



Ananda Kutir Ashrama

serve . love . give . purify . meditate . realise

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

May - June 2020

Update from Sri Yogeshwari Mataji

Hari Om! Loving greetings to all.

Our last editorial ended with the beginning of Lockdown on 26th March. Since then there has been little change as the Covid-19 virus has spread since then.

Our very dear friend Clare Fenton passed away after a long illness on 27th April (Freedom day). Being unable to meet together physically, we commemorated her passing by chanting Buddhist chants in the Ashrama's Meditation room, as Clare had taken a Buddhist vow. I would like to thank Renée Rossouw for giving us lifts to visit Clare regularly in the Retirement home.

We have done our best to abide by the State rules since what



we do reflects on the Ashrama, which is a very precious, although tiny corner of the world. Ultimately we do our best to live up to the teachings of our Guru

Swami Venkatesanandaji and Satguru Swami Sivanandaji.

Swami Vidyananda is giving online talks on the Bhagavad Gita, the Gospels and Vedanta. Vani Mataji has given online Hatha Yoga beginners classes and Swami Parvathiananda has given online talks on Ayurveda and strengthening the immune system and on health. Now she is giving online talks on the Ramayana. Swami Vidyanandaji has set up his cellphone to video-record my latest unrecorded poems.

We broadcasted Gurudev's Sannyas Diksha Satsang online on 1st June with chants and a short talk by Swami Parvathiananda on Gurudev's teachings.

We celebrated Guru Purnima on 5th July with morning puja, conducted by Swami Vidyananda. I also gave a short talk. At the evening Satsang, Swami Parvathi gave a talk and emphasised the importance of the Guru's guidance. After appropriate chants, I sang a song of praise for Swami Venkatesananda.

The Mahasamadhi of Sri Swami Sivanandaji on 14th July was broadcast online with Puja conducted by Swami Vidyanandaji assisted by Vani Mataji and

attended by the residents. Swami Vidyanandaji gave a talk on Gurudev's teachings. At the evening Satsang he gave another talk, this time on Death. It was not depressing, but uplifting and Swami Parvathiananda also added a few words.

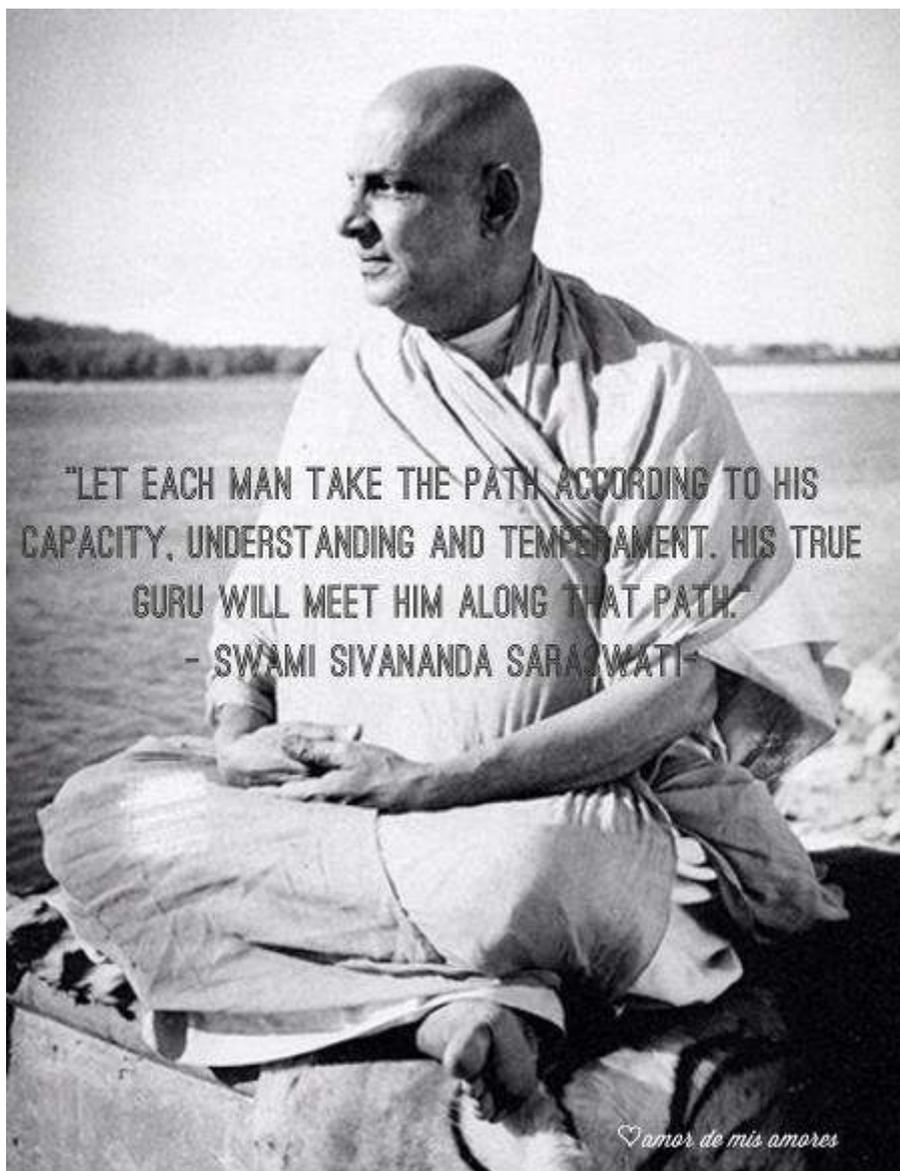
Since our late artist friend, Ravi Liebman, left his property to the Ashrama, much work has been done on repairs, so that we may be able to sell it and do much good work with the proceeds.

