion to obtain psychic powers, or to obtain name and fame through press and platform, to study scriptures for delivering powerful speeches or to become the secretary of the Society by controlling all the important sections of work. Some may plan to tour different parts of the land for collecting money from Sri Swami Sivanandaji's disciples or to go on pilgrimage to Kailash or Badrinath or secretly work and gather necessary materials for starting a new Ashram. Some personal desires of the aspirants prevent the devotees from implicitly following the teachings of and deriving maximum spiritual benefit from the Master. But I find Sri Swami Chidanandaji never entertained such desires. He has no plan or scheme. He leads the life of a saint by silently

following the teachings of the Master. Another striking point I have noticed is that he carries out all the orders of the Master, while we, many of the inmates of the Ashram, would accept and do the work only if we have a liking for the work.

Usually secretaries of all organisations, to maintain order, discipline, and carry out the normal work satisfactorily, sometimes have occasions to displease the Founder or the President, and in the Divine Life Society chances were many. Swami Chidanandaji, who has entirely depended on the Grace of the Master, has always carried out the orders of the Master to the letter and awaited his instructions on all matters or enjoyed fully by witnessing the Lila of Master and the grace that worked miracles and wonder. This Bhavana has helped him to

work in the Divine Life Society in a disinterested manner, to the perfect satisfaction of Gurudev and all the inmates of the Ashram and visitors. That is why he is the most beloved disciple of Gurudev.

I only feel that if I had even a thousandth part of Swami Chidanandaji's knowledge, capacity and devotion to the Lotus Feet of the Master, for all the years I have spent in close touch of the Master, I would have attained the position of the famous Trotakacharya. In order to share these secrets with all and to let Sadhakas and devotees of Gurudev all over the world know more about the glorious life and work of Sri Swami Chidanandaji that these Birthday celebrations were arranged. Glory to Gurudev and His worthy disciple, the ideal model for all seekers after Truth!

BEHOLD THE COSMIC PRESENCE

All creatures have come out of God. They go back to Him alone during dissolution. The whole world is the body of the Lord. How can you hurt or dislike another man or any creature on the surface of the earth when you have taken God as the object of adoration and love? How can you be selfish? Can you eat all mangoes of your garden yourself alone?

When you do not consider another's pain your own, you have no compassion or mercy. You have no complacency (Mudita). Therefore you do not rejoice at another's virtue. You have no contentment. There is burning desire in your heart. You do not consider another's happiness as your own. Therefore, you are uneasy. You have no indifference to the vicious actions of the wicked people. Therefore you are troubled. There is nothing but your own self in this universe. All bodies are yours. All hands are yours. This whole world is your body. All names and forms are yours. Do not separate yourself from the world. Unite. Expand. Mix. Feel oneness and unity. You will enjoy boundless joy and illimitable bliss.

—Swami Sivananda

WORSHIP THE MOTHER DIVINE, O MAN!*

(Sri Swami Chidananda)

I bow to you, Beloved Mother of the Universe! Thou art the origin of all existence! Thy Power makes me to live, to move, and to act in this world of diverse names and forms. Thou art everything, and I am nothing; I am but a machine, and Thou the One that moves it. All powers in this universe are Thy powers alone, O Thou Glorious Power of powers! Blessed Mother, my Beloved Mother, O Thou Parashakti! Thou the Sarva Shakti Swarupini, the Divine Mother of this universe!

This month is the auspicious month of our national adoration of the Divine as the Great Goddess, the Mother Shakti. During the third week of this month, countless thousands of the people of this land will turn their thoughts, full of reverence and love, to the Feet of Bhagavati, Mahadevi, the Great Goddess. From the snow-capped northern mountains to the wave-lashed southern Cape, and across the subcontinent, from East to West, everywhere people will gather together to celebrate the nine nights of devotional worship of the Mother Divine.

The worship of Her transcendental divine aspect as Mahakali, or Durga, Mahalakshmi and Mahasaraswati is laid down in the holy scriptures. But the Divine Mother is immanent also. You need to worship Her in this latter aspect as well. Else, thy worship would remain

incomplete. True worship is unbroken and continuous. For, life means worship. Living is worshipping. To live is to continuously adore the Divine, moment by moment, day by day, always through life.

He worships truly who sees the Mother in all, who sees everywhere Her Glory. Her Power manifest and expressed through all forms and movements of life upon earth. The entire universe, this world, all life and movement upon it, are the marvellous play of the Mother's indescribable Power.

The modern scientist asserts that the entire universe is but the play of Energy. But then, degrees of manifestation of this universal energy vary vastly. This universal energy is markedly manifest through certain phenomena and dormant and unmanifest elsewhere. We see it gloriously dynamic in the stormy wind, in the lashing rain, in roaring rivers, and in blazing fire. We see the restless and rushing Energy in the roaring ocean, in the blasting volcano, in the blinding flash of shattering lightning, in stream, in electricity and in atomic fission. These are some of the special manifestations of that universal energy.

Even as there are these special manifestations of this gross material energy, so too are there the special

*Taken from Divine Life Magazine 1963

manifestations of the subtle, spiritual, divine energy or Divya Shakti, and it is through the latter that Her Dynamism is manifest gloriously, and in a sublime way. Through these shall you worship the Divine Mother, O Man!

Your earthly mother, the one who has given, birth to you, nourished you, protected you, loved and reared you,—behold her as the veritable manifestation of the Divine Mother of the universe. O Man, revere thy mother! Serve her. Deify her. Worship her. To care for her and to protect and maintain her is your duty. The son who serves his mother with devotion is the best worshipper of Goddess Mahalakshmi.

One who marries and takes a wife to enter the life of a householder should verily look upon his wife as a manifestation of Devi Herself. For, she who is mother to his children is indeed the presiding goddess of the household. She is Grihalakshmi. The wife should be regarded with love and honour. Then she brings blessedness to the home. Such an ideal householder is a true worshipper of the Divine Mother; She will smile upon him, and rain joy and blessedness upon all his household.

The Divine Mother is also most gloriously manifest as the Ideal of Indian womanhood so wondrously exemplified in the lives of Anasuya, Sita, Savitri, Damayanti, Maitreyi, Gargi and the like. Let the women of modern India worship the Divine Mother by striving to live up to this lofty ideal of Indian womanhood. Thus would the Indian society be purified, regenerated and raised to high levels of enduring character and inspired

living. For, in feminine virtue lies the very life and permanence of any civilization and culture.

The motherland is also a glorious expression of the Divine Mother. To sacrifice everything and if need arises to lay down one's very life bravely and cheerfully for the sake of the Mother Bharatavarsha is verily the lofty worship of Goddess Parashakti. India is not only her outer geography but also her great and glorious inner culture. Dharma and Adhyatmika-Jivana, the ethical way of life and the spiritual ideal, constitute the vital inner India. To dedicate yourself to the revival and regeneration of the great Bharatiya Samskriti constitutes an inspired worship of the Mother Divine.

The all-auspicious Mother sustains the universal process. You see Her manifest as learning and knowledge, as fertility in the fields lush with harvests, as gold and money, and as sublime virtue and goodness. She is manifest as health and strength of the body, as fearlessness in the courageous heart, and as purity and modesty in character. She is manifest as charity in the giving hand and as determination in resolute mind. Therefore, O Man, worship Her in all these auspicious aspects. Adore Her in Her manifold manifestations. Keep thy sacred body-temple healthy and strong. Scrupulously avoid all debilitating and devitalising vices. Give up smoking, drinking and over-indulgence of any kind. Squander not wealth. Waste not money. Earn with honesty; save with diligence; give in charity. Spend wealth wisely and utilise it well.

