



It is the objective of this Ashrama to disseminate the Teachings of  
H.H. Swami Sivananda Maharaj  
according to H.H. Swami Venkatesananda Maharaj

**March - June 2017**

### **Update from Sri Yogeshwari Mataji**

Dear Friends,  
Hari Om! Loving greetings!

We are experiencing a very cold winter! The hands are cold, but the heart is still warm!

Seriously though, how grateful we are to have a roof over our heads, beds and blankets. There are many who cannot survive this cold spell and our Outreach does its best to alleviate the suffering of the less fortunate.

We celebrated Lord Rama's incarnation on 28<sup>th</sup> March with readings from the Ramayana at all the Satsangs. Lord Rama being the example of the perfect man with His equally outstanding consort Sita, both Avatars who came to live in the world to uplift the downtrodden and suppress the wicked. On 5<sup>th</sup> April Swami



Vidyananda talked on the various levels of Dharma and how it is impossible to understand the dharma of the Divine Incarnations.

On April 11<sup>th</sup> Swami Vidyananda gave an excellent talk on Sri Hanuman to celebrate his

life of unflinching dedication to Lord Rama. The talk focused on the relationship between Hanuman and Lord Rama, depicting the various levels of relationship that the seeker has with God.

To celebrate Easter, we began readings on 13<sup>th</sup> April at our Satsangs on the life of Lord Jesus by Swami Sivananda. On Easter Sunday we celebrated Christ's victory over body consciousness to freedom, moksha.

On the public holiday on 1<sup>st</sup> May, we commemorated Sri Adi Shankaracharya's Jayanti with the wonderfully inspiring two-and-a-half hour film on his life. We saw how Shankara's devout parents influenced his life. He was the first to spread his conviction in the Advaita, non-duality philosophy, against much opposition. He was a beacon of light. Swami Vidyananda gave an inspiring talk afterwards on the importance of constant reflection on death and wisdom.

On 20<sup>th</sup> May we held our AGM. The outcome has already been conveyed to members.

There has been much concern over the rotting staircase. Sri Daya Naidu arranged to have the stairs

reinforced and supervised the job himself. Thank you Daya!

On 27<sup>th</sup> May we were treated to a wonderful meditative recital on the sitar by the gifted artist Akash. This is a very difficult instrument to play. In keeping with Gurudev's teachings on the importance of Seva, selfless service, Akash would not accept payment. His demeanour was humble, a trait which characterises great souls.

On June 1<sup>st</sup> we paid tribute to Gurudev Swami Sivananda in commemoration of His Sannyas Diksha. This means that one is free to serve all without attachment. Swami Vidyananda gave an excellent talk on the four stages of life of which the last is sannyasa.

The following day we were treated to a concert by Desert Rose, our talented friends who inspire all of us with their devotional songs with musical accompaniment.

We had a somewhat impromptu visit on June 10<sup>th</sup> at our evening Satsang. The charming and most knowledgeable Smt Mahatma Suvidhya Baiji gave a most inspiring talk on the Bhagavad Gita. The Swamini covered the whole of the

# Cosmic links

Bhagavad Gita in one hour with such a light touch. We found her most inspiring and regret that on that cold, wintry evening we did not have a packed room, so that more could have benefitted.

We celebrated International Yoga Day on Wednesday 21<sup>st</sup> June. The programme consisted of hatha yoga classes, followed by a guided meditation and a talk on jnana yoga. The programme ended

with kirtan and handing out of jnana prasad.

We are happy to have Mother Priya staying with us again after having spent a few years in Montague. Welcome back!

We are thankful to God and Gurudev to have been so blessed in our undertakings.

With Prem and Om  
Yogeshwari



“What good is the warmth of summer, without the cold of winter to give it sweetness.”

— John Steinbeck

“You couldn’t have strength without weakness, you couldn’t have light without dark, you couldn’t have love without loss.”

— Jodi Picoult

“As contraries are known by contraries, so are the delights of presence best known by the torments of absence.”

— Alcibiades

“Opposites are not always contradictions, they can be complimentary.”

— Steven Redhead

“Abuse and respect are diametric opposites: You do not respect someone whom you abuse, and you do not abuse someone whom you respect.”