Friends and students have generously donated, so we have been able to continue working here.

The Ashrama has been supporting the gardener and domestic. Priya Mataji has been very caring in regard to taking Nobuntu, our domestic worker, for treatment for an injured leg.

We have observed much synchronicity in our actions as what each of us does or decides to do independently turns out to be the same - as we as one. Somehow things seem to fall into place! Swami Venkatesanandaji used to call this "accidental coincidence!"

With Gratitude and Love,
Yogeshwari



Cosmic Links

“There is no beginning to practice nor end to enlightenment. There is no beginning to enlightenment nor end to practice.”

Dogen

“To gain enlightenment, you must want it as much as a man whose head is held under water wants air.”

Zen Saying

“There is no fundamental difference between the preparation for death and the practice of dying, and spiritual practice leading to enlightenment.”

Stanislav Grof

“The goal of spiritual practice is full recovery, and the only thing you need to recover from is a fractured sense of self.”

Marianne Williamson

“Search, no matter what situation you are in. O thirsty one, search for water constantly. Finally, the time will come when you will reach the spring.”

Rumi

“Spiritual practice should not be confused with grim duty. It is the laughter of the Dalai Lama and the wonder born with every child.”

Jack Kornfield

“Spiritual practices help us move from identifying with the ego to identifying with the soul. Old age does that for you too. It spiritualizes people naturally.”

Ram Dass

“If the only prayer you ever said in your life was ‘thank you’, that would suffice.”

Meister Eckhart

“The aim of all spiritual practice is love.”

Sathya Sai Baba

“Here is a new spiritual practice for you: don't take your thoughts too seriously.”

Eckhart Tolle

“Spiritual Practice involves being constantly aware”

Shri Radhe Maa

Guide To Sadhakas

By Sri Swami Sivananda



The first thing a spiritual aspirant has to acquire is mastery over the mind. Like a blind man look at the objects.

Like a deaf man hear sounds. Do not allow the sense experiences to penetrate within. The mind gets fattened on account of its being fed by sense objects. Restrain the senses by the process of pratyahara (abstraction).

Why should you struggle to curb the mind? Its power is far greater than any other power, but it will become your slave if you surrender to the Lord and allow his divine power to work through you. The control of prana (life force) should be the natural and unfailing duty of all spiritually minded persons. It is the control of prana which paves the way for the non-cogitation of all the externals and the conquest of death.

Firmness of practice in the stainless non-dual principle, control of prana and the subjugation of the mind - these three are the paths to realise the meaning of moksha. Out of these three, one should be mastered thoroughly. Then the effects of all three will be obtained as all three are inseparably related to one another.

If the mind and prana cease to exist then thoughts will cease to arise - both of these are one only like the flower and its fragrance, or a seed and the oil in it. Prana and mind stand to one another in the relationship of supporter and supported. If either of them is slain then the other also will cease to exist. The destruction of both will confer moksha.

