



Ananda Kutir Ashrama

serve . love . give . purify . meditate . realise

Affiliated to the Divine Life Society, Rishikesh, India

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

For the period March 2017 – February 2018

Hari OM and Loving Greetings to You All,

During this past financial year, the main event was the 50 Years of Seva (1967 – 2017) celebration for Mother Yogeshwari. Sri Swami Padmanabhanandaji Maharaj, General Secretary of Divine Life Society, Headquarters, was invited as the special guest. During his stay at the Ashrama, Swamiji gave elevating discourses on the Kena Upanishad, and we had a most enjoyable and enriching time being in his company.

The actual celebratory event was held on 7 October 2017 and below follows an account of the function:

“On account of my 50 Year Seva Function, we were greatly honoured to have Sri Swami Padmanabhanandaji and his assistant Swami Sridharanandaji with us from 2nd October for eleven days. Swamiji gave wonderful lectures every evening and shared interesting stories with us during the day.

The 50 Year Seva Function was organised by our friends on 7th October at the Erin Hall in Rondebosch. This was a joyful event with speeches by Swami Padmanabhanandaji, Swami Vidyananda, Nalini Gangen on behalf of HAWC, Valerie Davids on behalf of SARYTA, Mary Frost on behalf of CTIL. Kamala Wengrowe so ably presented gifts of gratitude from friends. Vani took on the role of Master of ceremonies. Uma Edwards created a slideshow. The book ‘Conversations with Mother Yogeshwari’, which was beautifully coordinated by Tara Raymond, was also launched. The Punwassi family gave a rousing performance, including a song, whose words were written by Sita and set to the tune of a well-known chant by her brother Shivesh. What a talented family. Thank you to all who have gone to so much trouble! I now know how much hidden talent there is in all of my friends!

Personally I cannot thank Swami Padmanabhanandaji enough for the blessing bestowed on me and all of us by travelling all the way from Rishikesh to visit this little ashram for this occasion. We were also able to observe perfect seva exemplified in Swami Sridharanandaji. My sincere thanks to all who have spent so much time and effort in making the past few weeks so memorable! May Gurudev continue to bless us all.” *Written by Mother Yogeshwari [Newsletter July – October 2017]*

Swami Vidyananda's trip to India

Swami Vidyananda then accompanied Swami Padmanabhanandaji on his two week trip to Durban and Johannesburg, followed by a trip to India.

“At Swami Padmanabhanandaji's invitation Swami Vidyanandaji left on 15th January for India, travelling with Swamiji to Andhra Pradesh visiting spiritual centres. Returning on 12th February Swamiji showed pictures the following Saturday and commented on this fruitful pilgrimage during the satsang. So we all left with a wonderful taste of India at its best with the fragrance of its spirituality.” *Written by Mother Yogeshwari [Newsletter Nov – Feb 2018]*

The following is a brief account of the Activities that have taken/are taking place at Ananda Kutir Ashrama during this period:

1 Ongoing Weekly Activities:

- 1.1 Satsangs - continue to be held on Thursday and Saturday evenings, with regular attendance.
- 1.2 Hatha Yoga classes – There are 16 Hatha Yoga classes taking place weekly. The classes are well attended.
- 1.3 Sandwich-making – Volunteers make sandwiches three times a week for distribution to the clinics and Stormont School, and there is a weekly home roster, where people make sandwiches at home, and drop off at the Ashrama for delivery to Brown's Farm clinic.
- 1.4 Meditation classes – held weekly by Mother Yogeshwari.
- 1.5 Bhagavad Gita discourse with kirtan - held weekly with Swami Vidyananda.

2 Courses and Workshops held/being held:

- 2.1 Raja Yoga Meditation course - a weekly course, held over fifteen-weeks, from February – April 2017, with Mother Yogeshwari.
- 2.2 International Yoga day – an evening of Integral Yoga was held at the ashram on 21 June.
- 2.3 Meditation course – a 5 week course introductory course was run by Swami Vidyananda in July.
- 2.4 Retreat with Swami Vidyananda – a retreat was held at the Blue Butterfly Retreat Centre from 25 to 27 August.
- 2.5 Bhagavad Gita course – a Bhagavad Gita course was run from May – September 2017, by Swami Vidyananda.
- 2.6 Vedanta course – a Vedanta course was run by Swami Vidyananda from July – September 2017.
- 2.7 Introduction to Ayurveda workshop – a workshop was run by Swami Vidyananda in July and repeated in October 2017.
- 2.8 The Art of Dying Spiritually workshop – a workshop was run by Swami Vidyananda in November 2017.

3 Day / Evening events held:

3.1 Observance of the various Festivals, listed below:

When these special days were observed, discourses were given, speakers included; Mother Yogeshwari and Swami Vidyananda and other devotees from the Ashrama. Special events also include Pujas, some given by Guru Krishna, and dance items with distribution of Jnana Prasad (CD's).

