



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

July 2020 - March 2021

Update from Sri Yogeshwari Mataji

Hari Om!

It seems like a lifetime since writing the last editorial. Not because of the time lapse, but because of all that has happened in between. The Covid-19 virus has caused many changes of plan and subsequent rules in keeping with the Govt. protocol.

It is no doubt a serious type of flu, but the strict measures of the Government seem to have caused more damage than the illness. People have lost their jobs and cannot support their families. Insecurity, loneliness, depression and fear has created a susceptibility to the disease.

Due to the initial total lockdown and subsequent concerns in our committee the ashrama remained closed until



February 2021. However, we continued online to keep in contact with everyone.

We commemorated Guru Purnima, the Mahasamadhi and birth of our SadGuru H.H. Swami Sivanandaji, as well as the Mahasamadhi and birth of our guru Swami Venkatesananda.

Due to the Lockdown we performed the puja online. Swami Parvathiananda and myself did the pujas with the assistance of Vaniji who promptly handed us the offerings. Thereafter we each gave a short talk.

These important days are always celebrated with joy and enthusiasm in keeping with Gurudev's wonderful personality and positive, practical approach.

A NEW YEAR: 2021

Our classes and satsangs commenced in February on two days a week.

Due to social distancing, the yoga classes of sometimes up to 20 are restricted to 6 people. Vaniji is successfully taking Hatha Yoga classes by Zoom. This has been most convenient for those who live far away. But it doesn't beat personal contact!

From the 19th February we have had our interfaith sessions on Zoom. Since Tina, Doug and dear

Natavidad, who were founder members of the interfaith services held at the ashrama. have emigrated to Portugal, this has worked out to be a successful way of keeping in touch, though not literally.

Helping the ashram to survive has been due to generous donations from our friends, plus Ravi Liebman's bequest.

Swami Vidyananda is conducting many lectures by Zoom. Swami Parvathi also does this on Wednesday mornings.

We are able to have our weekly Satsang in our yoga room with social distancing of up to twelve people.

This year we are commemorating the Centenary of our Patron Saint Sri Swami Venkatesanandaji on 29th December 2021. On the 29th of each month we are having a talk by one of Swamiji's devotees on their experiences and the lessons they learnt.

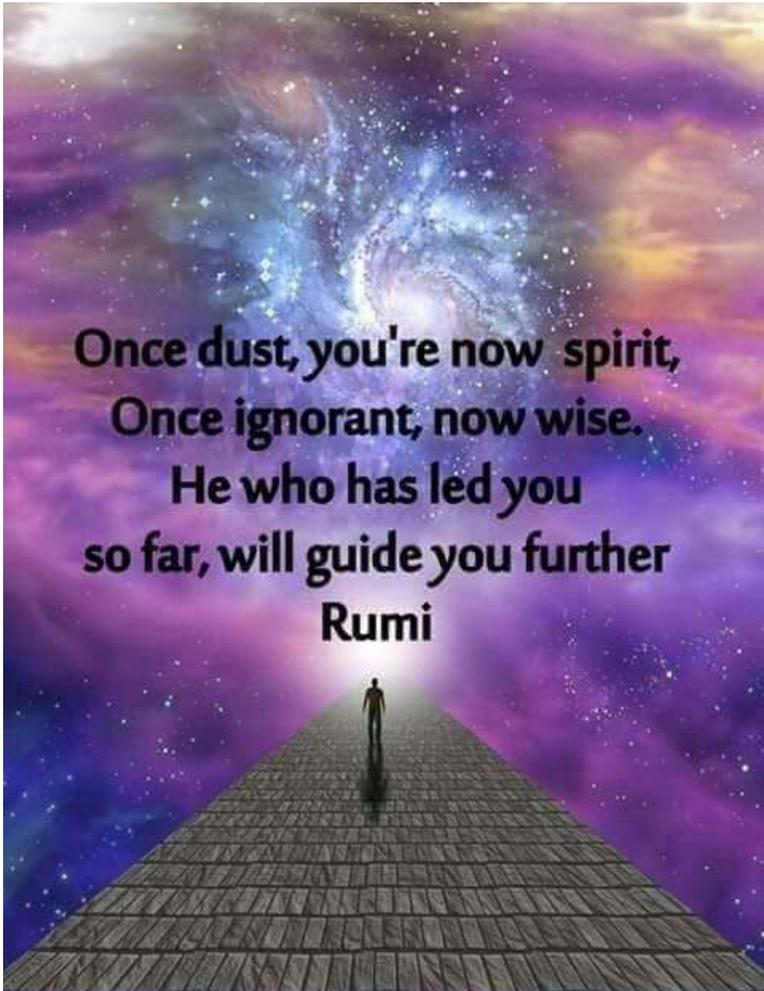
We launched the second edition of Swami Venkatesananda's book 'Buddha Daily Readings' on his birth anniversary 29th December 2020. It had to be reprinted, as we had run out of stock.