Spiritual life begins with repentance. Spiritual life begins with aspiration. Genuine aspiration is the pre-condition of success in leading a spiritual life. Aspiration is indeed the fruit of good actions of the past. Guard your spiritual aspirations very carefully. Increase them through viveka (wisdom), sadvicara (pure enquiry) and satsanga (holy company).

Devotion to God and guru, practice of discipline, regular meditation these will quickly lead to self-realisation. Selfless work is for the purification of the mind. Self-realisation is brought about by discrimination, dispassion, determination and meditation. He who is faithful to truth and who diligently practises meditation, turning inwards in meditation, is put upon the ultimate path which leads to self-realisation.

Sadhana

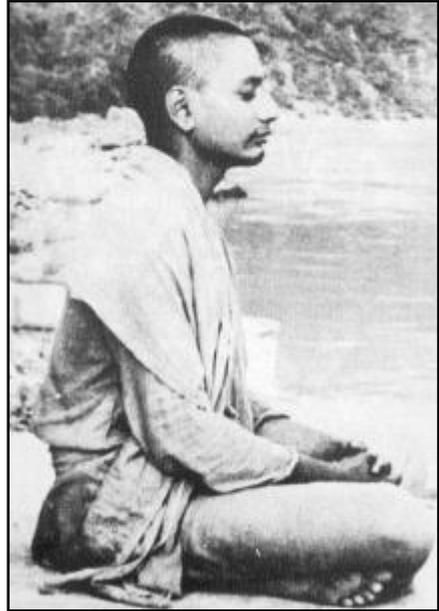
By Swami Venkatesananda

Sadhana means any practice, any effort directed towards an achievement. Whatever you do to reach your goal is sadhana. The goal itself is called siddhi, or perfection.

Perfection cannot be defined. As soon as it is defined, confined, it is no longer perfection. Mental and physical perfection are unknown to us, and who can lay down adequate criteria to identify them? Even what we would consider perfection for one stage of our life would not apply to another period of development, or type of person. But we can at least, to some extent, be aware of what imperfection may be.

Physically you can see that while you might not consider yourself to be in 'perfect' shape, (whatever that would imply) you are, however, free from obvious defect. The body functions as it should. It seems that the senses and the limbs and organs behave as God meant them to. The fact that you cannot do certain things like flying, merely means that that perfection belongs to birds and not to man!

Mentally you regard your mind as free from obvious imperfections, when you see that there is no dullness, no constant



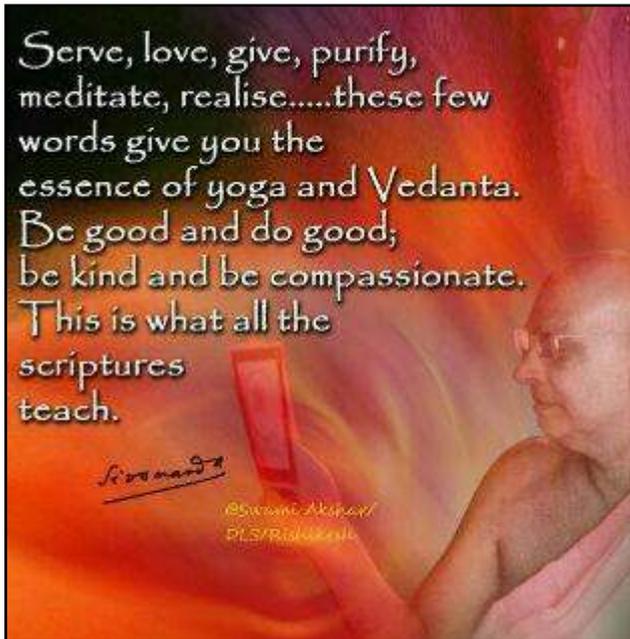
turmoil and loss of equilibrium, and so on. You can also establish on looking deeper, that the imperfection of psychiatric disturbance, psychological complex, neurosis etc. is absent. That much you can ascertain. Whatever practice you undertake to reach this state of total absence of imperfection, is sadhana.