Let neither the land lie fallow nor the plough idle. Farm diligently; grow more food in every way. The Divine Mother will smile upon you as prosperity and plenty. Encourage learning. Banish illiteracy. Help students in education. Propagate sanitation and hygiene. Where there is dirt and filth there the Mother is disregarded; and, you irreverence her. Cleanliness is close to godliness. Honour the Divine Mother by striving to keep thyself, thy dwelling and all thy environment, scrupulously clean. Propitiate the Mother and make Her manifest in thy clean life.

Practise, preach and spread the good life of lofty virtue. Infuse courage and fearlessness in all beings. Fight corruption. Root out vice. Eradicate evil, individual; and collective. Let auspiciousness and purity, truth and righteousness, reign supreme in our national life. Thus indeed should you grandly worship the Immanence Divine,

the Blessed Mother in Her many manifestations.

This is how the Divine Mother needs to be worshipped today. Confine not Her worship to nine nights only, nor to Her three supra-cosmic divine Forms alone. Recognise Her in all things that She has become, and make worship pervade thy life. Then alone will thou be a true child of the Divine Mother, and a true worshipper of Her Glorious Divinity. Such worship will make your life sublime. Thus, O Man, do thou worship the Divine Mother. Blessedness be thine. May you abide in Her forever!

May you all work ceaselessly to spread this new concept of Mother worship! May you all strive to bring unto everyone this new vision of Mother worship so that the light of this new vision may illumine the life-stream of India today, and bring about its total resurgence! Glory be unto the Mother Divine!

GITA SHOWS THE WAY

Gita lays down that the purpose of man's life here is to attain Self-realisation. The Lord does not cut asunder Sannyasa and life-in-the-world, as some scriptures that prevailed before the Gita had done. Observe the conditions of the Varnas and the Ashramas today; and you will readily admit the Omniscience of the Lord and His foreknowledge of the chaos that would envelop humanity. The Lord, therefore, enjoined Karma Yoga upon all. "Fill your mind with thoughts of Me; be devoted to Me; do My will; surrender yourself unto Me; you will soon reach Me": that was in short the burden of His Song. The Karma Yoga of the Bhagavad Gita is truly the Yoga of Synthesis. This Yoga is the most suitable one for the Kali age. It helps the integral development of the human personality. It leaves no loop holes for Mayaic forces to enter as it fills every part of man with godliness.

—Swami Sivananda

An Anecdote:

SECRET OF UNSWERVING RIGHTEOUSNESS

(H.H. Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj)

Life constantly imparts valuable lessons to every man. She instructs you every moment of your existence here on earth. But you are so heedless that you forget the lesson at once. But without disgust She, Mother Prakriti, again and again gives fresh lessons in the form of life's experience. She is a tireless teacher and if only you will carefully retain the memory of your earlier experiences then you will never commit a mistake or stray away from the correct path. If you treasure these lessons and cherish the memory of the past experiences then you become wise and remain safe in your wisdom and in your greatness.

Dara was a humble shepherd in the land of Persia. He was of low birth and was extremely poor, but endowed with deep wisdom and possessed a shrewd insight into and great understanding of the nature of men and things. The Shah of Persia, coming to know of Dara's wisdom and insight, took him into his services where Dara soon rose to the highest position of the Shah's Chief Councillor and trusted Prime Minister. This made the other nobles very jealous of Dara and they eagerly awaited a proper opportunity of bringing disgrace upon Dara and pulling him down from the high status he occupied.

The Shah had unlimited confidence in Dara and once he sent Dara as Governor-designate of one of the most

important provinces of his great kingdom. In his absence the hostile and jealous nobles reported many unfavourable things about Dara to the Shah. They accused Dara of corruption and told the Shah that Dara had amassed great riches by misappropriating Royal revenues and always took this ill-gotten treasure with him closely secured in a chest. Wherever he went, this chest followed him on camel's back and he opened it only at night within the privacy of his own tent. He never once parted with the chest nor ever opened it in public. This was the grave charge.

The noble Shah trusted Dara implicitly, the nobles insisted upon Dara being examined and exposed. At last, the Shah one day paid a surprise visit to Dara and entering Dara's tent at night said, "O Dara, my faithful friend, pray, show to me the contents of that chest. I have a great curiosity to see inside." Though he was reluctant, yet Dara obeyed the royal command and before all, slowly unlocked the chest, raised the lid and opened it full. And lo! To the astonished gaze of the onlookers was revealed an old shepherd's cloak of plain simple cloth, brown with dust and tattered with age. Except this there was naught else inside the chest, no gem, no gold, no silver or brass, not even a single copper.

The mystified Shah directed inquiring eyes at the silent Dara and the latter spoke and said, "Royal Shah, thou knowest now what I guarded closely all these years. This shepherd's garment I wore in those days before you found and favoured me with thy royal kindness. But position, prestige and power are dangerous things for the unwary man. They raise one high and pull him down to the dust as well. Prosperity and plenty, authority and respect turn a man's head and take him away from the straight path. He is safe who constantly remembers who he was before his fortune smiled upon him and God graced him. This alone reminds him what he really is and keeps him humble, true and righteous. Therefore, I have retained this old cloak of mine to remind me of my former life. I look at it every night lest I forget it in the intoxication of my present position and glory. This makes me ever humble, true and simple. O Royal Master, though, outwardly Dara is thy chief councillor and a great Governor by

thy favour yet even to this day in reality he is the same simple shepherd, humble, poor and incorruptible. And his one constant prayer to the Lord, his Divine Master, is that he may continue to be so."

Aspirants and seekers, take this great lesson from the sagely Dara. Never forget what you really are in your heart of hearts. Let not external changes and vicissitudes of fickle fortune turn your head and make you plunge into delusion and unrighteousness. Cherish the lessons of life carefully even as Dara treasured his humble cloak. Remember Life's lesson every day and thus remain unaffected by external passing phenomena. Even as Dara constantly remembered his shepherd origin ever bear in mind your own true Atmic origin. Do not be overcome by the influence of impermanent secular Abhimana. May the Lord bless you with an ever-alive Vichara and the constant awareness of your native Atmic glory.

THE EFFECTS OF EVIL COMPANY

Just as a nursery is to be well-fenced in the beginning, as a measure in the protection of it against cows, and other animals, so also a neophyte should shield himself against all foreign evil influences. Otherwise ruination will result. The company of those who speak lies, commit adultery, cheat, indulge in double-dealing, are greedy, love idle talks and backbiting, have no faith in God and in the scriptures, should be strictly avoided. The effects of evil company are highly disastrous. By contact with such a company, the mind gets filled with bad ideas. Undesirable persons easily shake your faith and belief. Have full faith in your spiritual teacher and continue your spiritual practice with zeal and enthusiasm.

—*Swami Sivananda*

TRUE KNOWLEDGE

(Sri Swami Atmaswarupananda)

In one of his best known songs, Gurudev Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj instructs us: “Enquire, Who am I? Know thyself and be free.” Ramana Maharshi said that no matter what other yoga we follow, ultimately we are going to have to enquire, Who am I?