Please read the articles written by our team of dedicated workers who give of their time and energy in different ways.

A big thank you to all who are supporting us in various ways.

May you keep well and fearless,

With love,
Yogeshwari



Cosmic Links

“Let no man in the world live in delusion. Without a Guru none can cross over to the other shore.”

Guru Nanak

“I have never said that there is no need for a guru. All depends on what you call guru. He need not be in a human form.”

Ramana Maharshi

“The Guru is the conveyance in which the spiritual influence is brought to you. Anyone can teach, but the spirit must be passed on by the Guru to the Shishya (disciple), and that will fructify.”

Swami Vivekananda

“The Guru cannot awaken you; all that he can do is to point out what is.”

Jiddu Krishnamurti

“Ishvara (God) is guru of gurus. He removes the veil of ignorance and blesses the ignorant jiva (soul).”

Swami Sivananda

“If I go into the place in myself that is love, and you go into the place in yourself that is love, we are together in love. Then you and I are truly in love, the state of being love. That's the entrance to Oneness. That's the space I entered when I met my guru.”

Ram Dass

“A real Guru's initiation is beyond the divisions of sects and creeds: it is the awakening to our own inner reality which, once glimpsed, determines our further course of development and our actions in life without the enforcement of outer rules.”

Anagarika Govinda

“A Guru desires nothing from you except your well-being and progress on the path!”

Sri Sri Ravi Shankar

“What is the guru? Guru is the light that dispels the darkness.”

Swami Venkatesananda

Respect All : Adore One

By Sri Swami Sivananda

Competent disciples are never in want of a competent guru. Realised souls are not rare, but ordinary ignorant persons cannot easily recognise them. Only a few persons, who are pure and embodiments of all virtuous qualities, can understand realised souls, and they only will be benefitted in their company. The number of realised souls may be less in the present age, when compared with the satya yuga (the golden age), but they are always present to help the aspirants. They are always searching for the proper adhikaris (qualified aspirants). Let each man take the path according to his capacity, understanding and temperament. His true guru will meet him along that path.

Do not dig shallow pits here and there for obtaining water, for the pits will dry up soon. Dig a very deep pit in one place and centralise all your efforts here. You will find good water that can supply you throughout the year. Even so, try to imbibe thoroughly the spiritual teachings from one preceptor alone. Drink deeply from one man. Sit at his feet for some years. It is useless to wander from one man to another, out of curiosity, losing faith in a short time. Do not have the ever changing mind of a prostitute, but

follow the spiritual instructions of one man only. If you go to several people and follow the instructions of many persons, you will become quite bewildered and be in a dilemma.

From one doctor you get a prescription. From two doctors you get consultation. From three doctors you get your own cremation. Even so, if you have many gurus, you will be bewildered and be at a loss to know what to do. One guru will tell you: "Do this." Another will tell you: "Do that." A third guru will tell you: "Do the other." You will be quite puzzled. Stick to one guru and follow his instructions.

Listen to all, but follow one. Respect all, but adore one. Gather knowledge from all, but adopt the teachings of one master. Then you will have rapid spiritual progress.



