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CHAPTER II

VALLI iii

भयादस्याग्निस्तपति भयात्तपति सूर्यः ।
भयादिन्द्रश्च वायुश्च मृत्युर्धावति पञ्चमः ॥३॥

3. From fear of Brahman fire burns, from fear the sun shines, from fear Indra and Vayu and Death, the fifth, run.

शिवानन्दस्तोत्रपुष्पांजलिः

SIVANANDA-STOTRA-PUSHPANJALI

(Sri Swami Jnanananda Saraswati, Sivanandanagar)

(Continued from the previous issue)

यद्वक्त्राम्बुजदर्शनेन कुमतिस्तूर्ण सुशीलो भवे-
 द्यद्वाक्यामृतमापिबन् जडजनः क्षिप्रं त्यजेन्मन्दताम्।
 यद् ध्यानोत्सुकभक्तलोकनिवहो मोक्षायने संचरे-
 त्तस्मै सद्गुरवे नमोस्त्विति शिवानन्दाय दिव्यर्षये॥१९

19. I worship the great sage Sivananda by whose mere sight the wicked becomes virtuous, by drinking whose nectarine words the dull-witted soon becomes wise, and by whose meditation sincere devotee treads the path of liberation.

यस्मिन् विस्मितमानसास्सुमनसस्सन्दर्शनाकांक्षिण-
 स्सामोदं समुपागता नुतिसुमस्रग्वर्षणं कुर्वते।
 यस्यानन्दकुटीरवासकुतुकादायान्ति नानाजना
 दिव्यर्षिप्रवराय सन्मतशिवानन्दाय तस्मै नमः॥२०

20. Salutations to Satguru Sivananda, the greatest Rishi of the age, for whose Darshan people of various cults and faiths flock to Ananda Kutir fired with the love of living in his presence and with purified heart and anxious looks shower the flower-garlands of praises on him.

(To be continued)

SREE RAMA NAVAMI MESSAGE

(H.H. Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj)

Salutations to Lord Rama, who is an Avatara of Vishnu, who is measureless, who is of the nature of pure intelligence and bliss, who is the consort of Sita, master of Sri Hanuman and the Lord of the three worlds, who took his birth at his own will to establish righteousness, destroy the wicked and to protect His devotees.

Rama was the Lord Hari Himself incarnate on earth for the destruction of Ravana. He was well-accomplished, beautiful and endowed with royal marks. His glory and prowess were unlimited. He was peerless on earth. He was free from malice. He was gentle and the protector of the people. He always addressed the people in gentle words. He never used any harsh words even when somebody addressed Him rudely. He had his sway all over the world.

Devotion to Sri Rama confers Immortality and Bliss. Therefore recite his name, sing his glory, serve his lotus feet. Enthroned in your heart Sri Rama of dark hue, whose image is reflected in the heart of Lord Siva.

I shall tell you the means of attaining the final release from the great cycle of births and deaths. Devotion to Vishnu is a great purifier of the heart. From devotion arises knowledge. From knowledge comes the realisation of the pure Self. Knowing this perfectly one

goes to the Supreme abode and is merged in the Supreme Self.

Do thou, therefore, today worship Vishnu, who is Lord Rama, who is the consort of Sita who is Lakshmi. Abandon all foolishness and enmity. Do thou serve Rama.

Without developing devotion to Rama, who is the Supreme Self, who lives in the heart of all beings, who is all Bliss, who is secondless, how can man cross the ocean of worldly life which has sorrow, pain and misery for its waves?

Even a great sinner who is endowed with evil qualities, who is fond of other people's wealth and belongings, if he always remembers Sri Rama, he is freed from all kinds of faults that pertain to this course of worldly life. He attains purity and goes to the pure supreme abode of Vishnu.

Devotion has absolutely nothing to do with age, caste, creed, position or rank or sex. Generally, the worldly-minded people say "We will practise Dhyana, devotion etc. when we will retire from service". This is a serious mistake. How can you do spiritual Sadhana after squeezing all your energy in service? How can you practise the strict means of Yogic discipline in old age? Is there any certainty of life? The spiritual seeds of devotion must be sown in your heart when you are young, when

your heart is tender and untainted. Then only you will strike a deep root, blossom and bear fruit when you become old when you retire from service. Then only you will not be afraid of the God of death, Yama. You will meet him with a smile.

Time is fleeting. Know the value of time. Time is most precious. Utilise every second profitably. Do not procrastinate. Abandon all idle gossiping. Forget the past. Live every moment of your life for realisation of the ideal and goal. Unfold all latent faculties. Grow, evolve and

become a superhuman or a dynamic Yogi. Struggle hard and reach the goal of life.

May you all attain the final beatitude of life through intense devotion towards Rama. May you live immersed in the ecstasy of divine love and Shuddha Prem. May Sree Rama, who is effulgent like million suns, who is adored by the gods and devotees, protect you all. May the blessings of Lord Rama be upon you all!

Om Tat Sat.

The Ramayana is a marvellous book which contains the essence of all Vedas and all sacred scriptures. It is a treasure for man. It is a reservoir which contains the nectar of Immortality. It delineates the character of a son who kicks off the throne and the pleasures of the senses and the world to fulfil the words of his father and lives in the forest for a period of fourteen years. It depicts the character of a father who sends even his most beloved son in exile in order to keep up his word. It delineates the character of an ideal, chaste wife who is devoted to her husband till the end of her life, shares his adversities, and serves him untiringly in the forest, and who also regards her husband as God. Above all, it also points out the character of a brother, who places brotherly affection above everything else in this world and follows his brother in the forest leaving all pleasures of the palace and leading the way to ward off all dangers. The description of nature in Ramayana is most sublime and beautiful. One can actually feel that the hills, the rivers, the trees, and the birds are really one with human joys and sorrows. The description of battle-scenes is magnificent. The chief characteristic of Ramayana is simplicity. Pathos and tenderness run through the whole poem. Poetry and morality are charmingly united. There is loftiness of moral tone. The Ramayana has a historical basis. It is a book of antiquity. It is not a mere allegoric poem. It is a marvellous inspiring book for all times, that has loomed large for centuries over the destinies of millions of people and will certainly continue to do so for ages to come.

—*Swami Sivananda*

SERVICE AND HUMILITY—HALL-MARKS OF A TRUE ASPIRANT

(Sri Swami Chidananda)

The source of the strength of Rama-Nama, Lord Sri Rama, the incarnation of Para-Brahman in order to keep the Maryada of this relative world, when he becomes embodied, observes the laws of this phenomenal world. That is the greatness of Avatars. All the Avatara-Purushas, when they come into a certain realm, observe the laws of that particular realm. Even though they are the power behind all universal laws, when they come into any particular plane of life they keep up the dignity, of that plane of existence, and therefore to cross the ocean, Lord Rama kept up the pretence of building a material bridge in order to cross over to Lanka. But what did Hanuman do? He, by the sheer force of Rama-Nama, crossed the sea with a single bound. The Lord's love of his devotees is so great that even though He Himself observes the laws, He makes His devotees superior to all laws. These incidents, to the man of faith, to the man of correct perception, to the man of proper receptivity, reveal great truths. It is not just for the sake of information as to how Rama or Hanuman crossed the ocean that this particular incident is mentioned in the Ramayana, but in order to give out the subtle truths which cannot ordinarily be grasped. And it reveals the power of the Lord and the heights to which the devotee reaches by his absolute faith and divine love for the

Lord. Hanuman easily crossed the sea in one jump, because he was a faithful votary of the Divine Name. It was the Bhakti in him that gave him infinite strength to overcome all the Rakshasas. Nothing could stand before Hanuman. Even Ravana, to overcome whom Rama had to take recourse to chanting of Aditya-Hridaya under the advice of sage Agastya, trembled before Hanuman. That Hanuman, who was more than a match to Ravana, was a great devotee, is of special significance to all spiritual aspirants. What is the source of all strength, what is it that sustains an aspirant in his struggle to overcome Maya? That strength is in the Name of the Lord, That strength is divine love and devotion to the Lord, the strength of absolute faith in the Lord, faith in His Name; and as though to exemplify this, the glorious personality of Hanuman stands radiant before us in the pages of the Ramayana.

