



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

## December 2021 - February 2022

### Update from Swami Vidyananda

Blessed Friends,  
Hari OM. Loving Greetings.

25 December we celebrated Christmas with Christmas carols, offering of flowers to Lord Jesus Christ and a discourse by Swami Parvathiananda. Swamiji emphasised the importance to assimilate the Christ-like qualities into ourselves. It was also wonderful to worship Christ in the Indian form of worship.

29-31 December marked the most important period of the year 2022. This was the culmination of the Birth Centenary of Sri Swami Venkatesananda Ji Maharaj, which was celebrated with a three-day yoga camp at the ashrama. The yoga camp integrated all the online lectures of The Divine Life Society Christmas Retreat, in

which the senior Swamis shared invaluable teachings for living Yoga in daily life. The yoga camp also included puja, yajna and kirtans on the actual birth centenary day. Maitri Makan and Swami Vidyananda offered some teachings on Nada Yoga, the yoga of sound, which included chanting and singing, with the focus on the chanter/singer being as hollow as a flute, listening to the sound and focusing on the source of sound, which is the Divine within. Kewal Kaur, a guest teacher, guided devotees in a process art session, in which devotees created clay images representing gratitude to the guru. A wonderful and interesting array of clay creations manifested from balls of clay through an intuitive process. Hatha Yoga and a meditation walk also

formed part of the yoga camp activities. Celebrating the life and teachings of the guru communally is an important and helpful way of connecting more deeply with the guru and his/her teachings.

January 2022 witnessed the complete opening of the ashrama to all its previous activities. It has been heartening to see friends returning to the ashrama to participate in satsangs, meditation classes and yoga classes. Swami Parvathiananda also commenced a new class on Laya Yoga. Laya Yoga is the Yoga of Absorption through pranayama, mudras and meditation on the cakras. Swami Venkatesananda Ji taught this Yoga.

On 19 February we had the wonderful blessing of having satsang with Sri Mahatma Suvidhya Bai Ji from the Manav

Dharam. It was wonderful to have her with us again, as she used to come annually. Mataji gave an insightful talk on the 18th Chapter of the Bhagavad Gita with a special focus on the last verse, which emphatically declares that the merging of the individual soul with the Universal Soul brings prosperity and wisdom. Mataji then proceeded to explain how this union can be achieved through renunciation of desires and yoga, especially meditation.

With such a wonderful start we pray for a fruitful year in which we may all unfold our innate Divinity. May we all experience profound Peace.

Yours in Prem and Om,

On behalf of Swami  
Parvathiananda,  
Vidyananda

The only useful purpose  
of the present birth is to  
turn within and realise  
the Self. There is  
nothing else to do.

Ramana Maharshi



# Cosmic Links

“There is a time for peaceful contemplation; there is a time for dynamic action; and all the time the lake remains itself.”

Yung-Ming Yen-Shou

“When does samadhi (blissful peace) arise? When one lets loose the things that he loves.”

Dada Bhagwan

“Mukti (Liberation) is synonymous with the Self.”

Ramana Maharshi

“This natural awareness, which is Samadhi, is enlightenment. Its light lightens life. Such enlightened living is divine life, the quintessence of Gurudev’s message.”

Swami Venkatesananda

“Proof that one is a master, however, is supplied only by the ability to enter at will the breathless state (sabikalpa samadhi) and by the attainment of immutable bliss (nirbikalpa samadhi).”

Paramahansa Yogananda

“You are not limited to this body, to this mind, or to this reality - you are a limitless ocean of Consciousness, imbued with infinite potential. You are existence itself.”

Joseph P. Kauffman

“It is the thought of worldly objects that prevents the mind from going into samadhi. One becomes established in samadhi when one is completely rid of worldliness.”

Ramakrishna Paramahansa

“Samadhi doesn’t just come of itself; it takes practice.”

Jack Kornfield

“Brahman can be clearly and definitely realised only through nirvikalpa samadhi. Samadhi ensues only when the purified mind is merged in Brahman.”