Why is that? Because the scriptures declare that our fundamental error is wrong identification. Thus, our fundamental sadhana has to be, one way or another, a correction of that error. The traditional way to approach this is to negate all the false ideas we have accumulated until we end up with our original Self—which has always been here and now, but is being hidden by layer after layer of erroneous thinking.

Ultimately, through the path of neti, neti, not this, not this, we negate all the things that we think we are—body, mind, emotions, experiences. They are not what we are, because we know them. They are objects to us, and we cannot be an object to ourselves. Finally, we come to a point where we have negated everything. Gurudev says: “Surrender everything unto the Lord. Place your ego at His feet and be at ease.” He is suggesting that at that point we have done everything we can do. Now the rest is up to the Lord.

At that point, what have we done? We have surrendered everything about

ourselves to the Lord. If we are a devotee, we offer it all to Him. If we follow the path of the intellect, we acknowledge that everything belongs to Him. We keep nothing for ourselves. There is only one thing left and that is the surrenderer. And we place the surrenderer at His feet, because the surrenderer cannot surrender itself. There is still something left surrendering, so we simply let it go. In other words, we place our ego at His feet.

What then is left? Nothing is left except an awareness of that nothingness. What is it that knows that emptiness? That the mind can never give an answer for, unless it is a simple, I know it. But we have gone beyond anything that the mind can conceive of.

It is there, beyond anything that the mind can conceive of, that we are meant to rest. Nisaragatta Maharaj said, “I take my stand beyond consciousness.” Nothing can touch us in that place. We know that it is prior to all creation. Everything has come from there. Nothing in this world has any meaning without reference to that truth that is beyond all meaning. It simply is—eternally unknowable and yet the source of everything. Retaining that knowledge is true knowledge. It is the basis of all knowledge. It is.

* * *

An Anecdote:

DOSAI SANGAM

(H.H. Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj)

United we stand; divided we fall. Union is strength. A Sangam or league is necessary for building up of a nation. An association is essential for propagating religious, social, industrial, economical and political ideas and cultural development. It must be properly organised by earnest selfless workers. Then only will the Sangam be stable.

The word Sangam means association. Dosai is a kind of round cake prepared in South India for the morning and evening Tiffin. It is very nutritious and very delicious, too. Bengalis, Punjabis, Hindustanis and even Europeans like it. It is made up of the paste of black gram and rice. Sufficient water is added. It is poured on to the frying pan and then turned with a flat-faced spoon. The size is that of an ordinary bread that is eaten in Northern India. It is eaten with some chutnie. When the paste is poured over the pan it produces the sound of "soyee". Hence the significant name "Dosai".

Dosai was invented in 400 B.C. by a poor Brahmin named Ramakrishna Iyer in Madhura. One day there was neither rice nor dhal in his house. He had some rice flour only. He was very hungry. He made a thin paste of the flour, poured it over a frying pan and made some cakes. But he did not relish it as it was hard. Necessity is the mother of invention. Man invents several things to satisfy his

palate. On the second day he added some flour of black gram. Then the cake was soft and delicious. He now opened a small shop and sold these cakes to the people. As this was something new, people came from all quarters to buy these cakes. He made much money and became a very rich man. He opened several shops in the neighbouring districts. Thereupon others also learnt the recipe of this famous dosai and opened shops all over South India. They formed a union called the 'Dosai Sangam'. Now the Dosai Sangam has centres all over the world.

Sangam is the place where two rivers meet. There is the Sangam or Triveni at Prayag (Allahabad). The Ganga and the Jamuna meet here. This is the most sacred spot. Kumbha Mela is held here once in twelve years. There is a Sangam in this body of ours, also. It is the Sahasrara Chakra, the thousand-petalled lotus at the crown of the head. Here the Kundalini Sakti meets Her consort, Lord Siva, when the Yogin is in Nirvikalpa Samadhi. The Yogin drinks the nectar of immortality and attains eternal bliss. He is freed from the round of birth and death. The nectar of immortality is the real Dosai of dosais.

The rice paste of Prana is mixed or united with the black gram paste of Apana and fried in the fire of Yoga during

meditation. The Yogin eats this real celestial or divine Dosai and remains ever blissful and crosses over the bridge of death. Jnana Deva ate this divine Dosai only.

A Vedantin or Jnana Yogin mixes the rice paste of Viveka (discrimination) with the black gram paste of Vairagya, Shad-Sampat (six virtues) and Mumukshutva (strong yearning for liberation), fries it in the fire of wisdom and tastes the immortalising Dosai of Brahma Jnana. Sankara and Dattatreya ate this Dosai only.

A Bhakti Yogin makes a rice paste of Sravana, Kirtan, etc. He adds nine things (practises the Navavidha

Bhakti—nine modes of devotion) in preparing his celestial Dosai. This dosai is very delicious and aromatic. It is very pleasing to Lord Hari. Mira, Ramdas, Tukaram and Tulsidas ate this dosai only. Rishi Narada keeps this Dosai in his pocket when he journeys through the three worlds and has it for his breakfast and lunch.

O man! Enough, enough of this Dosai of rice paste and black gram paste. You have taken this in abundance. Now taste the celestial Dosai of Bhava Samadhi, the divine Dosai of Brahma Jnana, the Yogic Dosai of Asamprajnata Samadhi.

THE THOUGHT OF THE DIVINE

Even if you think of the Lord or of Lord Vishnu or Siva, only once, even if for once you form a mental image of these all-pervading, omniscient deities, the Sattvic material of the mind will increase a bit. If you think of them crores of times, your mind will be filled with a large quantity of Sattva. Constant thinking of God thins out the mind and destroys the Vasanas and Sankalpas. Realise the great importance and value of thinking of the Divine.

You have the urge of hunger. There is food to appease the hunger. You have the urge of thirst. There is water to quench the thirst. There is the urge to be always happy. There must be something to satisfy this urge. This something is God, an embodiment of happiness. God, Perfection, Joy, are synonymous terms.

—*Swami Sivananda*

A PALACE OF DECEIT

(*Swami Ramarajyam*)

Once a king said to the most accomplished artisan of his kingdom, "Build a very beautiful palace for me. There shall be no shortage of funds. You will get as much as you ask for."

The artisan busied himself with the construction of the palace. While at work, it crossed his mind that he should use building materials of inferior quality but make the palace look beautiful externally. And that was what he did. The walls were raised with low-grade material. Outside they were plastered with fine cement. When the palace with hollow walls but glittering exterior finish was ready, the artisan presented himself before the king and said, "Your Majesty, the palace is ready."

The king went to inspect the palace. The palace looked very beautiful. He was

lavish in his praise for the artisan and said, "I am really pleased with you. I am thinking as to what I should give you in reward for your excellent work."

After a little while he said, "Alright, this palace itself is your reward."

The king went away. The artisan began to cry stealthily.

Why did he cry? That hollow and unstable palace was to be his lot. If you think ill of others, you yourself will fall victim to the disharmonious atmosphere, created by your ill will. If one builds a palace of deceit, he himself will be condemned to that.

Dear children, if ever the thought of wrongdoing occurs to you, think of the story of that artisan.

—Based on a story by Rabindranath Tagore

KILL LUST

Make the mind understand by repeated hammering and Vichar that all sexual pleasures are false, utterly worthless and extremely harmful.