But then, it is common fallacy to suppose that people who follow the path of devotion, who take recourse to prayer, surrender and the Name of the Lord become emotional, weak and are not as strong in mind as the Vedantins. We are told, the Vedantin is always strong, he is compared to a lion which fears nothing. But the real Bhakta is equal to the Vedantin, he fears nothing in the world.

His strength is infinite, because his strength is not the strength of an individual personality. The source of his strength is infinity, in which he has established himself. The source of strength of a Vedantin and the Bhakta is the same. The Vedantin relies upon the Atman in himself, but the devotee relies upon the Lord. The Saguna Brahman and the Nirguna Brahman are one. Therefore, if a devotee feels within himself a sort of fear or weakness, then, it means that his practice of Bhakti is not along correct lines. There is something lacking in him. If his devotion and faith are true, he must be perfectly fearless. He should say: "I have got the Name of the Lord on my lips. Nothing equals the Name of the Lord in the whole world. So, to me fear, misery and troubles are unknown." Maya cannot do anything to him, as he has the Name of the Lord ever on his lips. He who has faith and devotion to the Lord becomes invulnerable and his defense impregnable. It depends upon faith. He is the ideal of a true devotee, who is full of strength and full of faith. A true devotee fears nothing and no obstacles deter him from pursuing the spiritual path that leads to the attainment of oneness with the Lord. If this real devotion and faith is not there, then timidity, fear, misery comes to him.

Hanuman's strength was infinite, but then, he stands in striking contrast to another personality in the Ramayana, whose strength was also very great, at whose strength all the three worlds trembled. Ravana, who could lift mount Kailasa, who had conquered all the Devas, and made God Agni to serve as

his cook, the god Varuna to water his garden and all the Ashtadikpalakas his slaves,—such was the might of Ravana,—this Ravana who had to be subdued by no other than the Incarnation of Lord Vishnu Himself, was destroyed and spoiled by Ahankara (egoism), which was also allied to Adharma. Egoism and unrighteousness completely vitiated and perverted this great power which Ravana possessed; and as an anticlimax we have the grand personality of Hanuman towering in his height, and yet the most wonderful and most beautiful example of perfect humility and self-effacement. With all the strength, courage and heroism, Hanuman was melting in tears of Prema and was ever in the attitude of servitude and humility. It is an object lesson for humanity, both in its collective and individual aspect, to subserve our entire capacities, abilities and strength to the service of the Lord characterised by utter humility. This is the important lesson that Hanuman's personality teaches to mankind for all times. If that is not there, we face the other side of the picture of Ravana and we have the inevitable fall. Hanuman's name has been immortalised because his infinite strength was accompanied by immeasurable humility, as vast and deep as the ocean, coupled with a perfect spirit of obedience and service. He was a perfect devotee, a perfect servant and was a perfect spiritual aspirant, for he kept his ego always in subjugation. And therefore Lord Rama gave him the foremost place, and held him very dear.

The higher thing that man can achieve comes to him who allies all his

faculties of body and mind with virtue, devotion, humility, with the spirit of service and absolute surrender. To be ever absorbed in the repetition of the Name of the Lord and in the service of God and His devotees is the shining ideal that the grand personality of Hanuman presents before humanity for all time. Such is the glory of his personality, so great in importance to spiritual aspirants, as well as to all human beings in general, to co-ordinate strength with Dharma, and thus to attain the divine

realisation of eternal oneness with the Lord.

May Lord Rama shower His divine compassion on all true seekers! May He bless them with the faculty of and the desire for pursuing a path of righteousness, truth, and devotion, faith and humility. May all people perceive their defects and errors and strive to make amends and to correct themselves. May they attain true happiness through right knowledge, love and compassion! May God's blessings be upon all!

SADHANA

Sadhana is spiritual movement consciously systematised. Sadhana is the purpose for which we have come to this place.

Abhyasa and Sadhana are synonymous terms. The object of Sadhana is to release life from the limitations with which it is bound.

Sadhana is a lifelong process. Every day, every hour, every minute, is an onward march. Obstacles are innumerable in this great Voyage. But, so long as you hold God as thy guide, there is nothing to worry about. You are sure to reach the other shore.

Some people have curiosity for the spiritual line. They have no real thirst for liberation. They think that they will get certain powers or Siddhis if they do some Yogic practices. When they do not attain the powers, they lose patience and give up the practices, abandon the spiritual path, and pooh-pooh the Yogins and Yoga.

Mere curiosity will not help you to attain any spiritual progress. Curiosity-mongering is more abominable than mischief-mongering. Introspect. Analyse your thoughts and find out whether you have real spiritual hunger or mere curiosity-mongering. Transmute curiosity-mongering into real thirsting for salvation by constant Satsanga, study of good religious books, prayer, Japa, and meditation.

You must have interest and liking in your Sadhana. You must understand well the technique and benefits of Sadhana. You must select a Sadhana that is suitable for you. You must have the ability and capacity to do Sadhana. Then alone you will have joy in doing the Sadhana and full success in it.

—*Swami Sivananda*

SADHANA IS ALWAYS CONNECTED WITH OUR SOUL

(Sri Swami Krishnananda)

(Continued from the previous issue)

While that is one side of the question, the other side of it is the tradition of what we call the routine of self-control. We have a system of fasting on Ekadashi day, and getting up in the morning at a particular hour. The recitation of certain chants, the sitting in a particular posture, etc., can also get into a traditional routine so that we may go on doing it, like walking a long distance without knowing we are walking. We can walk three miles without knowing that our legs are moving because the consciousness gets withdrawn and the reflex activity of moving helps us in walking. So sadhana can become a reflex action rather than a deliberate concentration of consciousness. We can go on turning a mala a hundred times without knowing that it is turning.

So also is the tradition of self-abnegation by means of fasting, vigil, etc. There are thousands of people in the world who observe these routines and traditions, but can it be called spiritual progress? This question can be answered only when we touch the vital point of the person. There is a vital spot in every person, and when that is touched, we can know the spiritual worth of the sadhaka concerned. Our vital spots are our weaknesses, and these weak spots are never touched,

generally. They are vulnerable parts of our system. We always try to avoid this, like the thigh of Duryodhana which was not to be touched. But this is the only touchstone of progress.

The practice of spiritual sadhana is the growth of our inner personality, and not the change that takes place in the accretion that has grown over us like a fungus from outside. Concentration of consciousness on the higher form of existence to which one has to reach is the test of whether there is progression or retrogression. The whole question revolves upon the point of concentration of the mind attended with consciousness. Sadhana is the concentration of the mind, or consciousness, in a particular manner, deliberately directed for bringing about a transformation taking us to the next higher level. We are not supposed to be stagnant, remaining in the same position. Spiritual progress is a daily onward march. We do not remain in the same position even for a single day if the sadhana is properly directed.

The pleasures of the ego, therefore, are not to be identified with the progression of sadhana. In the beginning, we always appear to be on

pins and thorns. There is an intense struggle from within to get into the proper track because we have strayed too far away from the point which leads us in the right direction. To bring the vehicle back to the correct point, and then to make it move along the right track, is very hard. For this, we have to shed our prejudices.

The philosopher Bacon used to say there are various kinds of prejudices, which he calls idols—idols of the cave, idols of the market place, and so on. Every field of life has a prejudice of its own. There is political prejudice, social prejudice, personal prejudice, family prejudice, communal prejudice, religious prejudice, and the prejudice of even the species to which we belong. We are too concerned with human beings, and not concerned with other things in the world. When we talk of world peace, we generally speak of peace of mankind, not peace of anything else. That is attachment to species. Well, these are all various forms of psychological prejudice which may weigh very hard upon us and prevent us from really progressing in spirituality.