— Lundy Bancroft

“Worry is the opposite of power.”

— Bryant McGill

“So you find yourself surrounded by death and horror in the world, and you escape it into lust. But lust has no duration; it leaves you again in the desert.”

— Hermann Hesse

“Faith, in its most correct form, never removes responsibility; it removes fear of responsibility. The results are complete opposites with the greater saying, ‘God’s will is my delight.’”

— Criss Jami

“Embrace contradictions for they make up all of life: you will eternally be looking for yourself and seeking ways to lose yourself.”

— Kamand Kojouri

“Love has no opposite. Hate, fear, are not love’s opposites; they are its denial.”

— Ivan M. Granger

“But there is no energy unless there is a tension of opposites; hence it is necessary to discover the opposite to the attitude of the conscious mind.”

— C.G. Jung

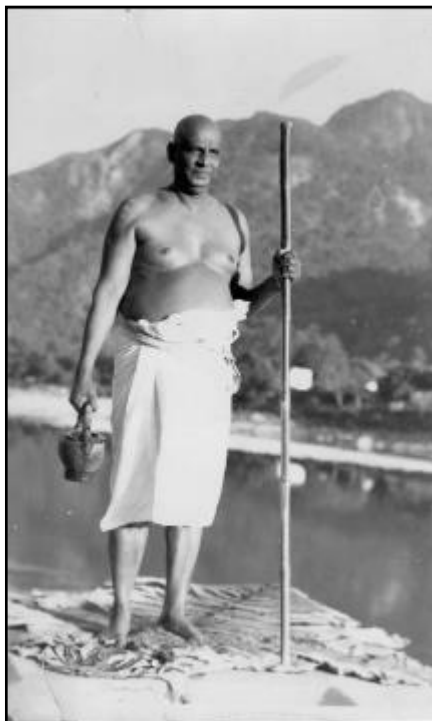
## World Of Opposites

By Sri Swami Sivananda

One thing which is sweet and pleasant to you at one moment, produces the very reverse sensation in another moment. Who has not experienced this, in this world of opposites? Objects when longed for are pleasant but are bitter if not longed for. Hence vasanas (tendencies) are the cause of sensual pleasures. Pleasures will stop when you get satisfaction in them but if vasanas cease, the mind will perish and all else will be destroyed. Therefore annihilate these vasanas, the enemies of atma jnana (self-knowledge) and immortality.

The mind clings to sensual objects. If the vasanas perish, the mind ceases thinking of objects and we attain the state of thoughtlessness. You will have a balanced mind despite adverse circumstances and many obstacles. Vasanas perish through dispassion, discrimination, control of the senses, enquiry of, "Who am I?" and meditation.

The impure vasanas persist and resist. They lurk in the corners of the mind in a mysterious manner. They play tricks on you. They can change their colours like a chameleon. Under pressure of yogic practices they get suppressed for some time but if you are not regular in your



meditation, if vairagya (dispassion) wanes, they will attack with redoubled force. You must have a sharp intellect to detect their presence. Vasanas have arisen through enjoyment in many thousands of lives. They are very potent. They only perish through protracted spiritual practices: japa (repetition of God's name), kirtan (chanting), meditation, self enquiry, discrimination, sama (control of mind), dama (control of senses),

pratyahara (withdrawal of the mind) and pranayama (yoga breathing).

You have to transmute the impure vasanas into pure ones, through constant effort. Change the current of impure vasanas and allow them to run in the channel of pure vasanas. But pure vasanas are also fetters, golden fetters. You have to destroy the impure vasanas with the help of pure vasanas then you have to abandon these pure ones also. Desire for liberation (moksa vasana) also must die eventually. Then only

you become that.

Separate yourself from the objects. In the absence of objects the 'I' does not exist; and these objects do not exist in the absence of 'I'. Have the strong conviction that 'I' does not belong to the objects, that the objects do not belong to the 'I'. Identify yourself with the infinite 'I' (the satcidananda Brahman) and abandon the burden of the physical body. Become a videha mukta (liberated and bodiless) - all burdens will perish now.