Clearly think over how very illusory and full of pain it is. On no account should you listen to the promptings of impure mind. Place before the mind the glory and advantage of a life in the eternal and all-blissful Omniscient Atman. Lust deals a deadly blow to spiritual Sadhana. Kill this lust by diverse methods. Do not entertain thoughts of women.

—*Swami Sivananda*

CELEBRATION OF 98th BIRTHDAY OF MOST WORSHIPFUL SRI SWAMI CHIDANANDAJI MAHARAJ

It is the celebration of these Birthdays that makes you constantly dwell upon the thoughts and actions of the saints. You then get an impetus and stimulus to attain the Goal which they have reached.

—Sadgurudev Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj

The auspicious day of 98th Birth Anniversary of Most Worshipful Sri Swami Chidanandaji Maharaj was celebrated with great devoutness at the Headquarters Ashram on 24th September 2014. With Brahmamuhurta prayers and meditation, commenced the day's programme. Thereafter, H.H. Sri Swami Yogaswarupanandaji Maharaj and H.H. Sri Swami Atmaswarupanandaji Maharaj in their brief messages inspired the gathering to strive sincerely to follow the noble teachings of Worshipful Sri Swami Chidanandaji Maharaj. It was followed by Prabhat-pheri and Havan in Ashram Yajnasala for the peace and welfare of the world.

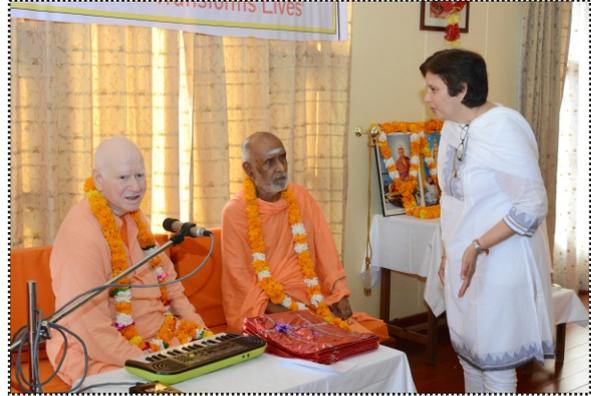
In the forenoon, a special worship was offered to the sacred Padukas of Sadgurudev Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj in the holy Samadhi Shrine. The Samadhi Shrine hall was packed with Brahmacharis, Sannyasins, Sadhakas and devotees who had assembled to pay their loving homage to Beloved Sri Swami Chidanandaji Maharaj. Soon after the worship, a brief Satsanga was organised which commenced with Jaya Ganesh prayers by H.H. Sri Swami Vimalanandaji Maharaj. Sri Swamiji Maharaj also delivered a brief talk on the glorious life of Param Pujya Sri Swami Chidanandaji Maharaj. Thereafter, mellifluous singing of favourite Bhajans of Pujya Sri Swami Chidanandaji Maharaj gave immense joy to one and all.

During the night Satsanga, H.H. Sri Swami Padmanabhanandaji Maharaj in his message quoting from various scriptures highlighted the all embracing love and boundless compassion of Worshipful Sri Swamiji Maharaj. H. H. Sri Swami Advaitanandaji Maharaj's talk centered upon the elevating teachings of Pujya Sri Swamiji Maharaj. One book of Sadgurudev and three booklets of Worshipful Sri Swami Chidanandaji Maharaj were also released to mark the sacred day. The Satsanga concluded with Arati and distribution of special Prasad.

May the abundant blessings of the Lord Almighty, Sadgurudev Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj and Most Worshipful Sri Swami Chidanandaji Maharaj be upon all. □ □ □

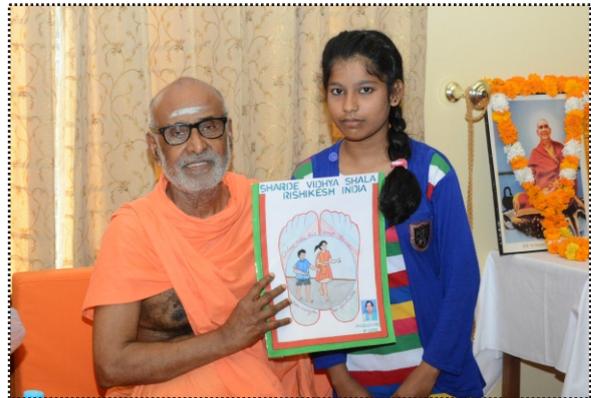
BAREFOOT BILLION PROJECT WORK LAUNCH AT THE HEADQUARTERS ASHRAM

Barefoot Billion Project is aimed at raising young people's awareness of the billion children across the world that are still living in poverty, many without education and shoes, combining this with art and poetry and giving the younger generation a voice. Philip Wells, a United Kingdom National Poet, walked 1000 miles barefoot across parts of the United Kingdom with this noble mission of raising people's awareness about global poverty amongst children. Children from over 79 countries participated in this world-wide project



by drawing around their bare feet, decorating one foot with art work and writing a poem or message of hope for the future on the other. The children of Sharda Vidya Shala (SVS), Rishikesh





were one of the three schools in India that participated in this project.

Sharda Vidya Shala is an after school programme for disadvantaged children in Rishikesh. It was started by Smt. Rajeshwari Mehtaji, Sri Anil Mehtaji and Sharda Mehtaji, London based devotees of the Ashram, in August 2008 with the blessings of Worshipful Sri Swami Chidanandaji Maharaj. Sharda Vidya Shala aims at inculcating cultural, moral, spiritual and ethical values in the children and nurturing them as confident, successful and independent global citizens. The students of SVS enthusiastically participated in the Barefoot Billion Project exhibiting their hidden talents.

At the humble request of Smt. Rajeshwari Mehtaji, a special Satsanga was organised at the Headquarters Ashram on 25th August 2014 to release the Barefoot Billion Project Work completed by the children of Sharda Vidya Shala. H.H. Sri Swami

Vimalanandaji Maharaj and H.H. Sri Swami Padmanabhanandaji Maharaj officially released the Barefoot Billion Project Work of the SVS children and blessed them with their inspiring words. This project work will be exhibited at Somerset House, a prestigious arts and cultural centre in London, England between September and December for the public to appreciate.

May the blessings of the Lord Almighty and Sadgurudev Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj be upon the children of Sharda Vidya Shala.

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SEVA THROUGH SIVANANDA HOME

By the profound Blessings of Gurudev Sri 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.

There was a real occasion for celebration this month. Two of the inward patients completed their course of Anti Tuberculosis Treatment. One of them was a young boy, who was brought from the Ashram Headquarters two years ago, in a desperate and sick condition with both his legs completely paralysed. After consultation of the Orthopedic Doctor and the needful investigations, he was diagnosed with TB of the spine. More than one year he had to keep strict bedrest, under medication, diet and the prescribed exercises. Gradually but slowly he improved, was able and allowed to sit up and he started using the sewing machine for small repair work. His parents passed away when he was at a young age, and he worked in a hotel in Haridwar, till he became sick and could not find any help. A couple of months later, another patient was admitted with a spinal fracture and both his legs were paralysed too, and this boy started to serve him, give him a glass of water and help him with all his daily needs. One was reminded of the words of Sri Swamiji Maharaj: "Put yourself in the place of the patient, when you serve," and again: "Put yourself in the place of the patient." In the place of the patient indeed. This boy did not need to put himself in the place of the patient, because he had been in that place himself, he had undergone the same feeling

of shame, when someone had to wipe him off after the bedpan use, or when he had to ask for seemingly small, small, minor things, which were so important for a bedridden person, but could sometimes not be understood by others, who would come and go. Thankfulness generated from the heart into action.