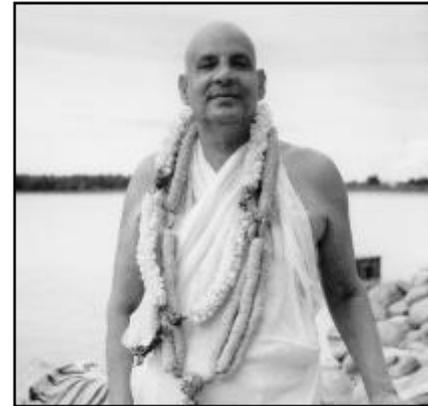
Swami Sivananda

“In the relative world the nearest approach to the peace and desirelessness of Brahman, and also to the contentless conscious felt in Samadhi, or profound meditation, is the experience of deep sleep.”

Swami Nikhilananda

## Epistle of Swami Sivananda

By Sri Swami Sivananda



Spiritual experiences differ in sadhakas (seekers) according to the nature of their sadhana (practice) and the yoga they are practising. Some hear anahat (mystic) sounds in the ear. Some see brilliant lights. Some have vision of rishis (sages), mountains, rivers, etc. Some experience cosmic consciousness. This is a rare experience. It cannot be expressed in words.

Maya is the illusory power of the Lord. Maya hides the real and makes the unreal appear as real. Maya is suddha (pure) satva.

Do not enquire now into the origin of maya. Strive for its destruction. Maya is indescribable. It can be crossed through the grace of God acquired by self-surrender. When jnana is attained, then you will know all about maya.

Avidya is ignorance. It is the cause for bondage. Vidya is the cause for liberation.

Destroy the root of avidya through knowledge of atman.

Avidya is the causal body of the individual soul. It is impure satva. It is mixed with rajas (activity) and tamas (inertia).

Avidya is the cause for births and deaths. Mind and body are the effects of avidya.

Samadhi is union with God. It is a state of eternal bliss and eternal wisdom. It cannot be described in words. In savikalpa samadhi there is the triad, knower, knowledge, and knowable.

In samadhi mind, intellect and senses cease functioning. All dualities vanish in toto.

Meditate ceaselessly and enjoy the supreme bliss of nirvikalpa samadhi.

Please note the difference between sleep and samadhi. Sleep is an inert state. But samadhi is a state of pure awareness or pure consciousness.

When a man returns from sleep he is heavy and dull. He has no experience of wisdom of atman. But when the yogi comes down from samadhi he is full of wisdom of atman.

## Touching The Infinite

By Swami Venkatesananda

Meditation cannot enter into me, I must enter into meditation. The whole of my mind, the whole of my self, everything, must enter into meditation, as if 'I' does not exist. That is when 'samadhi' happens. Samadhi is real meditation; or you can say that all the three - concentration, meditation and samadhi - combined is meditation. One cannot really say when concentration ends and meditation begins or when meditation ends and samadhi begins. It is very much like morning and evening - you cannot say exactly at this point daytime ended and nighttime started. One flows into the other, and therefore the three are regarded as one unit.

When you are in deep meditation you are touching the infinite. Meditation will certainly happen if the ground is ready and the distractions do not arise. That is, in the initial stages we are battling with these distractions all the time. At one point we realise that the battle itself keeps the distractions going. Then we abandon our attention to these distractions and focus all our attention upon the mantra or the object of meditation. That's all we can do. The rest of it has to happen by God's grace.



Once this has happened, it is possible that this spirit of meditation continues throughout the day. Whilst you were sitting and practising this as an exercise, the mantra or the form of God was the object of meditation. As you come out of your meditation room, whatever you do at the moment becomes the object of your meditation.

So meditation is not to be confined to a certain part of the day nor to a certain part of the house. That is where I learn the simple art - how to live totally. And that spirit continues throughout the day. The attention may shift from one object to another, but every time there is total attention to that single thing. The whole being is harmonised and focussed upon that one object. Then one leads a divine life.