Though we know very well that *sreyas* is different from *preyas*, spiritual good is demarcated from sensory pleasure, etc., it is hardly possible for most of us to distinguish between the two aspects of our experience. To judge oneself is the hardest of difficulties because spiritual sadhana is something that is connected with one's own self. It is a living movement which we embark upon, and not a dead mechanistic activity. Every moment of sadhana we

are conscious and aware as to what is happening, and we do not practice sadhana for the satisfaction it brings but for the progress that we can achieve through it.

Now, one of the prejudices of the mind is to judge progress from the point of view of human society. What do people say about me? What is the certificate that I have obtained from others? What is the opinion that the world has about me? Sometimes even right things, good understanding and proper insight into the nature of things will not be appreciated by the herd of people because the majority lives only on the surface of their mental consciousness and cannot go deep into the truth of things. This is why many of the saints had to suffer in social life. They were persecuted, insulted and excommunicated, and sometimes they had even to be martyrs. This is what the world will give us when we turn to God. Hence, to judge oneself from public approbation would be a very, very wrong method of self-assessment.

Nor is it possible for us to assess ourselves, because we may easily pat ourselves on our back while we are still on the first pedestal of spirituality. This is why we have been told time and again that we should be under the guidance of a Guru or a spiritual teacher who has reached a state of advancement and who knows the pitfalls of spiritual life as well as the art of living it. Whatever be the industrial and mechanistic progress that we have made in our life today, this necessity for training under a Guru and this system of Gurukulavasa cannot be

gainsaid or escaped because neither the public can help us, nor can we help ourselves. We are in a difficult position because from both sides we are at a disadvantage. Self-approbation and self-appraisal, especially in the beginning stages, is odious because no one would condemn oneself, no one would censure oneself, no one would be able to detect an error in one's own self. That is one side of the picture. The other side is, it is also wrong to lay too much emphasis on public approbation. This is the reason why the system of training under a Guru has been instituted for discipline which is spiritual and yet superseding the limitations of one's own personality.

We have, in the very beginning of the Kathopanishad, for instance, a statement as to how religion can get into a routine of mechanism that is bereft of all vitality and entirely dead. The father of Nachiketas, mentioned in the Kathopanishad, performs a sacrifice called Vishvajit, where he gives away everything in charity, in *dana*, for the sake of acquiring the pleasures of heaven. The Upanishad tells us that it was not really a satisfactory *yajna* or sacrifice that he performed because he got into a mood of giving solely for an outward show, and his giving was not attended with value or worth, which is really the value of charity. This was detected by Nachiketas, a very intelligent boy, and he made a remark which irritated the father who was performing this sacrifice in such a manner, and the story goes on further.

The point on hand is that spiritual life is to be trodden with an inner awareness of what one's conscience is, what one's conscience speaks and does, rather than what one does outwardly for the sake of mere performance according to routine or scriptural ordinance.

This difficulty has been beautifully mentioned in one of the passages of the Bhagavadgita where the Lord says that His Cosmic Form cannot be beheld by any amount of effort on the part of a person.

*Na vedayajnadhyayanair-na daanair-
na cha kriyabhir-na tapobhirugraih,
yevam-rupah shakya aham nriloke
drashtum tvadanyena kurupraveera.*
(B.G. 11.48).

With all the hectic activities of ours, with all the charities and self-abnegations and yajnas and whatnot, this vision cannot be had because this is a spiritual vision. This is not a merit that accrues due to mere virtuous activity. This is an efflorescence of personality into a higher reality, the growth of one's being into the Absolute rather than the reaping of a fruit of a mere charitable act.

The spirit is quite different from matter. All activity which is material or which has a value only in the material world can dupe us into the belief that it is the spirit of life. The spirit cannot be recognised because the spirit it is that recognises things. The spirit is different from the mere outward activities of our life because spirit is what performs the activity, and is not the activity itself. Hence, spirituality concerned with spirit is something that transcends the outer

performance of routine and concerns the very essentiality of the action itself.

The spirit of a thing is different from the form which it takes. This applies to every action, every conduct—ethical, moral, social, whatever it is. The spirit of a thing is different from its form, and sadhana is not a form; it is the spirit of what we do. Sadhana is not what we do, but the spirit of what we do. This has to be underlined and known very well. Whatever be our action, activity or performance, it is not going to be considered, but the spirit with which it has been performed is going to be considered. That is sadhana. It makes no difference what is our vocation in life, our profession, or the work that we perform. We cannot judge our progress by the kind of work that we do, but we can judge ourselves from the way in which we do that work. Social status is no criterion of spiritual progress. The attitude that is attending upon this activity, this profession, this action, this mood, this conduct and behaviour is going to be the test of our life. “Why have I done this?” is the question that you have to put to yourself. Whatever be the thing that you do, it makes no difference, but why have you done it? What is the reason? Go on putting this series of questions, one after the other, until you are cornered and the essence of the action is taken out. You will then know whether that conduct of yours is spiritual or otherwise.

The method of a performance of a duty is important enough, which

conduces to progress in life, no doubt; but we can employ a correct method with a wrong spirit. God will see only the spirit, and not the outer form of it. Even love of God can be directed to ulterior ends. We pray to God mostly for material goods. Whatever we do not have in the world, that we ask for from God so that we make God a means to an end and not an end in itself. God is an instrument that we employ for gaining some end which is purely temporal. This is an unspiritual interpretation of a spiritual aspiration. Even a spiritual aspiration can become unspiritual. Virtue can become vice when it is wrongly placed and out of context. Everything has to be in its proper position; only then it assumes the texture of art and beauty. Everything has to occupy its own place; then it is beautiful. In an audience, each person occupies his or her own place. It looks nice. But if the people are thrown pell-mell, one over the other, it does not look beautiful.

Thus, activity should be a beautiful performance, an art by itself, a picture of perfection drawn before our mental eye so that we grow from one state of perfection to another in spiritual sadhana. We are internally satisfied though we do not possess anything outwardly. We begin to feel a growth from within though it is not perceptible from outside, and this is attended with a sense of power and a gradual progress. We will begin to see newer vistas of reality as we proceed further.

(To be continued)

The greatest Yoga is the sinking of the self into unity with the Absolute, by denying the separate, and asserting the One.

—Swami Krishnananda

THE HERE-NOW GOD

(Sri Swami Atmaswarupananda)

Pujya Swami Chidanandaji often said that a guru is his teachings. If you want to know who the guru is, listen to, or study his teachings. And we might add, especially pay attention to phrases that he or she frequently repeats. For example, Gurudev's best known aphorism is Be good, Do good. Its significance for our spiritual life may change over the years, but its importance never does.

An expression that Pujya Swamiji Chidanandaji used to frequently use was "the here-now God." It implies that what we are seeking is not a God that we learned about years ago or had an experience of in the past. Nor are we meant to anticipate what it will be like to realise God in the future. We should be paying attention to the God that is here-now. Indeed, many teachers will tell us that there is no such thing as the past or the future. There is only the now. It is in the now that we remember the past. It is in the now that we anticipate the future. It is Now that counts.

Giving a talk one morning, Pujya Swamiji became unusually dynamic on the subject of the present moment. You could hear his fingers hitting the table in front of him for emphasis, as he

described the importance of the now. Now is where we live. Now is where God is, and it is in the now that we will realize God.

God is the life of our life. He is our very existence. He is here and now. Every time we say I am, we are repeating His name, we are speaking as Him. How is that? He is described as Existence-Consciousness-Bliss. When we say or think or meditate on our simple I Amness—without adding anything to it—not adding a body, not adding a mind, not adding any identification whatsoever, just our pure sense of existence, that is God's primary expression in creation.