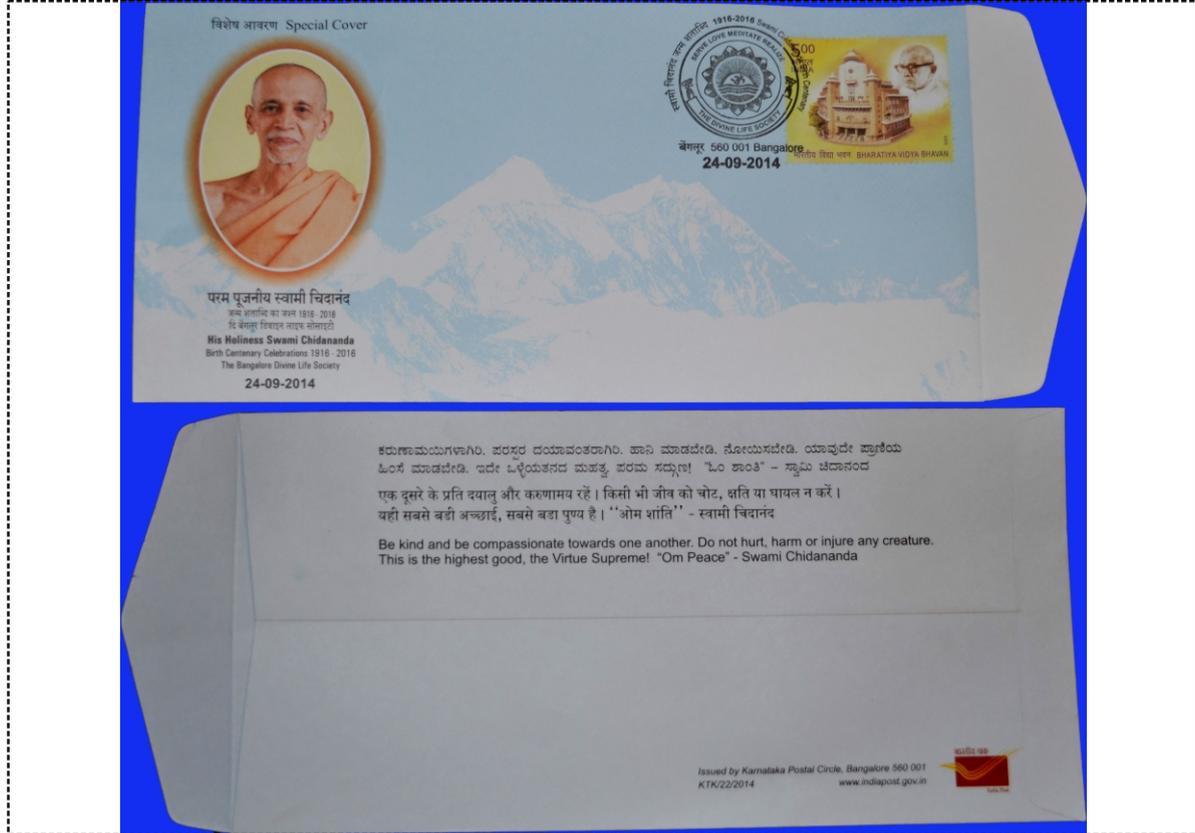
It is what Swamiji had called "empathy", besides the sympathy which one can have for someone else. Empathy, to feel what the other would feel and accordingly act. It is just like one of the female patients in the Home, who suffers from an eye disease, and who had two children who could not see at all. She was thrown out from the house due to her mental illness, but here in Sivananda Home she is attracted to a girl who is visually handicapped. She takes her by the hand, while going on the terrace, or helps her in making her bed. It is a spontaneous interaction, which comes from deep within her heart. Though she will never forget her own children, and still feel the pain of having lost them, there is a place in her heart that has opened. And where the medicines may cure the disease, it is Gurudev's GRACE that heals the soul, while being under HIS shelter and refuge. He is the Patient, the Doctor, the Disease and the Medicine.

Om Sri Sadgurudevaya Namah.

"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)

The Divine Life Society Bangalore Branch Inaugurates the Birth Centenary Celebration of Most Worshipful Sri Swami Chidanandaji Maharaj



The Divine Life Society Bangalore Branch inaugurated the Birth Centenary Celebration of Most Worshipful Sri Swami Chidanandaji Maharaj by releasing the Special Postal Cover of Param Pujya Sri Swami Chidanandaji Maharaj in a Satsanga organized on 24th September 2014.

The Satsanga commenced with Bhajans by Sivananda Bhajan Mandali. Thereafter, Smt. Veena Srinivas, Post Master General (Business Development) Karnataka, in the august presence of Sri H. B. Dinesh, Deputy Director (Administration) Department of Information and Public relations, Government of Karnataka released the Special Postal Cover of Param Pujya Sri Swami Chidanandaji Maharaj. Smt. Srinivas also released the Kannada version of Sadgurudev Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj's masterpiece 'Sure Ways of Success in

Life and God-realisation' and addressed the gathering. Sri B. Chandrashekar, Assistant Post Master General (BD and Technology) and some of the devotees spoke on the occasion as well. The devotees got the blessed opportunity to have Darshan of Worshipful Sri Swami Chidanandaji Maharaj through a DVD show. The Satsanga concluded with Mahaman-gala Arati and distribution of Prasad.

May the choicest blessings of the Lord Almighty, Sadgurudev Sri Swami Sivanandaji



Maharaj and Most Worshipful Sri Swami Chidanandaji Maharaj be upon all.



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



The Divine Life Society, Sivananda Sevagram Charitable Trust (managed by all the Divine Life Society Branches of Angul district) has been successfully rendering services to the poor and destitute through Chidananda Centenary Charitable Dispensary at Gaham, Angul. During the month of August, 886 poor patients were examined and provided free medicines. Dr. R. N. Panda, Dr. B. Pradhan, Dr. .R.C. Satpathy, Pharmacists Sri Swetambar Pradhan, Sri P.K. Dhar, Sri Himanshu Pani and Patho-technician Sri Labani offered their services to the destitute through the Charitable Dispensary.

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

INAUGURAL FUNCTION OF THE 78TH YOGA-VEDANTA COURSE

The 78th Basic Yoga-Vedanta Course was inaugurated on 20th August 2014 at YVFA Hall in the august presence of H.H. Sri Swami Vimalanandaji Maharaj and H.H. Sri Swami Yogaswarupanandaji Maharaj. Forty-two seekers from different parts of India joined the course.

The inaugural 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. Sri Swamiji Maharaj in his inaugural address highlighting the significance of human birth inspired the students to practice Sadgurudev Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj' six-step Sadhana viz. Serve, Love, Give, Purify, Meditate, Realise.

Thereafter, H.H Sri Swami Yogaswarupanandaji Maharaj in his blessing message, apprising the students of their blessedness of being a part of this unique Academy, motivated them to be regular in their classes and utilise every moment 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.