## News From The Outreach Project

The Outreach project, begun by Mother Yogeshwari and Swami Parvathiananda in the 1980's, has continued to support Masincedane clinic, Mzamomhle clinic, Crossroads clinic and Phumlani clinic in our disadvantaged communities in Cape Town.

### Clinic deliveries

We are grateful to Jou Ma se Veggies who supply fruit and veg packs to the clinics on a weekly basis. Each clinic receives 120 packs of 500g potatoes, a sweet potato and 3 fruits in season once a month. The total cost for the month being R6 000 i.e. R12.50 per pack.

### Christmas Hampers

During December we like to spread some holiday cheer by giving one of the clinics something extra. This year it was the turn of Mzamomhle Clinic in Brown's Farm. A special thank you to Pick 'n Pay in Claremont who packed and delivered 50 Christmas buckets of groceries to this clinic.

### Homeless Project

The homeless people in Imam Haron Road, Claremont, continued to receive tins of baked beans over this period.

### Donations

Our special thanks to Jill Woods a long-time friend and supporter of the Outreach Project who donated R7000 in December. As per her request R1000 was donated to COLT. Our grateful thanks go to Kim Worthington who donated R12,000 in February.

The above donations have helped tremendously to keep the Outreach Project going. Thank you to all who donate on a monthly basis. At the moment our monthly expenditure exceeds our monthly donations. If anyone is able to donate on a monthly basis we would be most grateful.

My thanks go to my fellow coordinators Damyanti Gajjar, Jennifer Stephens and Elsa Oliver.

Rosemary Frith

## God Is Found In Silence

By Sri Swami Sivananda

Still the mind. Listen. Enter the silence. In silence one becomes aware of his soul-consciousness. Silence is a pre-requisite for the apprehension of the reality. Enter the silence, realise the reality.

Silence the tongue; silence the desires; silence the thoughts. You will now enjoy the bliss of the eternal. Love silence. Live in silence. Grow in silence. Spend your life in silence. The truths of the Upanishads are revealed through the grace of God.

In silence there is God-realisation. Silence is the peace that passes understanding - samadhi (the superconscious state).

Train yourself to enter a state of ceaseless meditation. Strive diligently, patiently and with genuine humility to attain wisdom. Earnest aspiration and sincerity of purpose are the most precious assets to the seeker after truth. Silence conserves energy and gives peace and strength. You can amass inexhaustible spiritual wealth in silence.

The aspirant should possess tranquillity, self-control and compassion. An aspirant should avoid dainty dishes as they induce him to be voluptuous. An aspirant should not indulge in hearing

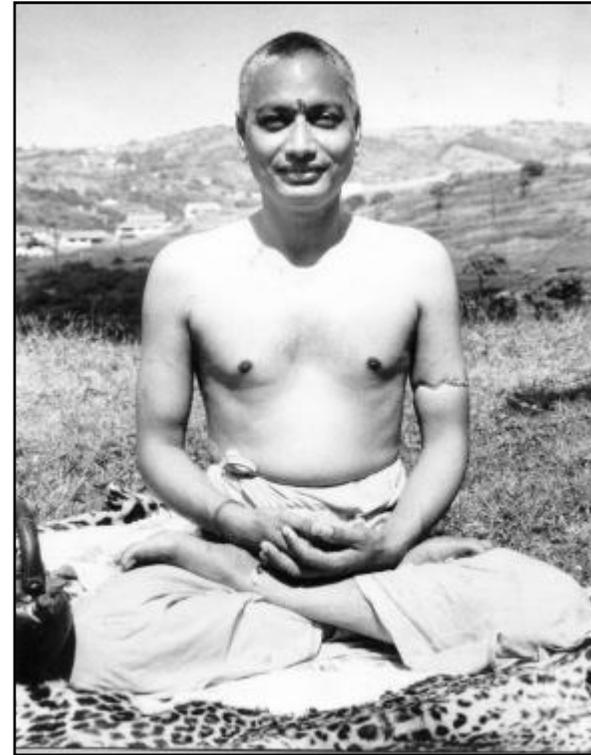
worldly talk as it leaves worldly impressions on the mind and these stand in the way of fixing the mind on God. If you are freed from attachment, you have attained salvation indeed. He who has strong vairagya (dispassion), utter distaste for all pleasures of earth and heaven is first to pursue the path of jnana (wisdom).