Ultimately the I is unknowable, transcendental, unthinkable. When it expresses Itself as creation, it is Existence-Consciousness-Bliss, the pure I Am. And that pure I Am is found here and now. We don't say I Am about the past or the future. It is always in the present moment. So if we want to meet God, if we want to become God, there is no better way than to meditate on our own sense of presence. Who we essentially are here and now is the here-now God, our I Am.

SRI SWAMI CHIDANANDA

— *A Brief Life-Sketch* —

(Sri Swami Venkatesananda)

[Continued from the previous issue]

The one invariable recreation he allowed himself outside the house was a regular visit to the Ramakrishna Math at Madras. He attended their Satsangs and meetings, he attended their evening prayers, and he took part in all their celebrations. Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa Deva attracted him very much. Swami Vivekananda's 'Call of Renunciation' resounded from within his pure heart. He ever thirsted to have Darshan of Saints and Sadhus who visited the metropolis.

In June 1936, Sridhar suddenly left his home, the entire family was sunk in grief. For, while everyone had been reconciled to the simplicity of his life and his queer ways, everyone loved him dearly. He would not take any rich food at all, he lived on fruits and milk mostly fruit juice, and they yielded to this. He carelessly threw a shirt on himself and wound dhoti round his waist and never



cared to appear well dressed in public, they tolerated even this. He kept himself aloof never indulging in the fun and frolic of his youthful companions, they endured all this. But to lose him, they were not yet prepared.

Vigorous search was made. Sridhar's grandfather's emissary found him in the secluded Ashram of a holy sage some miles from the sacred mountain shrine of Tirupathi.

God perhaps intended this as a preparatory measure to steel the hearts of the entire family to bear with mitigated grief the final separation that was soon to follow.

Sridhar returned to his home, but his heart roamed in the woods of God-realisation, in the silent forests of spiritual thoughts, beating in tune with the Eternal Pranava-Nada of the Jnana-Ganga within himself. More of seclusion, more of service, a more

intense study of spiritual literature, a greater zeal in the practice of self-restraint, and exercises aimed at acquiring perfect control of the senses like fasting, taking the simplest Sattwic food, abandonment of all comforts and conveniences and austerities which would augment his inner spiritual power marked the seven years after he returned from Tirupathi and left the home again once for all. These left no doubt in the minds of everyone in the house and in the neighbourhood that Sridhar was a bird meant to soar high in the realms of Elysium and all the efforts to encage him would ultimately prove futile. The inmost core of their own hearts admired him and respected him, if a touch of pain could not be avoided.

Sridhar knew that to run away from home and yet, to remain within easy reach of the family members was bound to prove infructuous. The previous episode of 1936 had taught him this. Therefore, he began corresponding with Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj of Rishikesh, Himalayas and the very name Himalayas would delight and thrill his heart and obtained his permission to join his Ashram. Sridhar considered well over the matter, for this was to be an irrevocable step.

As he stepped out of his house, there was joy in his heart, the ghost of temptation had been laid long before. A little pain his action might cause to his father and the other near and dear ones, that was inevitable, but his all compassionate heart had, with sagacious foresight, prepared the ground in such a way that there would be no

shock and the people were more or less ready to accept the inevitable.

It now remains but to say in a word, and so Sridhar reached the Abode of Bliss and shone as the fountain of Bliss and Knowledge (Chidananda) forever afterwards.

For, nothing had to be achieved for his own sake which he had not already achieved. He never was attached to anything to renounce anything. He never was a Grihasthi to embrace Sannyasa. He never was a worldly man to abandon the world. He was all this a Yogi unattached to anything, a Sannyasin *par excellence*, a great saint and very much more at his very birth. Sannyasa was a mere routine, a formality, in his case.

But there was one marked change. From his earliest days, he had considered that the whole world was his own family. When he set his foot on the Path of Renunciation, the world recognised it and mankind hailed him as a citizen of the world. What was the secret realisation of his own heart *Sarvam Vishnumayam Jagat* or *Isavasyam Idam Sarvam*: the world is pervaded by God became an open reality that was apparent in his attitude towards all and that was readily recognised by one and all who came into contact with him. The lamp had been lit and hidden under a bushel so long, and now it was placed on the mantelpiece, so that it could illumine all. That was just what Sannyasa had done in his case.

This would be at once apparent when it is told that though Chidanandaji joined the Ashram of Siva in 1943, he did not don the ochre robes till the middle of

1949. And, yet, during all these years, great Sannyasins and Sadhus bowed at his feet, his wisdom was marveled at by the foremost among the Sadhus of Rishikesh, his saintliness evoked the spontaneous praise of everyone who came into contact with him, Sannyasin or layman. Every atom of his being was Sannyasa itself. It was the Sannyasin's robe that longed to touch his holy body, it was the holy order that was eager to make him its member so that it may live and flourish.

On arrival at the Ashram, he naturally took charge of the Ashram's dispensary. He was not a doctor, but he was very much more than a doctor. He had not studied in a Medical College and got a doctorate in Medicine and Surgery. He had studied in the College of Life itself and attained the greatest diploma of compassion. Very soon, Dr. Raoji, as the people of the neighbourhood had lovingly christened him, Chidanandaji had become a famous 'Man-with-the-healing-hand'. For years, he was carrying this unique Seva singlehanded, with very little medical facilities available to the neighbouring villages, the rush of patients to the Sivananda Charitable Dispensary could well be imagined. Added to this was the growing reputation of Chidanandaji's divine healing hand which made even educated people willingly prefer Chidanandaji to a highly qualified medical man. On top of all this was the magic name Sivananda which itself was the guarantee that people would get at the Ashram love, sympathy, careful attention and divine treatment. Sivananda had set the ideal very high indeed, and the reputation of the

Ashram Dispensary and the rush of people to it continued without diminution.

To Siva, everything is important and nothing is so important as to swallow the rest! He knew Chidanandaji was busy day and night in the service of the sick, an element that was dear to Siva's own heart. Exactly like Siva, Chidanandaji spent many sleepless nights at the bedside of patients whose life hung in the balance, and he had often volunteered to nurse dangerous infectious cases. And, Siva knew that everyone loved Chidanandaji and insisted on having his advice (blessings they called it). Yet, Chidanandaji possessed in him superhuman talents in other spheres. He was a man after Siva's own heart, a man who had a highly developed harmonious blending of the head, the head and the hand. And, Siva would not allow Chidanandaji to devote himself entirely to the exercise of any one or the other of the talents to the exclusion of the others.

Very soon after his joining the Ashram, Chidanandaji had given ample evidence of the brightness of his intellect. Siva made him deliver lectures at every turn, write articles for the Magazines, and gave wholesome spiritual instructions to the visitors. There was no important function at which Chidanandaji would not be called upon to address the gathering. And, on every such occasion, the visiting Sadhakas, no less than the inmates of the Ashram, felt that they had truly received the greatest ancient wisdom from the lips of one who had divine authority. When the Yoga-Vedanta

Forest University was established in 1948, Chidanandaji was appointed its Vice Chancellor and Professor of Raja Yoga. During the Brahmamuhurta class on alternate days, the students of the Forest University had the rarest good fortune for over a year to listen to Chidanandaji's most inspiring exposition of the Patanjala-Yoga Sutras. His penetrating intellect brought out not only obscure truths hidden in the Sutras, but also practical instructions from every possible point of view. This exposition was concluded in 1949.

And, it was during the first year of Chidanandaji's stay at the Ashram that he wrote the great work 'Light Fountain', an immortal biography of Gurudev, about which Gurudev himself once remarked: "Sivananda will pass away, but 'Light Fountain' will live." Besides this, he also regularly contributed articles to the Society's monthly Journal 'The Divine Life'.