ANNOUNCEMENT
5TH CHHATTISGARH STATE DIVINE LIFE SOCIETY SPIRITUAL
CONFERENCE

By the grace of Most Worshipful Gurudev Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj, under the auspices of the Birth Centenary Celebration of Pujya Sri Swami Chidanandaji Maharaj, The Chhattishgarh State Divine Life Society Spiritual Conference will be held from 10th to 12th January 2015 at Ghatpadmur, Jagdalpur, Dt. Bastar, Chhattishgarh.

The Conference will be blessed by senior monks from Headquarters and saints and scholars from other institutions. Devotees from all the Branches of the Society in the State are cordially invited to participate in the programme aimed at dissemination of spiritual knowledge.

Delegate fee for participation in the Conference is ₹ 300/- which may be sent by Cheque or DD in favour of "Divya Jivan Sangh Sri Shivananda Ashram, Jagdalpur" to:

Divya Jivan Sangh-Sri Shivananda Ashram, Ghatpadmur, P.O: Dharampura, Tehsil: Jagdalpur, Dt. Bastar, Chhattishgarh-494005

For Registration and Information please contact:

- | | |
|-----------------------------|-------------|
| 1. Swami Sivadasananda | 09424284249 |
| 2. Swami Visuddhananda | 07856202343 |
| 3. Swami Premswarupananda | 09406329709 |
| 4. Sri Keju Singh Thakur | 07587737623 |
| 5. Sri Nagendra Bhadoria | 09425262393 |
| 6. Sri Sanjay Kumar Lahoti | 09425260225 |
| 7. Sri Shiv Narayan Chandak | 09826199806 |

Devotees are cordially invited to participate in the Conference and make it a grand success.

—The Divine Life Society

ANNOUNCEMENT

DIVINE LIFE SOCIETY, WEST BENGAL—SADHANA SHIBIR

The Annual Sadhana Shibir of The Divine Life Society, West Bengal, will be held from 22nd January evening to 26th January 2015 noon, at Manav Seva Trust Complex, hamiragachhi, Railway Station-Malia, West Bengal, on Howrah—Tarakeshwar Railway line (54 k.m. from Kolkata).

Participation fee will be ₹ 301/- per person for delegates from West Bengal and ₹ 251/- per person for delegates from other states, inclusive of food and accommodation.

Double bedded rooms are also available with attached toilet and bath at separate rates, for which interested delegates may please contact Sri Bijoy Kumar Swain.

The last date of enrollment is 31st December 2014. Delegate Fee in shape of Draft/Cheque in favour of “The Divine Life Society, West Bengal”, payable in Kolkata, along with the letter confirming participation has to be sent to:

Sri Bijoy Swain, 4C Meher Ali Mondal Street, Mominpur, KOLKATA—700 027, West Bengal.

For Enrollment and information please contact:

Sri Bijoy Kumar Swain	09339392845
Sri C.B. Sehgal	09830144147
Sri Nitul Parekh	09830040730
Sri Prafulla Mahapatra	09438303624
Dr. P.K. Samantaray	07738103383

All Devotees are requested to participate.

—The Divine Life Society

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REPORTS FROM DLS BRANCHES

Ambala (Haryana): Weekly Satsanga is held on Sundays with Maha Mrityunjaya Mantra Japa and Mahamantra Japa. V.D.O. Satsanga is held on 2nd Sunday of the month. Hanuman Chalisa, Sankata Mochana, Bajrang Baan Path are held every Tuesday with Bhajan and Kirtan.

Homeopathy dispensary treats 40 to 50 patients every day and free Jala Seva also continues.

Aska (Odisha): Weekly Satsang on Sundays, two nos. of mobile Satsang and Paduka Puja on Sivananda and Chidananda days were the regular activities of the Branch. 108 Parayans of Hanuman Chalisa were done on 17th and 31st of August. Punyatithi Aradhana of Pujya Swami Chidanandaji Maharaj was observed with Paduka Puja and evening Satsang.

Badhiausta (Odisha): Sri Krishna Jayanti was celebrated on 17th August with morning Puja, Paduka Puja, chanting of *Om Namo Bhagavate Vasudevaya*, Bhagavata Katha, Maha Mantra Japa, Arati and Prasad Sevan. 6th Punyatithi Aradhana of Pujya Swami Chidanandaji Maharaj was observed at the Ashram with morning meditation, Paduka Puja, Bhajan and Kirtan. In addition to this the Branch arranged mobile Satsang in two new villages. A session of chanting of Hanuman Chalisa 108 times was held.

Balasore (Odisha): In addition to daily morning Paduka Puja and evening Arati, Paduka Puja was done on Guru Purnima and Paramapujya Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj's Maha Samadhi Day; Sri Krishna Janmashtami was observed on 17th August.

Maha Samadhi day of Pujya Swami Chidanandaji Maharaj was observed with Paduka Puja, Archana and Prasad Sevan.

Barbil (Odisha): Satsang was held on Mondays (4 Nos) and Thursdays (5 Nos). Balvihar classes for school children every Sunday and Sadhana day on 24th of every month are regular activities of the Branch. Sadhana Saptah was held from 14th to 20th June in Ashram complex. 603 patients benefited from the Sivananda Charitable Homeo Dispensary run by the Branch.

Bargarh (Odisha): The regular activities of the Branch such as Paduka Puja, Satsang, Swadhyaya, Yoga, Bhagavad Gita discussion and distribution of Jyana Prasad (200 copies of Oriya Magazine Mahat Vani) continue. 150 patients were treated by the Homeopathy dispensary. A special Satsanga was held on 9th August. Sri Krishna Janmashtami was celebrated at Viswanath Temple Hall with Srimad Bhagavata Patha, Bhajan, Kirtan and Prasad Sevan.

Bellaguntha (Odisha): Daily morning meditation class, mobile Satsanga on Thursdays, Sadhana day on every Sankranti and Paduka Puja on 8th of every month are the regular programmes at the Branch. Two hour session of chanting of Siva Panchakshara Mantra was held on 4th August. Sri Krishna Janmashtami was celebrated with morning meditation, Prabhat Pheri, Paduka Puja, chanting of Dvadasakshara Mantra and Arati. Mahasamadhi Divas of Pujya Swami Chidanandaji Maharaj was observed with

Guru Paduka Puja, Gita Path, Maha Mantra Kirtan and Arati.

Bellary (Karnataka): The Branch performs daily Puja and weekly Satsangs are held on Sundays. Special Satsangs were held on 12th, 13th, and 14th July with Paduka Puja and Ashtottara Shata Archana on the occasion of Guru Purnima and Maha Samadhi day of Gurudev Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj.

Bikaner (Rajasthan): Daily morning and evening Puja, Yogasana Classes, maintaining a library and weekly Satsanga on Saturdays are the regular programmes of the Branch. In addition to these Tulasidas Jayanti was observed with Sundara Kanda and other Parayana. Sri Krishna Janmashtami was celebrated by decorating Sri Krishna Vighraha with flowers and ornaments, Dvadasakshara Mantra Japa, Bhajan, Kirtan and Prasad Sevan. The sixth Punyatithi Aradhana of Pujya Swami Chidanandaji Maharaj was celebrated with Paduka Puja and Pushpanjali. On the occasion of Somavati Amavasya fruits and sweets were distributed at the School of the Blind. Ganesha Chaturthi was celebrated with Bhajan, Kirtan and Laddu Prasad. Havan was performed on Chidananda Divas. Scholarship to poor students was given. Sundara Kanda Parayana was held at devotees' residence twice during the month.