The Guru

By Swami Venkatesananda



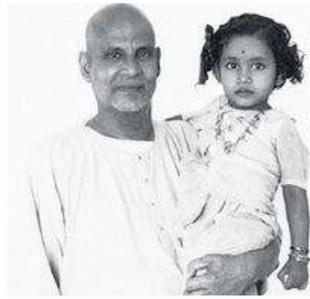
SWAMIJI: Like a midwife. The midwife cannot deliver the baby yet in a manner of speaking she does.

Let us start at the beginning. You are already marching on the spiritual path according to yourself. How did you get started on it without a teacher? Somewhere, something hit you and pushed you onto this path. That is already a teacher. It may be human, it may be divine, it may be subhuman, or it may be an incident in my life. That is what initiation means. I'm given a push.

So the guru or teacher may or may not be a human person. In the Bhagavatam there is the story of someone who says he had twenty four gurus – the sun, moon, wind, stars, stones, etc. All of them taught him some lesson.

QUESTION: It seems to be a popular conception that if you wish to adopt the spiritual path, at some stage you will need a teacher. You seem to be saying that one cannot teach another. Where does the guru come in?

News from Children Of Light Educare



“The first step in the spiritual path is selfless service of humanity. Feed the hungry, nurse the sick, comfort the afflicted, and lighten the sorrow of the sorrowful. God will bless you. Clothe the naked. Educate the illiterate. Feed the poor. Raise the down-trodden. The world is burning with misery and suffering.”

Swami Sivananda

Overcoming the Impact of Lockdown

Since the onset of the Covid pandemic with South Africa’s hard lockdown and then through the tiered approach that followed, we have and continue to make every effort to maintain personal contact with our children and their families. The Covid dilemma initially shifted our focus away from education, and with the gracious support of several families, friends and organisations we have been able to donate food and hygiene-related supplies like soap, toothpaste, toilet paper and other essentials to 23 of our families every single week. Having started this up in April 2020, we hope to continue with this initiative for as long as it is needed and are extremely grateful to those who have donated, and who continue to respond to the needs of these families.

With this support scheme firmly in place and after initiating the Covid protocol requirements, the Educare re-opened in August last year and all of our 12 children returned to their classroom. In January 2021, we expanded a little more and added a playgroup. We now have 20 children in our care with 8 in the Playgroup Sunflower Class (3 to 4 year olds) and 12 in the Kindergarten Daisy Class (5 to 6 year olds).

It is a busy, nurturing place once more.

Educare Activities

COLT Educare celebrated its 3rd birthday in October 2020. We selected to celebrate the moment with our children marveling at nature’s many gifts whilst harvesting vegetables from their well-cared-for garden.



Our Gratitude Concert, held in the Lansdowne Civic Centre in December last year, felt like the most appropriate way to bring closure to the 2020 school year. It was a joyous and proud morning for all of our children, parents and teachers. We witnessed their growing confidence as well as the gentle unfolding of some of their natural talents. This end of year function ended with a spiral advent ritual which symbolises the finding of light amidst the darkness. It is a deeply moving ceremony.



Just a few weeks ago, COLT Educare took delivery of a much needed 14-seater Toyota Quantum to be used for

transporting our children to and from the Educare. This was a long awaited moment and will most certainly ease the transport problems experienced in the past.

It will also be used for school outings and we aim to include experiences that develop a love of nature and the outdoors.

In January this year, 26 children started swimming lessons at Stars Swimming School, just an 8 minute walk from the Educare. A number of our families live in a settlement which backs onto a canal where young children have drowned in the past and so a ‘learn to swim’ and ‘water safety’ programme was identified to help prevent our children from drowning when exposed to a body of water. Of course, programmes like these also serve to enhance the overall wellbeing and development of our children.

COLT Educare, a Home for Healing

Combining various Yoga practices with Waldorf educational methods sees the innate healing powers of our children being stimulated. Children are given the space to express their feelings and experiences in a non-verbal manner which is deeply empowering and builds a sense of self confidence and achievement.