## Oases In The Desert

By Swami Venkatesananda

Whenever I read or speak about the Mahabharata, I am overwhelmed by a depressing thought. The hundred wicked Kauravas acted as one man, hardly ever arguing, hardly ever even disagreeing with one another and ever-willing to overlook their differences of opinion. On the other hand, the five noble Pandavas spent too much of time and energy arguing (almost bickering!) among themselves. I can understand this, justify it, but cannot appreciate it. 'Good' people in the world are more eager to reform one another; they expose one another's faults in the name of

truth, honesty, sincerity, etc. Criticising one another is considered a demonstration of moral courage. All that is excellent. But what they tend to forget the whole time is that they have forgotten the real problem: the Kauravas (wicked people) multiply proliferously.

If the leaders of world religions combine their energies, pool their resources and work in harmony, they will succeed in clipping the wings of Satan. Will they get out of their own shell and take a broad view of the world?



*Swami Venkatesananda with Roman Catholic and Anglican Bishops from the Bombay Missionary and Swami Kritananda Ramakrishna Mission Mauritius*

No one for one moment would deny that in every part of the world there are good people and there are not-so-good people. But it is doubtful if there is any justification whatsoever for the sweeping generalisations which we, in our ignorance, often make.

If you move around the world, you might be surprised how hazardous such generalisations are. There are good people throughout the world: of this I have no doubt. It is high time we gave up making sweeping generalisations born of our own ignorance and prejudice and made

a special effort to link up with the divine forces of love, harmony, unselfishness and divinity which exist throughout the world as oases exist in deserts.

Among materialists, you will find many spiritual beings; among atheists you will find devotees of God; among the superstitious you will find highly intelligent beings; among fanatics you will find those who are full of love and tolerance. The fact that they exist surrounded by the opposites makes them more valuable and precious: oases in deserts.

## **Ananda Kutir Ashrama School Project**

### **The Yogic concept of Education**

Education is a system through which we learn proper expression of life. We can even call it a science of behaviour, a science of performing creatively and constructively in our life, a process of learning how to live. This is the yoga concept of education. Real education happens in the first seven to eight years of life. Education which deals with life happens in these years. It is in this context that we have to see the role of yoga. Afterwards, we receive academic education.

Swami Niranjananda Sarasvati

### **The Value of Yoga for pre-school children (3 to 6 years)**

Our Friday Integral Yoga Programme which took place in 2016, in Garden Village Maitland, accommodated children between the ages of 3 to 6 years. These children were at home and never exposed to any form of early intervention. Eight of these children are currently in Grade R at Garden Village Primary School. I visited the school to meet the children and was pleasantly surprised to see how happy they were to be in formal school. The teachers had very positive feedback to share with regards to the impact that Yoga and Occupational Therapy has had on the children's performance and behaviour in the classroom.

The Grade R teacher, Ms Atson, shared the following: "Most often they have children

who do not attend any Early Childhood Development (ECD) Programme. These children do not have any concept of themselves, their environment, knowledge of basic concepts such as shapes and numbers and struggle to follow structure, such as sitting on a chair in the classroom. This leads to the children having emotional delays and struggling to keep up with the work. With the children that were part of the yoga programme, they were open to expressing their experiences, they wanted to interact with teachers and children and do not necessarily have a problem. There was one boy who stuttered and he no longer stutters. In some cases they are functioning even above children that attended ECD. They are more willing to work and are more enthusiastic. Those that experienced yoga displayed more confidence.

Raafiq is a star and excels academically, he has no reversals when writing, is in one of the top groups of the class and has a mature pencil grip. We do not want to stop yoga as it helps the kids.”



Following conversations with the school, the principal and Grade R teachers strongly feel that they would like yoga classes to continue during school time and not as an after school independent programme. This is currently being planned.

The child has his own laws of growth and if we want to help him grow, we must follow him instead of imposing ourselves on him.

Maria Montessori

### Life is Yoga Programme at Village Tods Educare

Devi Harker and Swami Vidyananda continue to offer yoga to the staff and children at Village Tods Educare. Devi offers yoga to all 91 children once per week and hatha yoga to the teachers once per week. The children’s classes have 3 age groups; 3 to 4 year olds, 4 to 5 year olds and 5 to 6 year olds. Swami Vidyananda offers meditation and yoga philosophy to the Principal, Carol Booyesen and 2 teachers on a weekly basis.