One of the spiritual practices which Swami Sivananda emphasised most was japa. In japa, one repeats a mantra (a short formula). The mantra often incorporates the name of God. Repetition of a mantra quiets the

mind and its turbulence. One must beware of dulling the mind through mechanical repetition but it may be possible that mantra makes the mind tranquil enough for you to go deep and enquire where the sound comes from - 'Who is the 'I' repeating it?' - thus getting to the source of the Inner Being. Japa should not be an isolated practice limited to short periods morning and evening. If it is to be spiritually beneficial, it

must affect every aspect of your personality, your life.

As you link japa with breathing in and out, you might discover that the respiration becomes regular, naturally controlled. Without any need (or possibility) for you to control it. It simply happens! Thus the simple sadhana of japa can bring about mental and bodily health as well as spiritual understanding.



News from Children Of Light Educare

It has been 90 days since the start of National Lockdown. Children have been out of the Educare Programme since 27 March 2020 due to the Corona Virus Pandemic. During this period we remained in touch with our families via telephone and we heard that they were safe and well. When our country went to Level 4, COLT Educare received a permit enabling us to provide essential work for running the Educare and supporting its beneficiaries.

Our first priority was to visit the children, meet their mothers to find out how they were and determine how we could best support them. Nothing could have prepared us for the despair that we saw in Michael's eyes. Michael is 4 years old and a learner at our Educare since January 2019. His mother gave birth to a sibling in January this year. Michael has lost weight, he did not speak to us, nor did he smile like he usually does. He just stood and stared at us as if we were strangers. All the other children came out running, and hugging us asked, "are we going to school teacher?" Kareem, who is 4 years old and has only been at the school for 6 weeks recognised Uncle Asim's (our school driver) car and immediately ran to fetch his school bag thinking he was going to school. The children are missing their nourishing routine.

All our past pupils also came to greet us.

We spent time with our mothers to find out how they were coping emotionally, socially and financially. It was important for us to understand how best to support them during lockdown. At that stage and even now, we have no clear indication from the Department of Social Development regarding the opening of Early Childhood Development Centres.

Food and basic household supplies were their greatest need. They also shared that the children were bored and asked for some activities for the children to do at home. Due to the large numbers in the communities two mothers from each community volunteered to be coordinators.

Our courageous and dedicated staff; Uncle Asim our School Driver, Nushfeekah our Class Teacher, and Juliet our Assistant immediately returned to work. We planned to provide support in terms of food and household essentials, educational lessons for the children, and visits to meet and spend time with the mothers every alternate week. For the daily home educational lessons we also supply bread, peanut butter, jam and juice for the children. We agreed to provide

this support to our current and past pupils, a total of 23 children and their families. Asim, our driver who was not able to work was grateful to be earning once again as he had to pay essential home and family expenses.

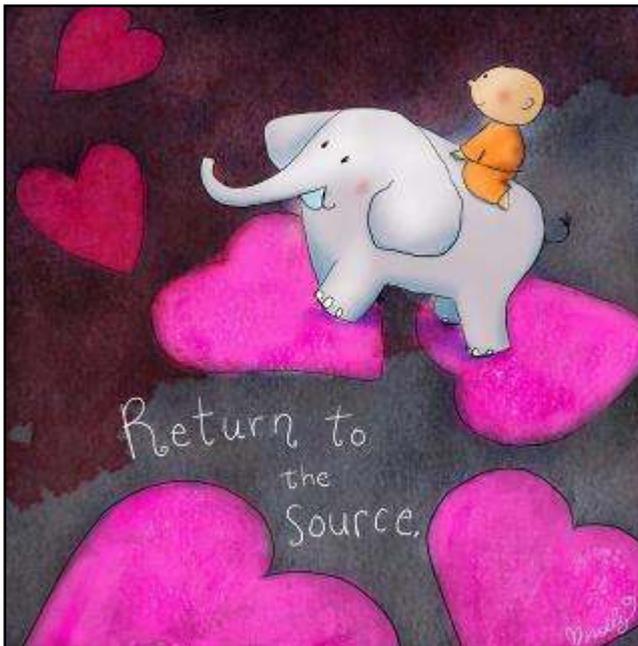
By the Grace of Gurudev we put out a call for donations and since 27 April we have been able to visit our children and mothers at least once a week, providing family grocery packs that include farm fresh fruit and vegetables and toiletries. We are immensely grateful to all the donors who have made this relief project possible.

