

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

March - June 2024

News on Recent Events

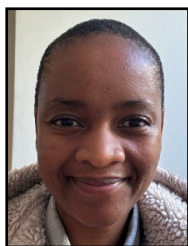
Hari OM and Loving
Greetings to all!

We have had another period full of activities at the ashrama. Besides the regular satsangs, meditation, philosophy and yoga classes, the ashrama was engaged in various special programmes. All of these serve the purpose of spiritual growth.

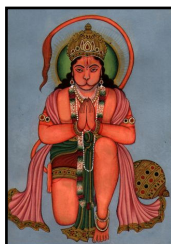


On 8 March the ashrama observed the auspicious spiritual festival Shivaratri, an all-night vigil of continuous devotional singing interspersed with puja (sacred rituals). This was an uplifting and joyous occasion, overcoming the temptations of sleep and immersing ourselves in the Divine.

The ashrama is currently collaborating with the Chiltern Yoga Trust (Aust.) in the republishing of Swami Venkatesananda's Daily Readings which are translations of various scriptures. It is a wonderful opportunity for devotees to offer their time and energy in this important work of preserving the sublime writings of Swami Venkatesananda. Once a month devotees meet at the ashrama to do proof reading and from time-to-time Swami Vidyananda and Santosh Van Der Merwe have been staying at Bhaktipriya Uren's home in Barrydale to dedicate themselves to a week of proof reading. Pat Markovina and Joan Vaughan have also been offering their services to this project in Betty's Bay .

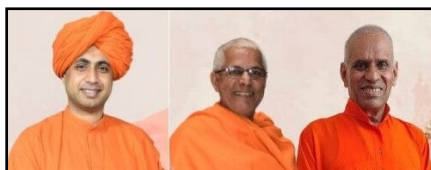


We welcome Noxolo Mthimkulu as a new teacher in the ashrama. She used to teach at the Sivananda School of Yoga in Johannesburg. The Swamis there spoke highly of her and we too are very pleased to have her teaching at the ashrama and attending satsangs.



The ashrama also participated in the annual Sri Hanuman Chalisa Recitals hosted by the Hindu Association Western Cape at the Vishnu Mandir. This is an auspicious event where the Hanuman Chalisa (a sacred hymn) is sung 108 times consecutively by various organisations in their favourite tunes. The ashrama has been participating in this every year since the inception of this event, always singing in the early hours of the morning.

The ashrama also hosted an evening satsang to welcome Swamis from the Sannyas Spiritual Council of South Africa. Swamis Vedanand, Gurubhaktananda and Chaitanyananda addressed the



devotees with short inspiring messages about spiritual life, the power of OM, and the true significance of sannyasa (renunciation). It was a joyous occasion.



Occasionally the ashrama is also engaged in teaching at the invitation of other organisations. In May Swami Vidyananda taught an introductory workshop to youth at the NGO AspireYouth. Swami Vidyananda's pre-ashrama work colleague Mark Gamble has established a remarkable NGO that assists unemployed and uneducated youth to be not only self-employed, but also to blossom as beautiful persons.

Another inspiring satsang was held on the Birth Anniversary of



Sri Adi Shankaracharya, one of the most important philosopher saints of India, whose teachings are at the root of the ashrama's life. The day was celebrated with the viewing of a wonderful biographical film by CV Iyer, followed by a talk and singing some of the hymns that Sri Adi Shankaracharya had composed about 1200 years ago.

We also had our AGM in May, a necessary event in the annual life of the ashrama, as the ashrama requires a committee to see to the running of the ashrama. Attendance is usually just enough to make the quorum. Bhaktipriya Uren, the chairman, conducted the AGM very well and the various reports were well received. Bhaktipriya explained that the

word 'chairman' does not refer to a male person, but is an abbreviation for manager, its origin being the Latin word 'manus' (to manage/handle). After the AGM members enjoyed one another's company over chai and treats.

An important event this year was the Centenary of Swami Sivananda's Sannyas Diksha. Sannyas Diksha is the ceremony at which a seeker



takes the vow of monkhood. This momentous occasion marked Swami Sivananda's total dedication to Enlightenment which later resulted in his immense service to humanity in the form of disseminating the entire teachings of yoga. The ashrama celebrated with a viewing of a biographical film, followed by meditation, a talk and kirtan.

The Cape Town Interfaith Initiative is a wonderful organisation promoting harmony amongst religions. One of its very successful projects is a Youth project. This year again a group of learners from an array of schools came to the ashrama to learn about the teachings of yoga. It is a great delight to work with and be with

young people as they are still open-minded, able to assimilate and reflect deeply, which leads to a most satisfying exchange for teacher and student.