The classes are well received and the feedback received indicates that the teachers are benefiting from the classes.

### Research findings.....

Recent research conducted by The Centre for Early Childhood and UCT Department of Social Development shows that in South Africa 63% of children under the age of six years cannot access adequate Early Childhood Development (ECD) Programmes. It highlighted that the government had very good programmes available but fell short in the implementation of the programmes to reach the needy children. The research showed that those benefitting from these development programmes did far better compared to their counterparts in later schooling.

The National Department of Education defines Early Childhood Development (ECD) as ‘The processes by which children from birth to 9 years of age grow and thrive physically, mentally, emotionally, morally and socially’.

There is substantial evidence indicating the benefits of providing structured and quality early childhood development (ECD) services and programmes to preschool-aged children. Providing appropriate cognitive stimulation, nutrition, love, health services during the critical development period results in increased primary school enrolment, enhanced school

performance, lower repetition and drop-out rates, reductions in juvenile crime rates, reduced remedial education costs and improved economic and social productivity in adulthood. These benefits produce significant social, education and economic returns to society.

The Children of Light School endeavours to address a very real and critical need of providing ECD services to needy children between the ages of 4 to 6 years.

Yours in Service  
Maitri Makan

ONE SHOULD  
**NEVER**  
Mistake  
Kindness  
FOR WEAKNESS...  
*for it is in the moments  
that we apply kindness*  
THAT OUR STRENGTH IS REVEALED.

- INSPIRE SOMEBODY

## Community Classes

### Maitland Garden Village and the Maitland Town Hall

Ananda Kutir Ashrama's activities now include two Hatha Yoga classes in two different communities. Having been able to extend ourselves in this way has been a real joy and has been relatively seamless given that Yoga is no longer quite as unknown or mysterious as it was two years ago.



*Maitland Garden Village Community Hall*

The 'flagship' class which takes place at the Community Hall in Maitland Garden Village has continued every Friday morning, whilst the newly set up class at the Maitland Town Hall has been running every Tuesday morning since February this year. The class has been met with much enthusiasm and currently serves the greater suburb of Maitland, with one student making her way from Goodwood. Both classes have no fee attached.

I usually focus on the students, but for this update I feel it is appropriate to zoom in on the teachers.

My own personal circumstances have limited the number of classes that I have been able to teach, but this has thankfully not interrupted the flow of classes in Maitland Garden Village as Shanti Roopnarain has taken up much of the teaching this quarter – thank you Shanti! Shanti has also agreed to co-teach this class with me which means that the class itself is just that much more sustainable in the longer term, providing continuity for the students throughout the year.

Devi Harker is another Ananda Kutir teacher who is involved in this project and she has taken on the second community class with her usual grace and enthusiasm. Devi has much experience around the needs of the elderly and I have no doubt



*Maitland Town Hall*

that those attending this class will gain enormously. Hopefully, with Shanti now available, we'll also be able to provide back-up to this class when needed.

The students from these communities display a range of chronic health conditions and we are very fortunate to have access to Anthea Parkinson who has offered Remedial Yoga at Ananda Kutir Ashrama for some years.

Anthea has provided advice when needed and what a privilege it is for both students and teachers to know that we can draw on her knowledge. Anthea, thank you for your generosity.

It is wonderful to see a small team of teachers coming together.

By Kamala Wengrowe

“Men can be united only if they are free from hatred and petty-mindedness and if they are perfectly established in ethical culture.”

Swami Sivananda

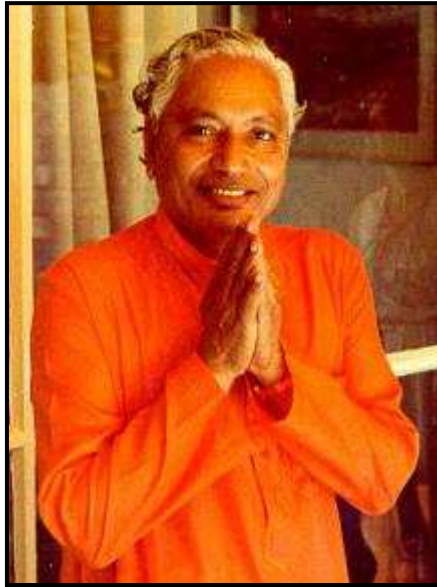
## The Symbol Of Wisdom

By Swami Venkatesananda

The folding of palms in greeting might well have numerous meanings: the coming together of the opposites, the ideal love relationship between 'you' and 'me' in a free (not locked-fingers) association (not held apart), and "I greet the divine in you".