He who has not developed strong dispassion, but is attached to the pleasures of this world must tread the path of karma yoga. He who is neither intensely attached to the world nor completely detached from it must take up the path of devotion (bhakti). The delusion of birth and death will only haunt those persons who have passions and darkness. Persons of powerful, pure tendency will be ever free from the fear of birth. Real austerity consists of the control of the senses and the mind, not mortification of the body. The middle path between extreme asceticism and self-indulgence is beneficial. Fasting is external austerity; repentance and meditation are internal austerity.



## Touching The Infinite

By Swami Venkatesananda



meditation posture is meant as a help. But even while talking, while eating, while looking at anything, one should watch the arising of the 'I'. Where does this feeling, the thought 'I am talking, I am seeing him' spring from?

This questioning is to be done continuously, not only in the morning and the evening. There is the assurance of the great masters (which can again be a danger) that it is possible for us to extend this consciousness through to our dreams. If we continually observe the arising of the ego-sense

during our waking hours, whatever we are doing, then even while dreaming there is the enquiry, 'Who is dreaming, to whom is the dream occurring?'

So eventually even while one sleeps, there is this continuing self-consciousness. This continuous awareness which runs through all states of consciousness is called samadhi, the fourth state of consciousness.

Meditation is the direct immediate observation of the arising of the 'I', the ego, without a mediator. A mediator is merely another distraction. Even words, descriptions of meditation, may be distractions. Meditation is observation without descriptions of any type that will give you an image of what it 'should be'.

What you and I practise while we are seated in a

## News from Children Of Light Educare

Loving greetings to all.

This year we welcome two new members to our staff. Mr Danny Pillay, our bus driver and Ntombie Nkompe our Grade R class assistant. May our team continue to work in a harmonious and peaceful way in the best interest of the children and their families.

Our first newsletter for the year will focus on experiences from our various staff members.

Yours in Service  
Maitri Mala Makan

### **Danny Pillay our Educare Bus Driver**

Om Shanti Om Shanti  
Namaste Vanaakam

I, Danny Pillay, was introduced to the Ashram and Children of Light Educare by Guru Krishna of the Siva Alayum Temple. My formal introduction to the Management and Staff at the Educare as well as to Swami Vidyananda was whilst attending the Staff Integral Yoga Retreat which took place in January 2022 in Tulbagh. The topic of the retreat being 'Lives of the Saints'.

I'm honored and privileged to be a service provider to the

children and team. I will use all my abilities and resources available to me to be the best service provider for the sake of the children.

I thank you.

Om Shanti Om Shanti  
Namaste Vanaakam

### **Teacher Nushfeekah Levendal, Grade R Class Teacher**

This year, we enrolled 4 of our most vulnerable children from Hadji Ebrahim settlement to Heatherdale primary School. This school is very suitable as it is a 5 minute walk for the children. This however was not an easy task for us but with the help and guidance from the principal of Heatherdale, Ms Van Der Heide-Adams we walked the journey together, easing this challenging task. It is challenging for the children and their parents because stepping into a formal mainstream school has expectations such as academic levels expected of a child of a certain age; communication with parents is electronic; records of the children. We, however committed to assist for the first year with integration into mainstream schooling to assist in these areas.

We took the children shopping for school uniforms and

stationery in order to prepare them for the year ahead. It was a beautiful experience for us as teachers and them as they are so used to second hand clothing. One learner did not attend school as he had washed his school shoes and laid them out to dry, only to find later in the day that his school shoes were missing. He kept running away in the morning and not going to school. His teacher kept calling us to inform us. He never shared with us his embarrassment, but after two weeks we discovered the problem. Now he leaves his shoes at school.