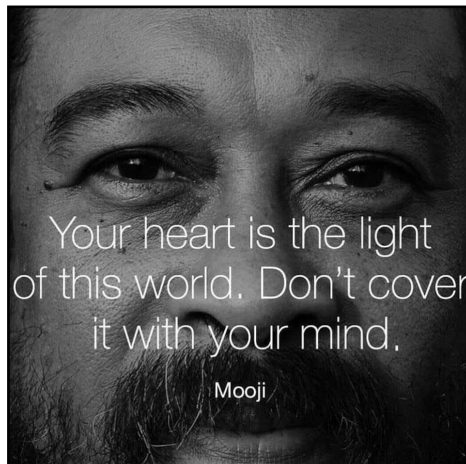


Swami Parvathiananda's birthday was also celebrated with a special satsang, where we read from the teachings of the Bhagavad Gita, Swami Sivananda, Swami Venkatesananda and Mother Yogeshwari and sang kirtans. A joyous happy birthday song was sung whilst Swami Parvathiananda cut the birthday cake. We pray that the Lord keep blessing her.

The ashrama continuous to serve and we pray for the spiritual uplift of all beings.

With Prem and Om on behalf of Swami
Parvathiananda,

Vidyananda



Cosmic Links

"The body is a treacherous friend. Give it its due; no more. Pain and pleasure are transitory; endure all dualities with calmness, trying at the same time to remove yourself beyond their power. Imagination is the door through which disease as well as healing enters. Disbelieve in the reality of sickness even when you are ill; an unrecognized visitor will flee!"

Paramahansa Yogananda

"What you think you become."

Gautama Buddha

"Internal and external nature, mind and matter, are in time and space, and are bound by the law of causation."

Swami Vivekananda

"Science enhances the moral value of life, because it furthers a love of truth and reverence-love of truth displaying itself in the constant endeavour to arrive at a more exact knowledge of the world of mind and matter around us, and reverence, because every advance in knowledge brings us face to face with the mystery of our own being."

Max Planck

"Age is an issue of mind over matter. If you don't mind, it doesn't matter."

Mark Twain

"To be yourself in a world that is constantly trying to make you something else is the greatest accomplishment."

Ralph Waldo Emerson

"It is the mark of an educated mind to be able to entertain a thought without accepting it."

Aristotle

"Mind and matter are two different aspects of one and the same thing."

Carl Jung

"Do I not destroy my enemies by making them my friends?"

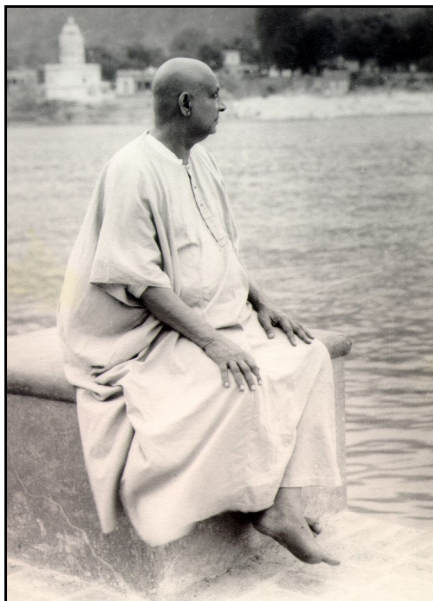
Abraham Lincoln

"To promote the healing response, you must get past all the grosser levels of the body - cells, tissues, organs and systems - and arrive at a junction point between mind and matter, the point where consciousness actually starts to have an effect."

Deepak Chopra

Mind and Matter

By Sri Swami Sivananda



Mind is not a gross thing, visible and tangible; its existence is nowhere seen; its magnitude cannot be measured; it does not require space in which to exist. Mind and matter are two aspects or subject and object of one and the same all full Brahman - who is itself neither and yet includes both.

Mind precedes matter; this is the vedantic theory. Matter precedes mind; this is the scientific theory. Mind is immaterial only in the sense that it has not the characteristics of ponderable matter. It is not immaterial in the sense that Brahman - pure spirit - is.

Mind is the subtle form of matter. Hence it is the prompter of the body. Mind is made of subtle, pure (satvic), atomic matter. Mind is all electricity. It is formed of the subtlest portion of food. The soul is the only source of intelligence; it is self-evident; it shines with its own light.