In service, too, Chidanandaji's field has always been where even the best among men would seldom venture into the realm of divine love, the greatest selfless service, based upon the supreme Wisdom that all is One. The patients suffering from leprosy were his Living Narayanas. Patients from the neighbourhood, suffering from the worst kinds of infectious diseases, with ghastly ulcers exuding terribly offensive matter, came to him. Chidanandaji had no idea whatsoever that it was a patient suffering from a dreadful disease that was before him, to him the patient was Lord Narayana Himself. And you should watch him serve the patient, watch the expression of tender love on his face,

watch the compassion filled eyes, watch every movement of his hands as they dress the patient, you will instantly realise that Chidanandaji is worshipping the Living Narayana. When he was dressing the open ulcers of one who was suffering from an advanced stage of galloping leprosy, with flesh falling off from the limbs, with bones jutting out from the palms, in place of fingers, even Major General A N. Sharma (now retired), Director of Medical Services of the Indian Army, felt that Chidanandaji was no ordinary man, but who was one far, far above the common run of humanity. Chidanandaji would be at the bed side of an Ashram-inmate suffering from typhoid or appendicitis, nothing in the world was as important to him at that moment than the service of the sick, no work, however important, not even his food, rest, bath and sleep. Service, especially of the sick, often brought out the fact that he had no idea of his own body and his own separate existence as an individual, but that his body loosely clung to a soul which had fully awakened to the realisation that It indwelt in all. To us, it would look as though he was removing the bed pan of a patient, emptying it of its contents and carelessly cleaning it, but, to him the entire process was a part of his devout worship of the Lord (the patient) and he would take away the bed pan and clean it with precisely the same attitude with which the temple priest would remove the Nirmalya (flowers offered to the Lord) and throw it to the Ganges. Several of the Ashram inmates owe their life to him and to his unremitting service.

(To be continued)

HOLI MESSAGE*

(H.H. Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj)

In days of yore, there were communities of cannibals in India. They did much havoc. They threatened the lives of many. One of them was Holika (Putana). She took immense delight in devouring children. Lord Krishna destroyed her and saved the little children. The effigy or figure of Holika is burnt in the fire even now on this day. In Southern India, the figure of Cupid made of clay is burnt. This is the origin of the great Festival Holi.

Holi festival comes in the spring season or Vasanta Ritu. It is a day of rejoicing. All the trees are filled with sweet smelling flowers. They all proclaim the glory and everlasting beauty of God and inspire you with hope, joy and a new life and stir you on to find out the Creator and the Indweller, who is hiding Himself in these forms. This year it fell on 21st March, 1943.

Holi is known by the name Kamadahan in South India, the day on which Cupid was burnt by Lord Siva.

In Northern India, people play with coloured water. The uncle pumps coloured water on the face and body of his nephew. The niece applies mud and coal tar on the face of her aunt. Brothers play with sisters and cousins.

Huge bundles of wood are put together and burnt at night, and everywhere you will hear shouting of

Holio, Holio, Holio! People stand in the streets and pump coloured water over the body and clothes of any man who passes in the street, be he a rich man or an officer. There is no restriction on this day. It is like the April-fool-day of the Europeans. People compose special Holi songs.

On this day people clean their houses, remove all dirty articles around the house and burn them; thereby the disease breeding bacteria are destroyed. The sanitary condition of the locality is much improved. Nowadays people are found to indulge in all sorts of vices in the name of holy festivals like these. Some drink intoxicating liquors like tody, etc., and fall unconscious on the roads. They indulge in obscene speech as a result of drinking. They lose respect for their elders and masters. They waste their money in drink and dice-play. These evils should be totally eradicated.

Festivities have their own spiritual value. Apart from the various amusements they create faith in God when properly observed. Hindu festivals have always a spiritual significance. They wean the man from sensual pleasures and take him gradually to the spiritual path and divine communion. People perform Havan and offer the new grains that are harvested to the Gods and then eat them.

*Taken from DL 1943

There should be worship of God, religious conferences and Sankirtan of the Lord's names on such occasions and not mere pumping of coloured waters and drinking liquors. These functions should be considered sacred and spent in devotional prayers, visiting of holy places and bathing in sacred waters, Satsang with Mahatmas, doing charity to the poor, feeding the poor, etc. Then only Holi can be said as properly conducted. The devotees of the Lord remember the Lilas of the Lord on such happy occasions and hold Kathas. This is the great significance behind every Hindu festival.

There is a controversy in South India whether Kama exists or not, whether he was completely burnt or not. Kama is called Ananga (the limbless). Cupid was not completely burnt. He was rendered limbless only. His subtle form still persists. That is the reason why people even now are swayed by lust.

The religious inner significance of this conflagration of bundles of wood on this day is, "Burn the fire of lust. Hold communion with the Lord and shine like

the self-luminous Brahman." Kamadeva was burnt by Lord Siva by the fire of His third eye. This fire reminds you of this act of Lord Siva and teaches you to burn this all-consuming lust by the powerful fire of wisdom (Jnana Agni).

Burn the lust. Attain purity. Become one with the Light of lights. Rejoice in the Self. Find delight in the Atman alone. Perform worship of the Lord with the purest purpose, with all thoughts directed to the Lord. This is the Message of Holi.

The spring has come with all its beauties. Enjoy the spring of life. Let there be a spring in your life—a life of sweet communion with the Lord, with the flowers and fruits of self-realisation, devotion, Brahma-Jnana, freedom, immortality, peace and bliss.

May you all observe the inner Holi festival by annihilating the Holika—lust and attain perfect purity in thought, word and deed and become the holy of holies! May all of you rejoice in the innermost Self, the fountain of joy and ocean of bliss!

THE PATTERN OF SAINTLINESS

The beginning of saintliness is killing of egoism. The end of saintliness is Eternal life. The key to saintliness is Brahmacharya. The light of saintliness is universal love. The garb of saintliness is virtue. The mark of saintliness is equal vision. The road to saintliness is regular meditation. The foundation of saintliness is Yama-Niyama. A saint lives in God: he is God-intoxicated.

THE GREATEST SACRIFICE

(Swami Ramarajyam)

This is the story of Sage Dadhichi.

The demon Vritrasura used to torment the gods. They were not able to vanquish him. Someone advised them, "You can kill this demon only with a weapon made from the bones of some saintly person."

In those days the austere spiritual practices done by Dadhichi were known all around. Who else could be more saintly than him in the eyes of the gods? The gods approached him and narrated to him the sad stories of the sufferings caused by Vritrasura. On hearing those stories Dadhichi was in great anguish. He said, "Let me know how I can be of any help to you."

The gods said, "Please give us your bones. We will kill Vritrasura with the weapons made of them."

Dadhichi replied, "My mind is where God is. My body is at the disposal of those for whom it may be of some use. I gladly allow you to use this body for their sake."

Saying this, he stopped breathing and departed from this life voluntarily.

A 'Vajra' (a strong weapon) was made of his bones. Vritrasura was killed with that weapon. The gods and the whole society were freed from the demon's terror.

We should be prepared to sacrifice even our lives to do away with injustice done and the feeling of insecurity aroused by others. This would be the greatest sacrifice.

Dear children, are you prepared to be like Dadhichi?

Be friendly to all. Towards your Superiors, have an attitude of complacency, do not be full of fear, timidity and nervousness in their presence. With your equals, be friendly. Towards those who are inferior to you in status, have an attitude of kindness, love and compassion. To those who are troublesome, wicked, unpleasant and nasty, be indifferent.

Swami Chidananda
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NEWS AND REPORTS

SRI MAHASIVARATRI CELEBRATIONS AT THE HEADQUARTERS ASHRAM

महेशं सुरेशं सुरारातिनाशं विभुं विश्वनाथं विभूत्यङ्गभूषम् ।
विरूपाक्षमिन्द्रकवह्नित्रिनेत्रं सदानन्दमीडे प्रभुं पञ्चवक्त्रम् ॥

I adore the Lord who is ever blissful, who has five faces, who is the Lord of gods, the destroyer of the enemies of gods, the all-pervading one, the Lord of the universe, besmeared with ashes, whose three eyes are the moon, the sun and the fire.