One of our learners, Diego who is developmentally delayed and has been with us since 2017, was welcomed into the Primary School with love and they sourced an Education Psychologist to assess him. He is now going to be attending Mary Harding School for children with Special needs. The other 3 learners are doing very well, they are disciplined and eager to learn, according to their respective teachers. This makes us feel very grateful that their time at COLT Educare has been a nurturing, loving and positive experience.

### **Ntombikayise Nkompe Grade R Class Assistant**

The first day at work, I was a bit nervous, I thought I was not going to get along with the staff and children but I actually get along with them very well.

The children and staff are very nice, lovely and very creative. I learnt a lot in my first four weeks about what the children like to do and how they react to certain things. I must say that I really enjoy myself at Children of Light Educare, and I am looking forward to working with the staff and children.

### **Juliet Mabhouwah Sunflower Class assistant and Level 4 Student at Centre for Creative Education, Waldorf Education Philosophy**

Being at COLT Educare has been an ongoing learning experience for me... where I found myself growing in all aspects of life. I am writing this with so much joy, kinda disbelief that my dream is finally coming true..., this one thing that I've been longing for is finally happening. I keep on hearing words of encouragement in my ears from Teacher Mala & Tr Nushfeekah saying "just go and register and everything else will unfold itself". I knew this is what I wanted to do but I was a bit skeptical about it, some fears of the unknown, wondering if I would manage financially - all these little voices inside me, but with the encouragement I received at work I listened to my inner voice saying "You can do it" and now I'm studying towards my Early Childhood Development NQ Level 4.

Well the journey has been amazing so far. I find myself being more excited to come share & implement what I'm learning with the children. I feel like a light has been lit inside of me and I only wish to maintain that light and pass it on to the children. What stood out for me so far at College is the Introduction to the Three Golden Rules which are:

1.Receiving the Child in Reverence - having a deep respect for the child, understanding where they come from, and accepting them as they are.

2.Educate the child in love (Love is the greatest thing that you can offer).

3.Let the child go forth in freedom.

With these 3 Golden Rules in mind, implemented every day, every time the journey of nurturing young children will be worthy and I am so excited to walk-on this journey seeing my self-growing & acquiring knowledge that I will pass on to the children. I must say being at COLT Educare has shaped me, prepared me for this journey, as I'm already familiar with some of the things we are learning because the foundation was already laid.

### **Devi Harker Gardening Teacher**

The first gardening sessions this year started in the classroom with children listening to a rendition of Frédéric Chopin's 'Waterfall' and then we listed what plants needed to grow and thrive. Out in the garden we smelt the leaves of the different plants: mint, lavender, spearmint, rosemary, nutmeg pelargonium.

The Worm Farm: Children stood on chairs to watch the worms and fed them veggie peels, apple cores, kitchen scraps and water. Willing helpers were quickly identified to help manage the worm farm!

The Vegetable and Herb Garden: Composting and planting of vegetable seedlings are activities for the end of February. Then children can water the seedlings with water from the rain tank and watch them grow.

Peace Garden: Children were introduced to the Peace Garden and learnt that this corner of tranquility was a safe space to take a break when they were feeling upset or feeling sad. They held the smooth stones and figurines in their hands and watched the sun dance off the glass mosaic that is mounted on the wall.

We practiced a variation of the lotus flower mudra and then sang 'blessings on the blossoms' before snack time.



*Looking for worms*



*Gazing at the reflecting mosaic*

## Kena Upanishad

By Sri Swami Sivananda

### Chapter 2 Verse 2

Disciple: I do not think I know (Him) well; but not that I do not know; I know too. He who among us knows It, knows It, and he knows not too that he does not know.

### Notes and Commentary

We cannot know Brahman, as we know other objects of this world by referring them to a class and showing other differences. On the contrary, we do not know that we know Him not, i.e., no one can assert that we know Him not, for we need to know Brahman in order to know anything. He, therefore, who knows this double peculiarity of the knowledge of Brahman, knows Brahman, as much as it can be known; and he does not know, nor can anybody prove it to him, that he does not know Brahman.