The organs or mind and senses derive their principle of activity and life from the soul. By themselves they are lifeless. Hence the soul is always the subject and never the object. Mind is the object of the soul.

It is a cardinal principle of vedanta that that which is an object for a subject is non-intelligent. Even the principle of self-consciousness is non-intelligence it does not exist by its own light; it is the object of apperception to the soul.

Mind is composed of coarse or fine matter, according to the needs of the more or less unfolded consciousness connected with it. In the educated it is active and well-defined. In the undeveloped it is cloudy and ill-defined.

Mind, Matter, Time and Space

By Swami Venkatesananda



How did the mind ever become aware of the outside material world? Through the body, through the avenues of the body. I am able to see you because of the eyes. I am able

to hear you because of my ears. When these have stopped functioning there is no apprehension of the external material world. That's quite simple, isn't it?

You and I know that it is possible to build a world of our own in sleep - that faculty is still there - don't call it mind, we don't know what it is all about. We go only on things you and I are clearly aware of. You are not clearly aware of the thing called mind, but you are clearly aware of the thing called body and how it is sustained - how it builds itself, does the repair work, elimination and all the rest of it. You are aware of that, so go on with that.

This body may not need another 58 years to disintegrate, but it will still take some time. If it is not burnt, buried or thrown to the dogs it will take some time

because decomposition needs some time. A composition needs some time and decomposition needs some time; and then slowly it disintegrates. But nothing comes and nothing goes - that means the faculty which was associated with this fellow called Swami Venkatesananda which was able to dream up the whole of itself within itself. Now that the body has gone the contact with the external world of matter is also gone. (External means external to the skin.) So the world does not exist, but not quite ...

Just as, when he was in this body, he was able to go to sleep and dream ('go to sleep' means disconnect the senses from apprehending the world of matter outside) and *then* create a dream world of his own; in exactly the same way, at that point too (of death), now that the world has been disconnected by the cessation of the functioning of the senses, this Venkatesananda starts dreaming. And that becomes a new world! In that world that fellow functions. For how long? What is time, what is space?

So, nothing has come, nothing has gone.

News from Children Of Light Educare

Loving greetings to all our Dear Friends

We are dedicating our June article to the Youth programme, and the COLT Youth Yoga Camp that was held in June. Ten of our youth, between the ages 11 – 14 years were selected from a group of 42 past COLT learners to participate in the youth yoga camp.



Pre-trip planning at COLT. Teacher Nushfeekah with our ten youth.

The reason for the camp was to visit Swami Ramkripananda at the Sarva Dharma Ashram in Durban. The ashram is situated in a township in Welbedacht and Swami Ramkripananda works with the vulnerable youth living in the area. He is currently working with a 4th generation of youth. The camp would be an enriching experience for our youth - living in an ashram in the presence of Swami Ramkripananda and interacting with the local youth who

participate in his programmes at the ashram.



Swami Ramkripananda, Swami Gurubhaktananda, Sri Vedanandaji, and Guru Morgan with COLT youth and staff

Preparing for the Youth Camp

In preparation for the trip to Durban a meeting was held for parents to provide them with details about travelling arrangements and the camp programme. The parents responded so positively, granting their consent knowing that this was a rare opportunity for their child. Fundraising began in earnest with the view to cover all clothing, transport, food, accommodation, teacher and driver costs.

Teacher Nushfeekah and the children slept over at the Educare on the night of 16th June to ensure an early start on Monday morning. A group of volunteers had packed food and beverages for the road trip and the trailer was packed and hitched to the Educare bus.

Day 1 dawned on 17th June and a very excited group left for Colesberg which would be the first stop (about 800km). The children were very curious about where they were going. When the driver had to stop the bus at a petrol station to fill up, the children spotted a big map mounted on a sign. They gathered around it and were able to trace where they were and name the places they had passed along the way. There was such a happy vibe in the bus with everyone singing and chatting.



A stop in the Karoo.

Poplar Grove, Colesberg

On arrival at the Poplar Grove Stoep Zen Buddhist Retreat in Colesberg we were very warmly welcomed by Antony and Margie Osler, owners of the farm. Our group spent 2 nights here with all the children sleeping together with teacher Nushfeekah.

During the day the children were free to enjoy the beautiful Poplar Grove farm - playing in the veld, touching sheep and horses,



Our room at Poplar Grove

watching the birdlife, walking the labyrinth, and climbing to the top of the hill. They also so enjoyed chatting and journaling next to the fire, eating soup together around the big table, and Satsanga in the evening! Time was allocated at the end of each day for journaling so that the children could capture their experiences with drawings, mapping out their journey, writing a paragraph, or just pressing a leaf between two pages. They loved this special quiet time. There couldn't have been a better start to the youth camp.