Research and experience tells us that children aged 3 to 6 look to their teachers for guidance, support and security, hence our decision to admit children from the age of 3 and to impress upon their parents the importance of regular, uninterrupted attendance.

Our programme involves at least one and a half hours per day of free fantasy play, self-care, music, singing, being in and connecting with nature as much as possible, oral storytelling, doing art, making crafts, baking, gardening and, most importantly, being led by a teacher who is the heart of the class and who brings her full being and presence into each child's experience.

Our Children

We have two brothers, aged 4 and 9 who started at the Educare in January 2021. When doing admissions, their father asked us to admit his children as their mother had left the family and he is having to raise the children on his own. He is also currently unemployed. He and his children are most loving and gentle. The

older brother takes care of the younger one as a mother or a father would. Their father is out all day looking for work and this pair, at the time, were spending the whole day in their shack without knowing where and when they were going to receive a meal, a bath or have a full night's sleep.

Since attending the Educare, we have noticed that they are in need of a warm bath, clean clothes, a nutritious meal and some time to play in a safe and loving atmosphere. On one occasion the teacher gave the older brother a warm bath and he began to shake as if he was experiencing seizures, she immediately gave him some warm herbal tea with sugar and a sandwich and set up a bed on the floor for him to lie on. After drinking the tea and eating the sandwich, he fell asleep within minutes, holding his house key tightly in his hand, knowing that his younger brother was in the classroom next door, happy and safe. He slept for about two hours. The loving touch of the teacher and the warm bath seemed to overwhelm him. After he woke up, he happily went off to play. His teacher now bathes both brothers twice a week and food is given to them to take home every week.

We are so happy and relieved that one of our children, an 8 year old boy who had joined the Educare when we started 3 years ago, has returned after being taken out of school for the last

year. We have worked closely with his family and more so in the last 3 months with his granny who is his caregiver. Much of his life has been spent on the streets, engaging with unemployed youths and gangsters. He has been a victim of verbal abuse, neglect and trauma and is now in a place of safety and is receiving trauma counselling. It has taken some time but we are walking in a positive direction with his biological mother having made a commitment to work with us and to apply for his birth certificate and clinic card. This is an important step. Emotionally, this gives women like this young boy's mother a sense of identity, a level of independence and immense hope. Following through with this

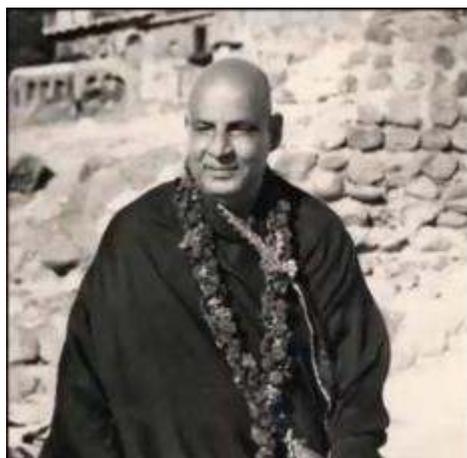
administrative step means that this mother will be able to make an application for her child to attend a primary school and they will also be able to apply for the relevant grants to better support themselves. Receiving even the most basic income will provide a form of independence and agency over their lives.

The vision of the Educare remains one of offering love and healing to vulnerable and traumatised children. We pray to Gurudev Swami Sivananda and Swami Venkatesananda, our guiding lights, for the patience and compassion to do this work.