- Sri Maha Shivaratri
- Sri Ram Naumi
- Sri Hanuman Jayanti
- Easter Satsang
- Ascension day
- Sri Adi Shankaracharya Jayanti
- Sri Ganga Saptami
- Sri Narasimha
- Sri Buddha Jayanti
- Swami Sivananda's Sannyasa Diksha
- Sri Guru Purnima
- Swami Sivananda's Mahasamadhi
- Raksha Bandhana
- Sri Krishna Jayanti
- Mahasamadhi of Swami Chidananda
- Ganesh Chaturthi
- Swami Sivananda's Birth Anniversary

- Swami Chidanandaji Birth Anniversary
- Navaratri
- Deepavali
- Swami Venkatesananda's Mahasamadhi
- Swami Sahajananda's Mahasamadhi
- Maha Mantra (chanted for 12 hours)
- Swami Venkatesananda's Birth Anniversary
- Christmas Eve
- Swami Venkatesananda's Mahasamadhi
- New Year's Eve

3.2 Special Musical Recital

On 27 May we were treated to a wonderful meditative recital on the sitar by the gifted artist Akash Srikewal.

Guest Speaker

On 10 June at our evening Satsang, Smt Mahatma Suvidhya Baiji gave a most inspiring talk on the Bhagavad Gita and again on the 11 November specifically on the 7th Chapter of the Bhagavad Gita.

3.3 Special Satsang which included a Drama for Sri Krishna Jayanti

“Sri Krishna Jayanti on 14th August was celebrated with Satsang at 19h30 with another excellent discourse by Swami Vidyanandaji. This was followed by a play produced by Maitri Mataji, which had been rehearsed for weeks beforehand. The play was excellent and brought out much hidden talent. The play was on the Bhagavad Gita. Uma Mataji took the part of Krishna. Four of our friends, all dressed in white, illustrated the story with mudras and movements. Andrew Raad surprised us all with his excellent interpretation of Arjuna! Sukha Mataji was the narrator and Swami Vidyanandaji sang bhajans on the harmonium. Priti Mataji produced the slides introducing each chapter. What an admirable production which showed a wonderful spirit of unity. We then concluded the Satsang with bhajans and special bhajans by Shakuntala Mataji from Durban with a chant in her exquisite voice.” *Account by Mother Yogeshwari [Newsletter July – Oct 2017]*

3.4 Annual Interfaith Satsang

This is an annual event of the Ashrama, which is held on the 2nd of December, in celebration of the mahasamadhi of Sri Swami Venkatesananda, who was very much in favour of Interfaith activities. Dignitaries representing different religions were invited to speak on the chosen theme 'Faith'.

4 Maintenance of the Ashrama:

- 4.1 The shower in the downstairs residence was retiled.
- 4.2 The parking area was paved.
- 4.3 A new kitchen counter was installed in the upstairs residence.
- 4.4 The staircase in the residence building was fixed and varnished.
- 4.5 New fans were installed in the main Yoga room.
- 4.6 New concertina doors were organised for the Shrine room by Ravi Naidoo.
- 4.7 Toilets in the main building and residence have been connected to the wellpoint tank.
- 4.8 Serve, Love, Give, Purify, Meditate, Realise – mosaics were put up at the entrance.
- 4.9 The pillar area has been repaved, and a new garden created where the defunked water tank was.
- 4.10 The area at the back of Yoga room 2 has been repaved.

5 Seva

The Ashrama receives much support from many people who are involved in different types of Seva, from making sandwiches (for the Outreach Project), Teachers for Hatha yoga classes, office work and upfront Reception, design of book and CD covers, typing and proof-reading of books, preparation of Financial Statements, care of the Shrine and setting up for Satsangs, gardening, cooking, general handy-man work, shopping, and attending committee meetings.

6 Other Matters:

6.1 New resident

Priya Mataji re-joined the Ashram in May 2017.

6.2 Books printed

Conversations with Mother Yogeshwari - This inspirational book contains insightful interviews with Mother Yogeshwari and covers a spectrum of topics regarding life and spirituality. The book is also beautifully illustrated with photographs.

Sparks of Insight – A collection of poems written by Mother Yogeshwari, which are full of wisdom, love and joy.

6.3 iPhone

The Ashram took out a contract for an iPhone, this is being used as a video camera to film discourses, and take photographs for the Ashram archives.

6.4 CTII (Cape Town Interfaith Initiative)

Swami Vidyananda was the Chairman of the Cape Town Interfaith Initiative, and attended monthly meetings, and special events.

6.5 Talks outside of the Ashrama

Swami Vidyananda gave weekly discourses to the Teachers of TODS, in Garden Village. He also gave talks at Mareth Spamer's centre in Durbanville and to the University of the 3rd Age in Constantia, and the Mosque of the Ahmadiyya Community during the period March 2017 – February 2018.

In the service of Gurudev.

Vani

Chairman