Journaling next to the fire at Poplar Grove

It's day 3 and time to leave Colesberg and drive through to Durban. The children occupied themselves in the bus, chatting,

singing, and playing 'I spy'. A stop at Steers for lunch was a special treat for everyone and then a stop in Pietermaritzburg to look at Howick Falls. Other visitors to the falls commented on how smart the children were in their matching tracksuits.

Sarva Dharma Ashram, Welbedacht

Each child was hugged by Swami Ramkripananda on arrival at the ashram which made them feel like they were his children. He showed them to their rooms and then we were all invited to have supper with him. He noticed how much the children enjoyed roti and beans and immediately informed the ashram cook to cook more for them the next day! A visit to uShaka Marine World in Durban had our children mesmerised as they watched the performing dolphins and other sea creatures. They then spent time on the beach building sand castles and eating pizza and ice cream.

The love expressed by the children and how quickly they learnt prayers and chants impressed Swami Ramkripananda. On the 2nd night some of them confidently sang at the mic, played drums and the manjeera and joined in the dancing on the stage. Om Namo Narayanaya became a favourite chant!

International Yoga Day was celebrated with a 3 day



*A statue of Gurudev on the altar at
Sarva Dharma Ashram*

programme at the ashram. Our children were invited to join the ashram youth in groups, and participate in activities organised by Swami Ramkripananda. He would engage with the children and ask questions after a group activity, such as watching a movie about living values. By this time our children were confident enough to put up their hand and answer the question. Part of the programme was learning a new dance and then performing the dance in front of an audience of 300 people. It was inspiring to see how confidently our children performed, and how

attentive they were when Swami Ramkripananda told stories about the different deities. The children shared with staff that they felt that the ashram was a home and Swami Ramkripananda was the father in that home. They were reluctant to leave because for the few days that they stayed in the ashram, it felt like their home. It was not only the children who had experienced the connection with God outwardly, and inwardly, but the staff as well.



Last day of the 3 day programme

Return trip home

Early on 24th June with full hearts our children and staff left Sarva Dharma Ashram with the trailer packed and secured, and headed back towards Colesberg. Everyone had an overnight bag in the bus for the Colesberg stopover. When filling up with petrol just before Colesberg our driver noticed that the trailer was gone! It had mysteriously vanished! The children were very upset because their bags and journals were packed in the trailer. Fortunately, the stopover at the Gariep Forever

Resort, a ‘treat’ from Antony and Margie Osler provided a warm and comfortable night with some peace of mind.



Dawn at Gariep Dam

Then just like that it was the 25th June and we started on the last leg of the trip back to Cape Town. Diego had won R10 in Durban and when asked what he would spend it on, he said he would buy a candle for his mother because they don’t have electricity at home. As the bus got closer to their homes everyone got their gifts out, ready to hand over to their families who were waiting for them.

For the children the Youth camp was an experience of abundant love, awe, adventure and friendship that will remain in their hearts forever. A big Thank You to our donors who made the Youth Camp possible. We could not have done it without your generous support.

By Principal Maitri Makan

The Spiritual Life

By Swami Venkatesananda

Life is spiritual. The spirit is indivisible and it is also invisible. It therefore does not satisfy man's craving to experience it, to possess it and to express it. Therefore we see in him a savage compulsion to materialise this spirit.

This idolatry of matter is seen in our veneration of someone who is able 'to materialise things' by a wave of his hand. But our own life is full of such materialisations; the whole world is the materialisation of the spirit. All the machines and all the weapons have been 'materialised' by a wave of someone's hand.

It is this materialisation of the spirit that has prevented us from realising the spiritual nature of life. The mind serves as the veil to hide the reality and promotes the worship of matter. The mind is clever enough to conjure up, like an adept magician, false concepts and images of God, religion, love, peace and happiness, so that even in a moment of disillusionment we might not turn away from the unreal and discover the reality. Only the greatest of spiritual heroes is able to discover this plot and to realise that these concepts or images are not only not the reality, but the greatest and most potent obstructions to the realisation of the reality which is

pure and spiritual. The spirit is never lost, though, in ignorance, it may be lost sight of. It is forever waiting to be discovered.