Chandigarh: The Branch holds regular weekly Satsanga on Sundays with Bhajan, Kirtan followed by lunch to about 250 to 300 people, and medical treatment and medicines for about 60 to 70 patients. Monthly financial assistance is given to renal transplant patients. Collective Mahamantra chanting is held every Thursday evening.

Guru Purnima was celebrated with Bhava, Paduka Puja, Bhajan, Kirtan and Prasad Sevan. The 51st Punyatithi Aradhana of Gurudev Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj was observed with Pushpanjali to Gurudev's Padukas, Svadhyaya and devotional Songs. 24 hour Akhanda Kirtan of Maha Mantra was held from evening of 24th to evening of 25th July.

Chatrapur (Odisha): During the month five weekly Satsangs, seven special Satsangs and daily evening Satsang were held. Paduka Puja was performed on 8th and 24th of every month. Seven days Dhyan class was organised from 13th to 19th July. The Maha Samadhi Day of Gurudev Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj was celebrated on 20th July with Nagar Kirtan, poor feeding, Vastra Dan (to 14 people), Paduka Puja, Bhajan and Kirtan.

56 Parayans of Sundarakanda have already been performed till end of July against a target of 50 on the occasion of Golden Jubilee of the Branch and the Branch intends to do more.

Dhananjayanagar (Odisha): The Branch holds weekly Satsang on Sundays. Punyatithi Aradhana of Gurudev Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj was celebrated on 23rd August with distribution of fruits and biscuits to local hospital patients and among the students of five local primary schools.

Dhenkanal (Odisha): Weekly Satsang is held on every Sunday. Guru Purnima was celebrated with Paduka Puja, discourses on Guru Mahima, Bhajan and Prasad Sevan.

Digapahandi (Odisha): Satsang on Thursdays and Sundays, Paduka Puja on Sivananda and Chidananda day, and a special evening Satsang on Sankranti day are the regular activities of the Branch. Two

mobile Satsangs were held at the residences of devotees. Sri Krishna Jayanti and Nandotsava were celebrated on 18th and 19th August respectively. 6th Anniversary of Punyatithi of Pujya Swami Chidanandaji Maharaj was celebrated with Paduka Puja, Gita Path, Bhajan, Kirtan and Prasad Sevan.

Faridpur (U.P.): Guru Purnima was observed with Paduka Puja, Bhajan and Kirtan. A book in Hindi "Devarchana" was got released at Headquarters and distributed free at Headquarters and Faridpur. Financial help was given to students from poor families. Weekly Satsang continues.

Jaipur Raja Park (Rajasthan): Janmashtami was celebrated by festooning the temple premises with lights. Special Sringer of Pancharukhi Mahadev was done. Hundreds of people came to see the JHANKIS. The programme ended with Pancharukhi Abhishek of Lord Laddu Gopal, Arati and Prasad Sevan. Nandotsav was observed with pomp on 25th Aug. by the Ladies' wing. Other regular programmes of Katha on both Ekadasis and Purnima, daily evening Satsang, Ladies' Satsang on Mondays, Mahamrityunjaya Mantra Japa on Thursdays, Sundarakanda Path on Saturdays and weekly morning Satsang on Sundays continue.

27 poor widows and one mentally challenged person were given financial aid totalling Rs.4050/=. Narayan Seva is done every morning at Siddheswar Temple with Dalia, Chole, bread or Khichdi. Every Sunday Puri & Sabji are distributed as Narayan Seva to about 300 people. Dry ration like rice, dal, sugar, oil, and tea leaves are given at Garibdas Kushtha Roga Ashram every month. A library is maintained which

has about 1900 books. The quarterly magazine (Shivanand Vani) is published.

The Sivananda Yoga Vijnan Centre, Homeopathy dispensary and Jalmandir continue to serve people.

Special Sahasra Ghat, and Rudrabhishek were performed twice during the month of Sravan.

Jeypore (Odisha): Daily morning and evening Puja, weekly Satsanga on Sundays and Mobile Satsanga on Thursdays are the regular activities of the Branch. Sivananda day was observed with Havan, Puja and Prasad Sevan. Sri Krishna Jayanti was celebrated with Puja, Kirtan, Havan, Vishnu-sahasranama, reading from Srimad Bhagavata, midnight Arati and Prasad Sevan. Punyatithi Aradhana of Pujya Swami Chidanandaji Maharaj was observed on 23rd August with meditation, Paduka Puja, Satsanga, Arati and Prasad. About 140 devotees including 40 college students attended. Koraput District Homeopathy dispensary treated about 750 patients.

Kakinada (A.P.): Apart from Satsangs on Wednesdays (4 Nos), Fridays (3 Nos), Saturdays (4 Nos,) and Sundays (4 Nos) at various places, free medical camp is held by the Branch on 1st and 3rd Sundays of the month. Narayana Seva is arranged every Sunday where 25-30 poor people are served. Activities of The Divine Life Society were initiated at Dharmavaram, a remote village.

Kantabanji (Odisha): The weekly Satsanga held every Sunday starts with chanting of Om, Slokas are recited from Bhagavad Gita followed by Bhajan, Kirtan, and ends with Shanti Path.

Khatiguda (Odisha): Sadhana day was observed on 3rd August. Both Ekadasis were

observed with Vishnu-sahasranama and evening Satsanga. Sri Krishna Jayanti was celebrated with Bhagavata Parayana and Satsanga. The 6th Punyatithi Aradhana of Pujya Swami Chidanandaji Maharaj was observed with meditation, Guru Paduka Puja, Narayana Seva and Prasad Sevan in the morning and Satsanga with reading the life history of Swamiji Maharaj and Bhajan, Kirtan in the evening. Morning and evening Puja and weekly Satsanga on Thursdays at the Branch continue.

Khurda Road (Odisha): Daily evening Satsang is held regularly at the Branch. A special Satsang was arranged on Janmashtami. The 6th Punyatithi of Pujya Swami Chidanandaji Maharaj was celebrated on 23rd August with early morning meditation, Guru Paduka Puja, discussion on life and teachings of Swamiji Maharaj, poor feeding (50 leprosy Patients who also planted trees), followed by Satsang in the evening with talks, distribution of Jnan Prasad and Prasad Sevan. Two families (victims of fire) were paid Rs.2000.00. The Branch is planning a 2-day Youth Camp for about 300 people as part of the celebration of Swami Chidananda Birth Centenary.

Lanjipalli (Odisha): In addition to daily reading of Ramacharit Manas, Bhagavata and Bhagavad Gita with Arati, the Branch celebrated Tulasidas Jayanti, Sri Krishna Janmashtami, and 6th Punyatithi Aradhana of Pujya Swami Chidanandaji Maharaj, on 3rd August, 17th August and 23rd August respectively. Weekly Satsang is held on Sundays. Sadhana day with Narayana Seva was observed on 31st August.

Lucknow (U.P.): Satsangs were held at the residences of devotees on 3rd, 24th and 31st August with Jai Ganesh Kirtan, Guru

Stotra, recitation from Bhagavad Gita, Bhajan and Swadhyaya.

The Branch people visited Home for Orphan Girls on 10th August. Snacks and fruits were distributed. The children sang devotional songs.