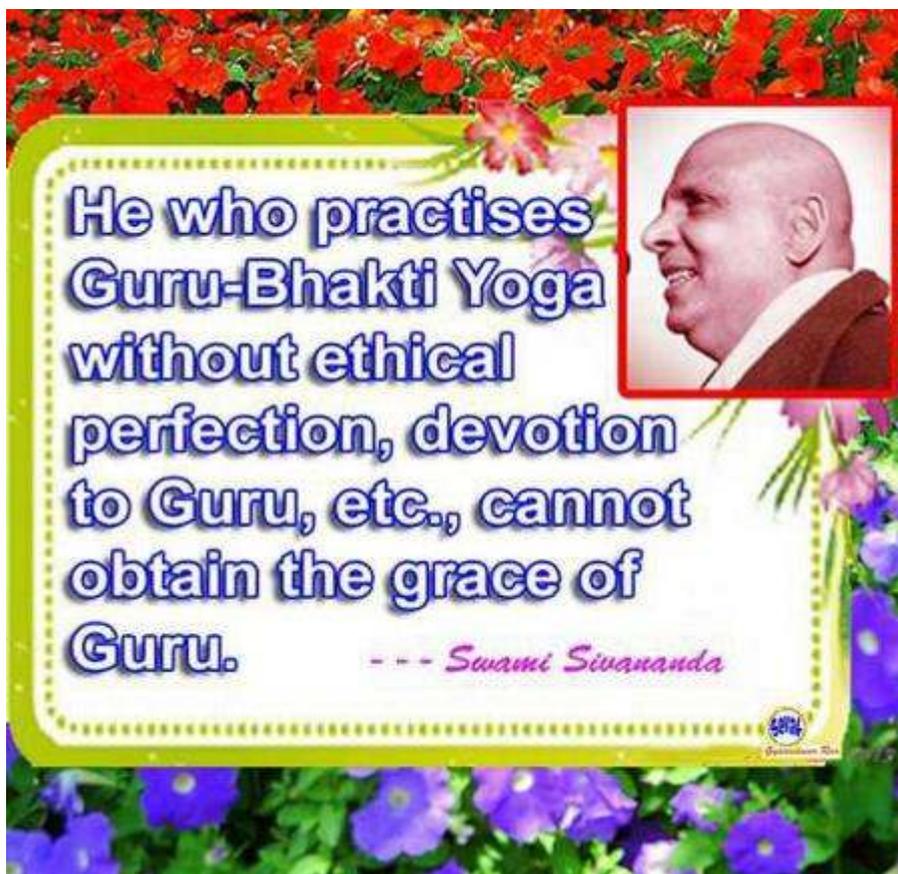
Yours in Service
Maitri Makan
Principal

As a non-profit organisation, we are fully dependent on the goodwill of volunteers and donors.

Should you feel inspired to make a once-off donation or set up a monthly contribution to fund the continued education of these young children, you can either use payfast OR make a direct deposit into our ABSA savings account no. 93-2207-3615, Claremont branch code 632005. The account name is Ananda Kutir Education Trust and we ask that you include your initials and surname as a reference. Note that the SWIFT code for international donors is ABSAZAJJ. Please let us know that you have done this by sending your contact details and proof of payment to info@colt.org.za.



**Rise above
infatuation. Give up
identification with
this perishable body.
Take a bath in the
Ganges of devotion to
the feet of the Guru.
- Sri Swami
Sivananda**



**He who practises
Guru-Bhakti Yoga
without ethical
perfection, devotion
to Guru, etc., cannot
obtain the grace of
Guru.**

--- Swami Sivananda



News From The Outreach Project

This has been a challenging time for everyone, however the Outreach project, initiated by Mother Yogeshwari and Swami Parvathiananda in the 1980's has been able to continue assisting Masincedane clinic, Mzamomhle clinic, Crossroads clinic and Phumlani clinic in our disadvantaged communities.

Clinics

During the lockdown, as the ashram was closed, we had to discontinue the sandwich making and bread delivery to the clinics.

Jou Ma se Veggies, an online delivery service, has been delivering directly to the clinics providing them with 120 fruit and vegetable packs. Initially each clinic received packs once a month but when funds have allowed this has been increased to twice a month. Each pack consists of 1 apple or pear, 1 orange or naartjie, 2 guavas and 1kg of potatoes and costs R1500 a week.

Many volunteers on the Mazamomhle (Browns farm) home roster who supplied peanut butter sandwiches, fruit and eggs every week have very generously donated money to the Outreach project in lieu of the above.

Homeless Project

This project initiated by Swami Vidyananda began in August 2020.