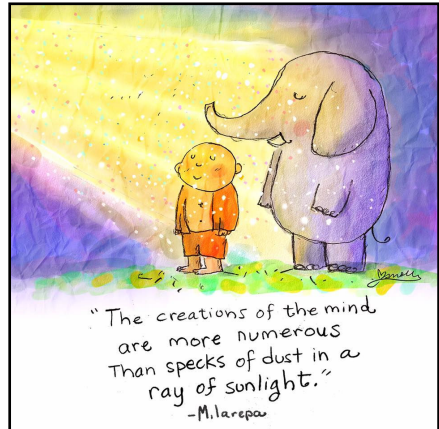
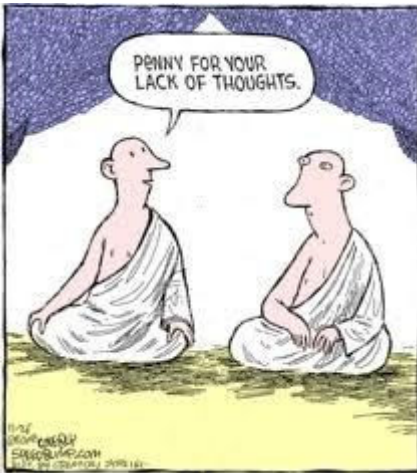
Right from infancy we have been bombarded with concepts that have created divisions in our consciousness. The infant's vision is pure. Perhaps even the notion that there is an object external to itself has not arisen in it, because its own ego-sense has not been developed. The parents strive to condition the infant's mind and call it 'training'. The child is prevented from seeking to find its true identity by being forced to identify itself with this or that. 'I' am constantly pressurised into accepting as an incontrovertible fact that 'I am a man, an Indian, a brahmin...'. It hardly ever occurs to me that I am even a human being, leave alone the purest truth, that the spirit alone is real and 'I' am but a cell (a soul) in the cosmic body of the spirit which is the universe.

The direct realisation of the spirit which is indivisible is religion. It is also love that is God. That love is not partial, limited, contractual, nor is it the antithesis of hate. It is the spontaneous manifestation of the already existing indivisible oneness which alone is the truth.



The problem is not yours - it is your mind's only. Begin by disassociating yourself from your mind. Resolutely remind yourself that you are not the mind and that its problems are not yours.

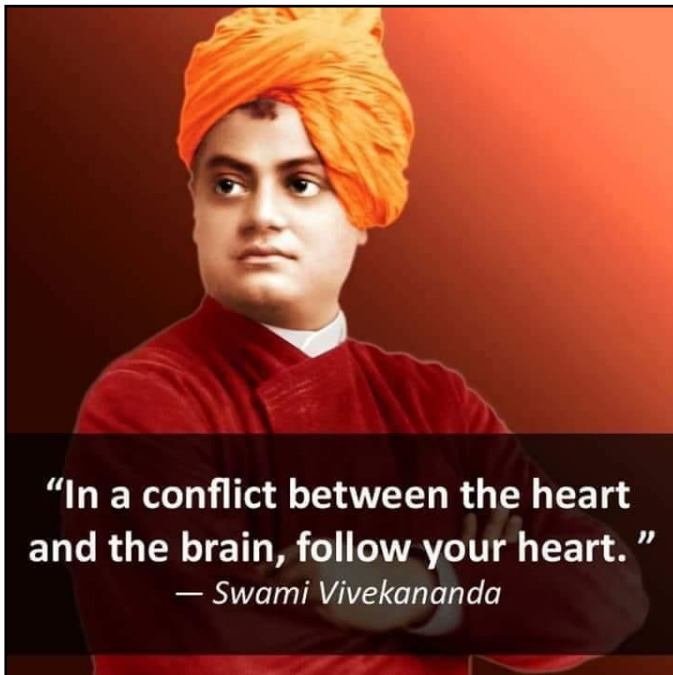
Sri Nisargadatta Maharaj



Wisdom from Mother Yogeshwari



**The most amazing path to follow is
the labyrinth of your own mind.**



**“In a conflict between the heart
and the brain, follow your heart. ”**
— *Swami Vivekananda*

Ananda Kutir Ashrama Membership Application Form

Students 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

R250 valid for the financial year March-February. R350 for married couples.

Name _____

Postal Address _____

Phone _____

Cellphone _____

E-mail _____

Signature _____

Date _____

**For more information please contact:
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Email: info@anandakutir.org.za

www.anandakutir.org.za

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Banking Details

Donations to the Ashrama

Bank: Standard Bank
Branch code: 051001 (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: 051001 (Rondebosch Branch)
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Donations to the Children of Light Educare

Bank: Absa
Branch code: 632005 (Claremont Branch)
Account name: Children of Light Educare Trust
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