The auspicious occasion of Mahasivaratri was celebrated with great sacredness and devoutness at the Headquarters Ashram on 17th February 2015. As a part of the celebrations, the chanting of Panchakshari Mantra 'Om Namah Sivaya' was done daily for two hours from 14th to 16th February at Sri Vishwanatha Mandir.



The Mahasivaratri day's programme commenced at 5.00 a.m. with prayers and meditation followed by Prabhat Pheri. The Ashram reverberated with the soulful chanting of 'Om Namah Sivaya' from 7.00 a.m. to 6.00 p.m. as the Sannyasins, Brahmacharins, Sadhaks and devotees of the Ashram participated enthusiastically in the Akhanda chanting at Sri Vishwanatha Mandir. A Havan for peace and welfare of the world was also performed at the Yajnasala.

At 8.00 p.m., the Mahasivaratri Puja commenced in the beautifully decorated and splendidly illuminated shrine of Lord Sri



Vishwanatha; four grand worships in four Praharas were offered to the Lord to the chanting of Namakam and Chamakam. A large number of devotees from different parts of India and abroad had come to the holy abode of Sadgurudev to participate in Mahasivaratri celebrations. Everyone got the blessed opportunity of performing Abhisheka and Archana of the Lord. The devout and sonorous singing of Kirtans and Bhajans of Lord Siva throughout the night made the devotees' hearts and temple premises 'Sivamaya'. The celebration concluded at 4.00 a.m. with Mangala Arati and distribution of sacred Prasad at Annapurna Dining Hall.

May the ever-auspicious Lord Siva and Sadgurudev Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj shower their blessings upon us all! □ □ □



CULTURAL TOUR OF H.H. SRI SWAMI NIRLIPTANANDAJI MAHARAJ

H.H. Sri Swami Nirliptanandaji Maharaj, Vice-President, DLS Headquarters undertook a Cultural Tour during January-February, 2015, in the States of West Bengal and Odisha.

The Divine Life Society, West Bengal was holding its Annual Sadhana Shibir at Manav Seva Samiti Complex, Hamiragachi, West Bengal, from 22nd to 26th January, 2015. Upon their earnest request and invitation Swamiji Maharaj attended the Sadhana Shibir fully on all the days. The Sadhana Shibir was inaugurated by Sri Swamiji on 22nd January with a discourse for the participants. From 23rd to 25th Swamiji Maharaj addressed the Sadhaks every day in the Morning prayer and meditation session and also gave discourses in the forenoon and afternoon sessions. Swamiji also attended the evening Satsang of the devotees and offered concluding prayers. On 26th which was the concluding day, Sri Swamiji also addressed the Sadhaks in the Morning Prayer session and gave his blessing message in the concluding forenoon session. The Sadhana Shibir was attended by Sadhaks from West Bengal, Odisha, and some other States. On the whole the Shibir was a

great success and was very helpful for the spiritual seekers participating. Swamiji Maharaj expressed thanks for the organisers of the Divine Life Society, West Bengal, for the pains undertaken by them for conducting the Sadhana Shibir, as also for the participating Sadhaks.

Sri Swamiji proceeded to Odisha on 27th January. On 29th Swamiji attended the Annual Day Celebrations of Swami Sivananda Centenary Boys' High School, Khandagiri (Bhubaneswar) and gave his blessings for the students and others.

The Bharatiya Shiksha Vikas Samsthan, Odisha, has been established with the objective of bringing about co-ordination among the various educational institutions and organisations of Odisha for ensuring a single aim and way of thinking, for instilling in the hearts of the students who are the future of the country, all good virtues, qualitative education, the attitude of service for the country and the society, and the sense of dedication for this in life, so as to prepare ideal citizens of the country. There is emphasis on all-round development of their personality from

the intellectual, mental, physical, vital, moral and spiritual points of view. This they have been doing now in the State through 817 schools, having more than 92,000 students, with the help of more than 11,000 teachers engaged in this noble work. The Institution has been started by Dr. Karunakar Pradhan who is now the General Secretary, and others. It has been rendering excellent service in the State of Odisha in the field of value-based and spiritual education. They have constructed newly their State Head Office Building (Saraswati Vihar) at Ghatikia, Kalinga Nagar, Bhubaneswar. Dr. K.K. Pradhan had very earnestly requested Swamiji Maharaj for inauguration of the Head Office building. Sri Swamiji attended the Inaugural function on 30th January, and inaugurated the building and also presided over the function. Paramapujya Gajapati Maharaja Sri Dibyasingha Debji was the Chief Guest, Pujya Swami Sivachidanandaji Maharaj, Pujya Swami Satyaprajnanandaji Maharaj, Pujya Baba Satchidanandaji Maharaj, Pujya Swami Jagannathanandaji Maharaj,

and Pujya Mahant Sri Ramakrishna Dasji Maharaj were the Guest of honour. Swamiji Maharaj addressed the gathering including the teachers and students and gave his blessings. The State President of the Samsthan Sri Devprakash Goel and other distinguished persons were also present.

Revered Sri Swami Jijnasananda Saraswati Maharaj, President, Gita Mandir, Sri Gita Kshetra, Pandara, Bhubaneswar, was conducting the Annual Srimad Bhagavad Gita Swadhyaya Mahayajna on 1st February. As per his request Swamiji Maharaj attended and presided over the Mahayajna and participated in the Parayana of the whole of Bhagavad Gita. Swamiji also gave a discourse on Bhagavad Gita on the occasion. There was an inspired participation of a very large number of devotees of the Gita who very sincerely took part in the holy recitation.

On 2nd February Sri Swamiji attended the meeting of the Managing Committee of Sivananda Centenary Boys' High School, Khandagiri.

You should get up in Brahmamuhurtha and meditate. This is the best time for divine contemplation. The mind is calm. It is like a blank sheet of paper. You can mould it in any way you like. The worldly currents of Raga-Dvesha have not entered it at this time.

(Swami Sivananda)

SEVA THROUGH SIVANANDA HOME

By the profound Blessings of Sri Gurudev Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj, the Divine Life Society Headquarters continues rendering its humble service through Sivananda Home, situated in Tapovan near Laxman Jhula, to the best of its ability.

This month too, new patients were admitted in the Home. A few Sadhus, who were suffering from fever, breathlessness, vomiting and general weakness, were admitted and medical treatment was started. The change of weather from chilling cold towards the spring with its hot sun in the afternoons, caused trouble also for many of the inmates of the Home. Cold and cough, viral and bacterial, vomiting, enteric fever, etc., occurred and were treated accordingly, as per the prescription of the doctor. Furthermore, an old-aged Babaji was admitted, who seemed to have lost his way in life, lost his family and had landed up at Triveni Ghat in Rishikesh, where he was just sitting in a corner, not able to get up at all. He was found to be dehydrated, with fever and having an old fracture, due to which he could move only with the help of a stick.

His mind was disturbed, naturally, having undergone the loneliness and absolute abandonment by all human beings. But one good-hearted Samaritan brought him to the Home for admission, and he could settle down after a while. Still he hardly talks, but his gestures and body-language shows that he is getting at ease, step by step. Forgotten by all, but not by Him, remembered by none, but by Him, Who abides in all, Who resides in all, Who rests in all.

“Adorable Presence, Thou who art within and without, above and below and all around, Thou who art interpenetrating every cell of my being, Thou who art the Eye of my eyes, the Ear of my ears, the Heart of my heart, the Mind of my mind, the Breath of my breath, the Life of my life, the Soul of my soul, Bless us, dear God, to be aware of Thy Presence now and here.”