On Sunday mornings cans of baked beans are given to the homeless living in the Imam Haron Rd area in Claremont/Lansdowne. When the ashram residents go shopping they take cans to be distributed as they see fit.

The wonderful response to an appeal for donations during the holiday season enabled us to make Christmas day a special one for the homeless. Containers of delicious and nutritious kitchari as well as biscuits and dates were gratefully received by 80 homeless people.

Stormont Madubela School

The Monday home roster group initiated by Juliet Clavaux, provides roughly 120 sandwiches, 120 fruits and 120 hardboiled eggs to the children every week during school term.

Due to COVID related restrictions, transport issues and lack of funds it was not always possible to deliver to Nyanga, in which case the sandwiches were delivered to The Children of Light Educare or distributed by Mother Priya.

In response to an appeal for PPE equipment, at the end of August the team made 100 masks for the grades R to 3 learners as well as donating 60 litres of a hand sanitiser.

Christmas Hampers

In December 20 Pick ‘n Pay Christmas Hampers were given to the clients of Phumlani Clinic. Another 20 went to the fire victims of Masiphumelele.

Masiphumelele

In December thousands of people were left with nothing after a devastating fire swept through the area, the flames fanned by a howling south-east wind. Household goods were supplied to 10 families and thanks to a generous donation, building materials were purchased which helped in the sealing and water proofing of the residents’ homes.

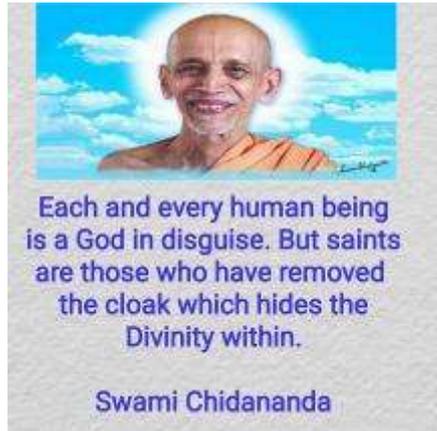
Phumlani Clinic

In March Phumlani clinic hosted a TB awareness day and invited children from a local school. We contributed 20 apples and 20 oranges towards this initiative.

As the lockdown restrictions are easing we are looking at resuming the closer personal contact we had with the clinics in earlier years. Teaching TB patients yoga breathing exercises was an important part of the Outreach programme.

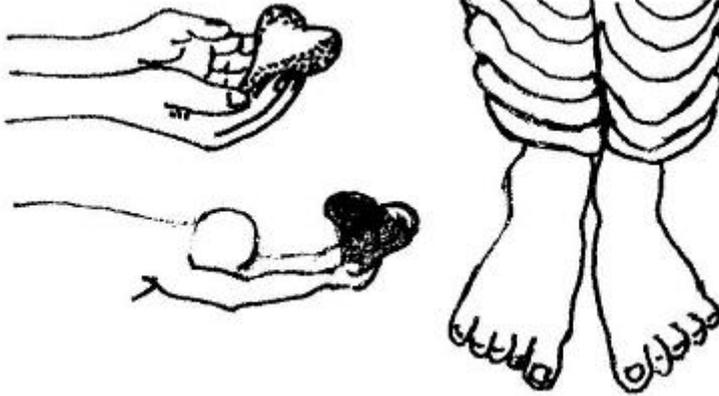
A very special thanks goes to our very generous donors who have helped the Outreach project survive during these turbulent times.

Damyanti Gajjar
Jennifer Stephens
Elsa Oliver
Rosemary Frith



Wisdom from Mother Yogeshwari

If your heart's in the right place, you receive Guru's Grace.
No doubt about that!



“To one who is awake and
vigilant the whole of life can be
the guru.”

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:
Ananda Kutir Ashrama
031-418 NPO**

Tel: +27 21 696 1821

Email: info@anandakutir.org.za

www.anandakutir.org.za

Residential and Postal Address:

24 Sprigg Rd,
Rondebosch East, 7780
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