What is that 'divine-in-you'? This is answered by the great jnana mudra or chin mudra: bring together the tips of the thumb and index finger with the other three fingers straight and together. God is not the three. Hence they are excluded and the so-called ego (the index finger) bends (surrenders) to meet the Lord (symbolised by the thumb).

What are the three? The physical body which is but the product of food and shares the perishable fate of food, the mind which is the supermarket called knowledge, the confluence of very many influences or conditioning factors, and thirdly, ignorance in its literal sense of non-knowing. It is on account of ignorance that the so-called ego (the index finger) comes between all these and the omnipresent divine. The ego-sense has no separate existence. Its realisation of this truth is surrender, and the instant completion of the circle (when the tips of the index finger and thumb



are united) which is the realisation of the infinite.

The 'three' are excluded only from the point of view of the assumed individuality. When this bluff is called, there is no longer 'my' body and 'my' mind. Then all matter, including the body, is seen to be God's own cosmic body; all mind is understood to be the cosmic intelligence which is non-different from the infinite consciousness.

Hence we worship and adore even the physical body of the enlightened sage, our own guru.

## Wisdom from Mother Yogeshwari

**Stillness creates space for intuition.**

"The elimination of egoism is the sole condition of self-realization."

Swami Sivananda

## Book Review

### Daily Readings by Swami Venkatesananda

Swami Venkatesananda has translated many important yoga and vedanta scriptures into a daily readings format. The purpose of daily readings is that it is possible for the seeker, who also leads a busy life, to be able to spend a few minutes a day reading and contemplating the teachings contained within a scripture and to be able to complete it within a year. The following books were compiled:

1. Thoughts for Today: This contains various themes on spiritual life.
2. Insights and Inspirations: This contains a collection of articles covering the five branches of yoga and other important topics.
3. Song of God: This is a commentary on the Bhagavad Gita, which teaches yoga as daily action.
4. Valmiki's Ramayana: This interpretative translation of this epic poem teaches how to live a life of dharma.
5. Book of God: This interpretative translation of the Srimad Bhagavatam instills devotion to God and the spiritual path.
6. Supreme Yoga: This interpretative translation teaches the highest truths of Vedanta in captivating and thought-provoking stories.
7. Buddha Daily Readings: This book contains translations from some of the original important Buddhist texts.

## **Ananda Kutir Ashrama Membership Application Form**

Seekers who are keenly involved in the ashrama and who are actively supportive of its objectives can become members. A member receives a copy of Swami Sivananda's 20 Spiritual Instructions and Swami Venkatesananda's Prayer, the newsletter and is able to receive discounts on courses, yoga days and purchases. A member has access to the library, can vote at the AGM and can serve on the management committee.

**PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY**

R200 for a one-year membership.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Postal Address \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Cellphone \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

**For more information please contact:  
Ananda Kutir Ashrama**

**031-418 NPO**

Tel: +27 21 696 1821

Email: [info@anandakutir.org.za](mailto:info@anandakutir.org.za)

[www.anandakutir.org.za](http://www.anandakutir.org.za)

Residential Address: 24 Sprigg Rd, Rondebosch East,  
Cape Town, South Africa

Postal Address: PO Box 36134, Glosderry, 7702  
South Africa

### **Banking Details**

#### **Donations to the Ashrama**

##### **Electronic Transfers:**

Bank: Standard Bank  
Branch code: 025009 (Rondebosch Branch)  
Account name: Ananda Kutir Ashrama  
Account No: 275500551  
Reference: Your name & purpose of payment

#### **Donations to the Outreach Project**

##### **Electronic Transfers:**

Bank: Standard Bank  
Branch code: 025009 (Rondebosch Branch)  
Account name: Ananda Kutir Outreach Project  
Account No: 275471152  
Reference: Your name & purpose of payment