(Swami Omkar)

“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)

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**UTTAR PRADESH STATE DIVINE LIFE SOCIETY
SPIRITUAL CONFERENCE/DIVINE MEET-2015**

By the grace of Worshipful Gurudev Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj, under the aegis of Birth Centenary Celebrations of Pujya Sri Swami Chidanandaji Maharaj, Divine Life Society Spiritual Conference-Uttar Pradesh, will be held from 12-04-15 to 14-04-2015 at Naimisharanya, Dist. Sitapur, UP, (80 K.M. from Lucknow).

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 of U.P. are cordially invited to participate in the Divine Meet aimed at dissemination of spiritual knowledge.

Delegate fee for participation in the Conference will be ₹ 500/- per person inclusive of food and accommodation which may be sent by DD/Cheque in favour of "The Divine Life Society, Lucknow Branch" or can be directly deposited in the PNB Account No 1856000100767344 IFSC Code PUNB0185600 (No delegate fee for Children up to 12 years).

Last date for enrollment is 31-03-15. Delegate fee along with the form confirming participation has to be sent to: Sri Jagdish Dayal, A-669, HAL Old Colony, Faizabad Road, Lucknow, Pin-226016, UP.

For Enrolment and other details kindly visit the website: www.dlslucknow.org or contact :

1. Sri Naresh Singla	08173000385
2. Sri N K Aggarwal	09335710601
3. Sri C L Manikant	09450930777
4. Sri Rakesh Goyal	09621087893
5. Sri Jagdish Dayal	09415135046
6. Smt Vijya Tiwari	09936143693
7. Sri Ambreesh Dubey	07599101194

All Devotees are cordially invited to participate in the Divine Meet & make it a grand success.

—The Divine Life Society

REPORTS FROM THE DLS BRANCHES

INLAND BRANCHES

Ambala (Haryana): The Branch continued with regular Satsang on Sundays and Tuesdays during January, 2015 and a special Satsang was arranged on 1st of January; free Homeopathy Seva, every day, continued at Sriguru Granth Sahib Society's dispensary as usual; video Satsang is on 2nd Sunday of every month.

Aska (Odisha): In the month of November and December, 2014 regular Satsang was held on every Sunday and Thursday; mobile Satsang every week was also conducted; the Branch organised one-day Sadhana Shibir in November as well as December, in which large number of devotees participated.

Bangalore (Karnataka): Satsang on first and fourth Sundays and weekly Thursday Satsang were conducted as usual, besides Devi Puja every Friday with Lalita Sahasranama and Vushnu Sahasranama; and a special Satsang as a part of Swami Chidananda Birth Centenary celebration was conducted on 24th of December, 2014, which included Bhajan and Kirtan and talks on the life and teachings of Swami Chidanandaji Maharaj and 2nd chapter of Bhagavad Gita recitation.

The Branch celebrated its 70th year of inauguration from 12th to 14th of January, 2015. The celebration included Kirtan and Bhajans, talks on the life and teachings of Swami Chidanandaji Maharaj, Swami Sivananda Katha in typical Harikatha style, and a dance drama "Yoga the Supreme Union" by artists of Ramana Centre of Learning.

Barbil (Matkambeda-Odisha): In December, 2014 the Branch conducted 4 weekly Satsangs on Thursdays, 5 residential Satsangs on every Mondays and Balvihar classes for school going children every Sunday. Besides this, 'Gita Jayanti' and 24th of December as Sadhana day were celebrated, and a number of patients were treated in Sivananda Charitable Homoeo Dispensary.

Bellaguntha (Odisha): Daily morning prayer and meditation followed by Guru Paduka Puja from 5 to 7am, weekly Satsang every Sunday, mobile satsang every Thursday, Sadhana day on every Sankranti, Ramayan Path every Tuesday, and a special Satsanga on 8th of January were the activities of the Branch during January, 2015.

Bargarh (Odisha): Rudrabhishek every Monday, Guru Pada Puja on Thursdays, Satsang every Saturday

and Sunday, and daily activities of Arati, Swadhyaya, and Yoga continued during December, 2014. Besides, treatment of poor patients and distribution of free literature in Oriya were carried out, and a talk on Srimad Bhagavata Mahapurana was also arranged.

Bellary (Karnataka): Satsang every Sunday and daily worship continued during the month of December, 2014, which included chanting of Maha Mrityunjaya Mantra, Shanti Mantras and Prayer for world peace.

Berhampur (Odisha): Besides the usual Satsang, mobile as well as in Branch premises, the Branch celebrated Gita-Jayanti and Ekadashi on 2nd and 18th of December, 2014. Sadhana Divas was observed on 21st December. A special birthday Satsang was conducted to celebrate the birthday of the daughter of a devotee.

Bhishmagiri (Odisha): Satsang every Sunday evening with Bhajan, Kirtan and Swadhyaya, and special Satsang on Gita-Jayanti, Dhanu Sankranti, Saphala Ekadashi and Bakula Amavasya were held during December, 2014.

Bhuj (Gujarat): Talk on Kathopanishad on 10th January and another talk on Indian Constitution on 24th January, 2015 were arranged. Both the talks began and ended with prayers.

Chatrapur (Odisha): Apart from daily Satsang the Branch also conducted 4 weekly Satsangs. The monthly Jayanti day ceremonies were observed on 8th and 24th of December, 2014 with Paduka Puja of Sadgurudev Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj and H.H. Sri Swami Chidanandaji Maharaj. A three-day Gita Jayanti programme was held by Adhyayan of Srimad Bhagavad Gita.

On the completion of 50 years the Branch celebrated its Golden Jubilee during the month of December. The special function was from 22nd to 26th of December at Chatrapur in which 1500 delegates participated. The function included a Sadhana Shibir, a Yuva Shibir, a free health camp, book stall for spiritual literature, Narayan Seva and Nagar Sankirtan. Saints from DLS HQrs as well as from Odisha graced the function and Sri Gajapati Maharaja Dibyasingha Deb attended the function as the chief guest.

Cuttack (Odisha): During December, 2014 the Branch continued its regular Satsang every Sunday and Paduka Puja of Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj and Swami Chidananda every day. The first Sunday was observed as Sadhana day with spiritual programme in the

morning and rendering service to the poor patients through charitable Allopathic dispensary in the evening. As a part of Birth Centenary celebration of Swami Chidanandaji Maharaj on hundred blankets were distributed among the inmates of Govt Leprosy Colony. Christmas was celebrated on 25th December in which life and teachings of Jesus Christ were discussed. During the month of January, 2015 Sadhana day was observed on 4th of January.

Digapahandi (Odisha): Apart from regular activities the Branch conducted a one-day special Sadhana programme on 01.12.2014 in a local temple, celebrated Gita Jayanti on 2nd December; Dhanu Sankranti on 16th December with a Havan for world peace and welfare of the devotees in the morning and a Satsang in the evening, a home Satsang and a special meeting held to chalk-out programmes for Birth Centenary celebrations of Sri Swami Chidanandaji Maharaj.

Faridpur (U.P.): The 71st year of the commencement of Mahamantra Kirtan in Bhajan Hall and establishment of Vishwanath Mandir in Headquarters Ashram were celebrated through special Satsangs. Warm clothes and blankets were distributed amongst the poor and needy in the month of December, 2014.

Gurdaspur (Punjab): Besides Satsang every Saturday evening the Branch representatives visit a Leper Colony with medicines every second Saturday and arrange an eye check-up camp once a month in a nearby village.

Jeypore (Odisha): During the four months from September to December, 2014, 44 Satsangs were conducted, Birth anniversaries of Gurudev Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj and H.H. Swami Chidanandaji Maharaj were celebrated on 8th and 24th of September, a large number of patients were treated in homoeopathic dispensary every month, Parayan of Srimad Bhagavata Puran was conducted in the month of Kartik and Gita Jayanti was celebrated in December, 2014.