Mahasamund (Chhattisgarh): Daily morning Prayer with Yoga class, Hanuman Chalisa Path on Tuesdays and Saturdays, Gita and Ramacharit Manas Path on Sundays are regular activities of the Branch. Siva Panchakshara Mantra Japa on 4th August and a mobile Satsang on 5th August were held by the Branch. Sri Krishna Janmashtami was celebrated with 12 hours of "Om Namo Bhagavate Vasudevaya" Japa.

Patiala (Punjab): Regular mobile Satsangs are held at various places. Regular monthly donations are given to local Goshala. Light refreshments or sweets are distributed at Khushdeva Leprosy Ashram on 8th and 24th of the month.

Raigarh (Chhattisgarh): The Branch observed Guru Purnima with Paduka Puja, Bhajan, Kirtan, worship of Guru and talks on the glories of Guru. It conducts regular Satsang every Monday.

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Raipur (Chhattisgarh): Weekly Satsang on Sundays, Ramacharita Manas Path every Monday by the Ladies' wing, Sundarakanda Path every Tuesday by Ladies' wing, Paduka Puja on every third Sunday, Vishnu Sahasranama on Ekadasis, and Rudrabhisheka of Lord Vishwanath on

every Mas Shivratri form the regular activities of the Branch.

Sri Krishna Janmashtami was celebrated on 17th August with Jai Ganesh Kirtan, Pratah Smaran, Shanti Path, Bhajan, Kirtan, Mantra chanting, Arati and Prasad Sevan.

Rourkela (Odisha): Daily morning meditation, Yoga and Pranayama classes are held. Paduka Puja with Abhishek and Archana on Thursdays, Paduka Puja with Abhishek and Archana on 8th and 24th of every month, and mobile Satsang on Sundays are the regular activities of the Branch.

Guru Purnima was celebrated on 12th July with Paduka Puja, Archana, Hanuman Chalisa, Bhagwad Gita and chanting of Mahamrityunjaya Mantra where more than 300 devotees participated.

51st Punyatithi Aradhana Divas of Gurudev Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj was observed on 20th July with Pravachan, Bhajan, and Prasad Sevan. Every Sunday free medicines are given to the needy through the Homeopathy Clinic. Special Sadhana days were held on 10th and 28th July with Paduka Puja, Abhishek, Archana, Hanuman Chalisa and Prasad Sevan.

Rourkela Steel Township (Odisha): Daily morning Yoga class, free music class on Sundays and Mondays, Paduka Puja on Thursdays, Svadhyaya on Saturdays and mobile Satsanga on Sundays are the regular activities of the Branch.

Janmashtami and Nandotsava were celebrated from 11th to 18th August with Kalash Sthapana on 11th August. Satsanga was held from 11th to 16th August. On 17th August Janmastami was celebrated with

Gopala-sahasrarchana, Vishnu-sahasranama, Kirtan, Havan and Shanti Path.

Punyatithi Aradhana of Puja Swami Chidanandaji Maharaj was observed with meditation, Nagar Kirtan, Paduka Puja, Kirtan and Bhajan in the morning and evening Satsanga.

Salipur (Odisha): Daily morning and evening Puja, weekly Satsanga on Sundays, Sundar Kanda Parayana every 2nd Saturday, and Paduka Puja on Sivananda day are the regular activities of the Branch. Free health services are rendered every Sunday. Sivananda Sannyas Diksha Divas was observed with a special Satsanga on 1st June. The annual Programme of chanting Hanuman Chalisa 108 times was held on 15th June.

South Balanda (Odisha): Janmashtami was celebrated with 12 hours chanting of *Om Namoh Bhagavate Vasudevaya* Mantra followed by midnight Puja.

Punyatithi Aradhana of Puja Swami Chidanandaji Maharaj was observed on 23rd August with morning meditation, Nagar Sankirtan, Paduka Puja, Satsanga, Narayana Seva at leprosy colony, followed by Prasad Sevan. In addition to this daily morning and evening Puja, weekly Satsanga on Fridays, Paduka Puja on Sivananda and Chidananda days, and special Satsanga by the Ladies' wing on Ekadasis are some of the regular activities of the Branch.

Akhanda Mahamantra Sankirtan for 3-hours was held on 30th August for world peace and universal brotherhood. A programme of Pravachanas was held from 18th to 22nd August.

Sunabeda Ladies Branch (Odisha): Daily morning Puja is performed with

Sankirtan, Srimad Bhagavta Path, Gita Path and Mahamrityunjaya Mantra Japa. Weekly Satsanga is held on Sundays along with Children's Satsanga. Ekadasis are observed with Abhisheka and Vishnu-sahasranama. Maha Mrityunjaya Mantra Japa Anusthana is performed on 24th of every month (12 hours chanting). A Sadhana day was arranged on 10th August. Coordinators of Swami Chidananda Janmashatabarshiki Samiti visited the Branch for a meeting regarding Sadhana Shivir.

Surada (Odisha): Guru-Purnima was observed with meditation, Prabhat Pheri, Paduka Puja in the morning and Bhajan, Kirtan, Narayana Seva and Prasad Sevan in the evening.

Maha Samadhi day of Gurudev Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj was celebrated with meditation, Prabhat Pheri, Paduka Puja, Bhajans and discussion on the Mission and Teachings of Gurudev.

Sri Krishna Janmashtami was celebrated with Paduka Puja, reading of Srimad Bhagavata, Archana and Prasad Sevan. 6th Punyatithi of Pujya Swami Chidanandaji Maharaj was celebrated with morning meditation and Paduka Puja, and Satsang in the evening with Bhajans and Prasad Sevan.

Surendra Nagar (Gujarat): Daily Paduka Puja, Matri Satsang at the Branch and daily evening Satsang at Hatkeswar Temple are the regular activities of the Branch. On 8th of every month victuals are distributed among 40 needy families. Fodder to cows and grain to birds is given daily. A discourse was arranged at Sivananda Ashram on 12th August which was well attended. Collective Rudrabhishek was done on 18th August followed by Prasad.

Vizag (A.P.): Daily morning Yoga and Pranayama classes, daily Vishnu Sahasranama Parayan, Lalita Sahasranama Parayan on Fridays, Bhagavad Gita classes on Sundays and monthly Satsang followed by free medical camp are the regular activities of the Branch.

Varalakshmi Vrata was observed by devotees on first day of Sravan Masa and Kumkum Archana was done on every Friday of the month. Janmashtami was celebrated with Abhishek and cultural programme followed by Bhajan and Kirtan. Pravachans were held from 17th to 23rd August on the occasion on Rukmini Kalyanam.

OVERSEAS BRANCHES

Hong Kong (China): One-hour chanting of Mahamantra every Saturday (except the second) in both the Cheung Sha Wan and North Point Centres, monthly Satsanga (43 participants), and regular Yogasana and breathing technique and meditation are the regular activities of the Branch.

The special activities are the Bhajan practice session at North Point Yoga Centre on 5th July, and celebration of Sri Guru Purnima with Holy Paduka Puja on 12th July. A workshop on "Yoga for Beginner" was held on 15th and 19th July with 30 participants. The Branch held a 1-hour chanting of Mahamrityunjaya Mantra on 26th July with prayers for victims who suffered in the air tragedy of the Malaysia Airlines. There was also the Bhajan-Kirtan, Satsanga with a talk on the Essence of Bhagavad Gita conducted by Sri Hari Chang at the Cheung Sha Wan Yoga Centre on 26th July. □ □ □