The weekly visits are very meaningful to our children and

mothers. They say they feel cared for and supported and not abandoned. Our one mother who has lost a great deal of weight says that all her children of varying ages have returned home and it has been stressful coping with them.

We at Children of Light Educare like all other ECD Centres have no indication from the Department of Social Development when the children may return. We pray to Gurudev that we may continue to keep our doors open in order to offer support to the children and their families,

Yours in Service
Maitri Mala Makan



News From The Outreach Project

Our grateful thanks go to all those who have continued to support the Outreach project so generously during the COVID19 pandemic. This has enabled us to continue our support of the clinics: Masincedane Clinic in KTC, Phumlani and Crossroads Clinics in Crossroads and Mzamomhle clinic in Brown's Farm

During the lockdown, as the ashram had to be closed, we had to discontinue the sandwich making and bread delivery to the clinics. Golden Crust bakery was unable to help us with bread delivery directly to the clinics as their resources were limited.

Towards the end of April, Dharmic Samelan, a Hindu Faith-based organization established in 1971, donated R5000 to be used for feeding those in disadvantaged communities. We decided to share the money equally between four organizations:

1. Ubnthu Trust for buying soup vegetables for the Vrygrond community in Muizenberg.
2. Peninsula Schools Feeding Scheme.
3. Nushfeekah Levendal who runs a feeding project in Valhalla Park.
4. The Hopeful Hands

Foundation run by Jane-Leigh Abrahams who has been feeding the poor in the Ocean View community near Kommetjie, for many years, often from her own pocket.

In May we contacted Jou Ma se Veggies an online delivery service who were happy to deliver directly to the clinics. Since mid-



Nushfeekah Levendal and Neighbour cooking from home



Food distributed by Hopeful Hands Foundation

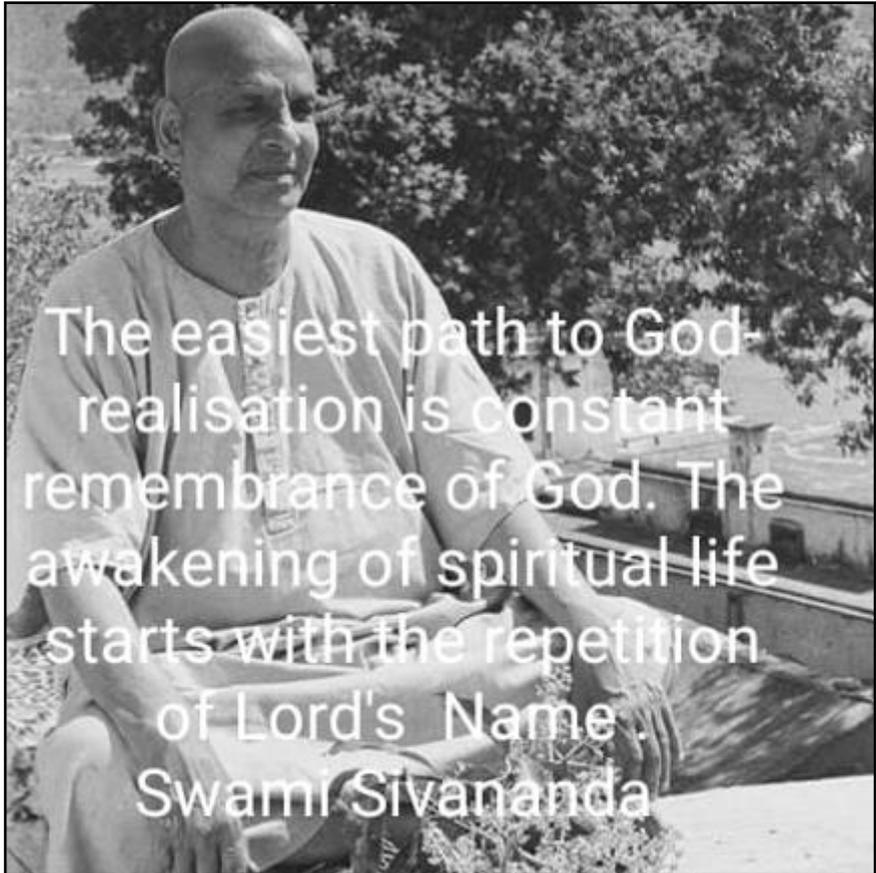
May, every week they have been delivering 120 fruit and vegetable packets to the clinics on a rotational basis.