The disciple says: "I do not think I know Him well, but not that I do not know. I know too." Against this, the preceptor says: "Then you do not know Brahman, because there is a contradiction when you say, 'I do not know Him well and I know Him.' If you do not think you know Him well, how can you think you know Him? If

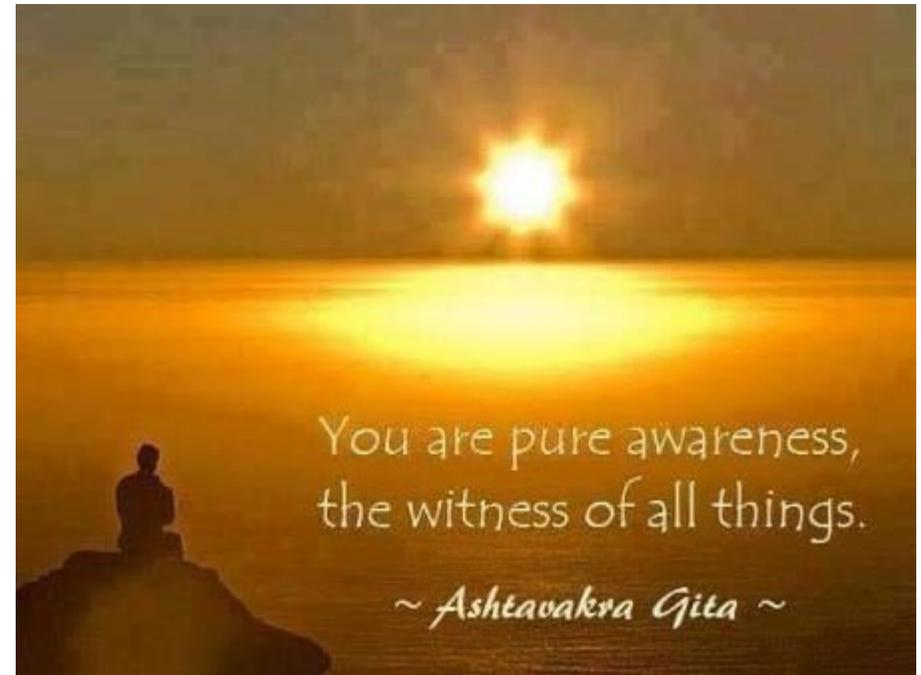
you, on the other hand, think that you know Him, why do you not think that you know Him well?" The disciple remains unshaken in his faith owing to the strength of his own experience. He shows the firmness of his knowledge of Brahman and says: "He among us (my co-disciples) knows this, he knows it, etc."

You cannot know Brahman just as you know an object. Brahman is known or realised not as an object, but as pure self-consciousness, through intuition or direct inner experience or illumination. In this spiritual experience, there is no objective consciousness just as you experience in this world. Subject and object are one in the spiritual experience. The Self or Brahman is everything. The sage beholds the Atman everywhere. Sarvam Khalvidam Brahma - everything is certainly Brahman. This is a sublime, soul-stirring experience that cannot be either imagined or described in words. You will have to experience it yourself in Samadhi, when the mind, intellect and the senses cease functioning.

## Wisdom from Mother Yogeshwari

### SURRENDER

Today may be a special day to be commemorated,  
On account of actions past, either good or hated,  
Building up of energy with mind and senses heightened,  
Surrendering it all to God, one might become enlightened.



## **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 \_\_\_\_\_

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Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

## **For more information please contact: Ananda Kutir Ashrama 031-418 NPO**

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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: 10158117954  
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: 10158113770  
Reference: Your name & purpose of payment

#### **Donations to the Children of Light Educare**

Bank: Absa  
Branch code: 632005 (Claremont)  
Account name: Children of Light Educare Trust  
Account No: 93-2207-3615  
Reference: Your name & purpose of payment