Kakinada (Andhra Pradesh): The Branch conducted Satsangs with Bhajan, Kirtan, meditation and Pravachan regularly on all Wednesdays, Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays, Narayan Seva for the poor every Sunday, and free medical camp once every month. As a part of Birth Centenary celebrations of H.H. Swami Chidanandaji Maharaj the Branch conducted Akhanda Mahamantra Sankirtan once a month, arranged discourses by distinguished saints of the area, celebrated birth anniversary of Pujya Swami Devanandaji Maharaj, organised a spiritual 'quiz' and a

contest on Bhagavadgita 15th chapter. His Holiness Swami Padmanabhanandaji Maharaj visited the Branch on 19th of January to participate, address and bless the gathering in a grand Satsang arranged by the Branch under the aegis of Swami Chidananda Birth Centenary celebration and delivered an inspiring talk.

Kanpur (U.P.): H.H. Swami Padmanabhanandaji Maharaj visited the Branch on 14th of November and delivered an inspiring talk to nearly 100 devotees; special Satsangs were held on 24th November and 7th of December, 2014. The Branch devotees conducted Akhand Manas Path at Divya Nama Mandir of DLS HQs on 3rd and 4th of January, 2015.

Khatiguda (Odisha): Apart from weekly Satsang on Thursdays the Branch conducted special Satsang on every Ekadasi day. January 4 was observed as Sadhana day in which it did Narayan Seva and Satsang.

Lucknow (U.P.): Satsangs were held on various dates in a flat in Lekh Raj Homes, a central place in the city. Home Satsangs were arranged in different parts of the city during the visit of Sri Swami Devabhaktanandaji of DLS HQs. The Branch distributed fruits and snacks in the National Association for the blind.

Mahasamund (Chhatisgarh): The Branch conducted Satsang everyday in the morning from 5 to 7 am which included Prayer, Bhajan, Gita Path as well as Asana and Pranayama. There were recitation of Hanuman Chalisa every Tuesday and Saturday; and Path of Sri Ramacharita Manas everyday at night from 8 to 9 pm. A Yoga camp was conducted from 14th to 23rd of December 2014 in which 80 people participated. The Branch also held a mobile Satsang.

Nandininagar (Chhatisgarh): The Branch conducted daily Brahma Muhurat Satsang, daily evening Satsang, weekly mobile Satsang every Thursday, Matri Satsang every Saturday, twelve-hour Mahamantra Kirtan on 3rd December, and arranged recitation of the entire Gita on Gita Jayanti day on 2nd December. Annaprasan Sanskar of the granddaughter of a devotee was also arranged during December.

Patiala (Punjab): The Branch organises mobile Satsang in the house of some devotee once a month and gives monthly donation to a Gaushala. Sri Swami Akhilanandaji Maharaj and Swami Shivashritananda Mataji visited Patiala Branch from November 21st to 23rd, 2014 and delivered discourses in a number of Satsangs arranged, during this period, under the aegis of Swami Chidananda Birth Centenary Celebration.

Pasulunda (Cuttack-Odisha): The Branch conducted morning mobile Paduka Puja every Sunday,

observed one day as Sadhana day and conducted Bhagavata Saptaha from 25th to 31st of December, 2014 during which Morning Prayer, Meditation, Paduka Puja were done every day and the village children were given Anna-prasad at lunch time.

Raipur (Chhatisgarh): Weekly Satsang every Sunday, Rudrabhishekam of Lord Vishvanath on 'Mas Shivratri', Vishnu-Sahasranama chanting and Puja of Lord Vishnu on both the Ekadashis, Ramacharitamans Path every Monday by ladies of the Branch, Sundarakand Path every Tuesday by the ladies of the Branch and Paduka Puja of Gurudev Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj and H.H. Swami Chidanandaji Maharaj on the 3rd Sunday were conducted by the Branch in the month of December, 2014.

Rourkela (Odisha): Weekly Satsang every Thursday in the Branch premises; mobile Satsang every Sunday; Paduka Puja, Abhishek and Archana every Thursday and Sunday morning; Paduka Puja, Abhishek and Archana on 8th and 24th of January 2015 with Satsang in the evening, and under the aegis of Swami Chidananda Birth Centenary celebrations five Sadhana days observed which were attended by more than 150 people every day during the month of January, 2015.

Sirpur Kaghaznagar (Telengana): Besides the usual activities of mobile Satsang every Sunday and Guru-Paduka Puja every Thursday the Branch conducted a two-day Annual Day programme on the occasion of 15th Aradhana of Sri Swami Devanandaji Maharaj in the month of December, 2014.

In the month of January, 2015, in addition to mobile Satsang on Sundays and Paduka Puja on Thursdays the Branch devotees, about 40 in number, participated in the 41st All Andhra Divine Life Society Conference from 24th to 26th January.

Salipur (Cuttack-Odisha): Apart from daily prayer and meditation in the morning and daily Satsang in the evening, the Branch conducted complete Gita Parayan on 1st Sunday, practice of Yogasana and Pranayam on 2nd Sunday, Sadhana day on the 3rd Sunday, Akhanda Mahamantra Chanting on 4th Sunday, special Satsang on 5th Sunday and Sivananda Day (Gurupada Puja) on 8th in the month of November, 2014. Free medical treatment was provided on Sundays, and training in Yogasanas and Pranayam, theory and practical, was also organised.

Sunabeda Ladies Branch (Odisha): Daily Mahamantra Sankirtan, Bhagavat Path, Gita Path and Mahamrityunjaya Mantra Japa in morning, weekly general Satsang on Sunday evening which included study of Gurudev's books and children's Satsang in the

afternoon, Abhishek and Vishnu-sahasranama Path on every Ekadasi and Chidananda day on 24th September were observed in the Branch in September, 2014. In January, 2015 Sadhana day was observed on 4th January, a special Satsang programme was arranged from 1st to 7th of January in which a learned Swami delivered discourses on Bhagavad Gita. Sarawati Puja was done on 24th January.

Varanasi (U.P.): The Branch conducted a Satsang in the 'Vridha Ashram' on 15th December in which Sri Swami Devabhaktanandaji from DLS HQrs and some devotees of the Lucknow DLS Branch also participated. In the month of January, 2015, a mobile Satsang was held at the residence of a devotee on 4th and another at 'Vridh Ashram' on 25th.

Vasant Vihar (New-Delhi): During the month of January, 2015 the Branch conducted Satsangs on all Sundays. The Satsangs included meditation, reading from Sivananda literature, reading from Ram-Charit Manas, reading from Bhagavad Gita and a lecture from a local Saint and prayer for world peace.

OVERSEAS BRANCHES

Hong Kong (China): The Branch held one-hour Maha Mantra Chanting every Saturday (except Second Saturday) in both Cheung Sha Wan and North point Yoga Centers of the Branch. Regular monthly Satsang was held on 8th November, 2014 in the presence of H.H. Sri Swami Yogaswarupanandaji Maharaj which included one hour chanting of Maha Mritunjaya Mantra, Hanuman Chalisa, Bhajan, prayer and Arati. Regular Yogasana classes based on 'Practical Guide to Yoga' continued during the month.

The Branch organised a series of activities during the visit of H.H. Sri Swami Yogaswarupanandaji Maharaj in November, 2014 which included a meeting with the disciples of H.H. Sri Swami Chidanandaji Maharaj, Deepavali celebrations, evening lecture by Swamiji for Yoga teachers, visiting the Big Buddha at Po Lin Monastery in Lantau Island, a public talk by Swamiji on the topic "Meditation in city life" at the community Hall in Happy Valley; 3-day Yoga Camp from 7th to 9th of November. On the theme "Karma Yoga in Bhagavad Gita" there were 3 sessions of lectures by Revered Swamiji.

The Branch held a special Bhajan-Kirtan Satsang with a talk on the Essence of Bhagavad Gita conducted by Revered Hari Cheng at the Cheung Sha Wan Yoga Centre, on 22nd November 2014. □ □ □