Many volunteers on the Mzamomhle (Brown's farm) home roster who supply peanut butter sandwiches, fruit and eggs every week have very generously donated to the Outreach project in lieu of the above.

Due to the generosity of our funders the Outreach Project,

started by Mother Yogeshwari and Swami Parvathiananda in the 1980's, is in a much better financial position than it was at the end of April so that we can continue the support of those in need.

Rosemary Frith on behalf of
the Outreach team
Damyanti Gajjar
Jennifer Stephens
Elsa Oliver



The Disciple's Duty

By Sri Swami Sivananda

People want to have contact with an avatara (divine incarnation), without being endowed with the proper qualifications. Even if an avatars appears before you, you will not be able to recognise him. You have not got the eyes to see him. You will take him for an ordinary man.

It is only a saint who can recognise a saint. Only a Jesus can understand a Jesus. Even if you live with a saint for a considerable time, you will not be able to fathom or know him.

A beginner on the spiritual path should have various upagurus (assistant gurus). He must prepare himself gradually. He must get spiritual instructions from them. He must follow their instructions strictly. He should make himself fit to approach a Brahma nishta guru (a guru who is already established in Brahman). He should practise meditation and he should see the Lord in meditation.

An aspirant should develop various sattvic (divine) virtues. These are all enumerated in the Bhagavad Gita, chapters thirteen and sixteen. These are virtues such as humility, fearlessness, freedom from anger, a forgiving tendency, tranquillity, self-

restraint and so on. He must also practise yama (self-restraint) and niyama (discipline). This is his work. The guru will not do this.

But nowadays people want to practise a

comfortable yoga, lying in an easy chair. They do not want to practise any vigorous tapas (penance) or sadhana (spiritual discipline). They expect everything to come by the grace of the guru. They even seem to expect him to place self-realisation before them, like a ready-made betel-leaf - so they can just take it and swallow it easily!

All saints and yogis are ready to receive you with outstretched hands and love - if you have the real eyes to behold them, if you have the real heart to unite with them, if you have the real earnestness and longing to be in their company, if you have a real thirsting for God-realisation - and if you are really hungry to eat the sweet divine manna of the illimitable domain of bliss of the self.



Doing Sadhana

By Swami Venkatesananda

You and I are one. There is this oneness alone in reality - but there is some mysterious loss of memory. Anything that helps to bring about the remembering of what has been temporarily forgotten is called yoga sadhana, yoga abhyasa - the practice of yoga.

Having heard that, I am sure the question is itching in all of us, 'What does one do?' We must be careful here. The danger lies in excessive concern about our doing (and not doing) which may then become a routine performance. As soon as the emphasis is on what I do, it is likely to become a ritual and I tend to see myself as the 'doer'. We feel that unless we do something, we cannot get from here - our present position, to there - that state of yoga.



“Japa is the best of all spiritual practices in this modern age. It is the easiest too. Divine name alone will give you all success and bestow the highest spiritual attainments on you. The seeker after truth realises the highest goal of japa or recitation of the Lord's name alone. Have faith in the saving grace of God and in the power of the Lord's name. Repetition of the Lord's name is a sure medicine for the disease of birth and death.”

Swami Sivananda

Wisdom from Mother Yogeshwari

God provided us with a do-it-yourself kit (mind, body, senses).
While making good use of it, we must never lose sight of the
Giver.



“Spiritual life or sadhana is a great art.
Every stroke of the brush matters very
much - we should carefully plan it and do
every action after great thought. Thought,
word and deed must be delicate and
purposeful.”

Swami Venkatesananda

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. A member can vote at the AGM and can serve on the management committee.

PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY

R200 valid for the financial year March-February. R300 for married couples.

Name _____

Postal Address _____

Phone _____

Cellphone _____

E-mail _____

Signature _____

Date _____

For more information please contact:

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Cape Town, South Africa

Banking Details

Donations to the Ashrama

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

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

Donations to the Children of Light Educare

Bank: Absa
Branch code: 632005 (Claremont)
Account name: Ananda Kutir Education Trust
Account No: 9322073615
Reference: Your name & purpose of payment