



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 - July 2026

News on Recent Events

Blessed Friends,
Hari OM.



This year marks the Birth Centenary of Mother Yogeshwari. The commemorations started with the commencement of the Raja Yoga Meditation Course that Mother

Yogeshwari used to teach. Swami Vidyananda endeavoured to follow the course outline established by Mother Yogeshwari and started the 15-week course on 16 March. The course was offered as a tribute to Mother Yogeshwari, as it was when Swami Vidyananda joined this course in 1999 that he realized

that the path of self-realisation was the answer to his life's questions.

Furthermore to the Birth Centenary a lecture series was conducted by Sri Swami Gurubhaktananda from Jnana Ganga Academy in Durban from



18 to 21 March. Swami Gurubhaktananda knew Mother Yogeshwari for many decades from his annual visits to our ashram. The lecture series focused on various aspects of Mother Yogeshwari's yoga practices and how we can incorporate these into our lives. The lectures were well received.

Swamiji also joined us for the Holy Observances of Sri Ramnavami and Sri Hanuman Jayanti and gave inspiring talks relating these holy days to the life of Mother Yogeshwari.

Swami Vidyananda joined an Interfaith event hosted by the Emissaries of Light on 29 March. The event focused on the current state of the world and all the participants shared their thoughts and prayers on various associated topics. The idea was that by discussing and contemplating these issues from a spiritual perspective and discussing spiritual solutions, that the energy generated may influence the world.



During the above-mentioned Interfaith Event Swami Vidyananda met a disciple of Sri Swami Nihshreyasananda called Ananda Van Zijl. Swami Nihshreyasananda was a contemporary of Swami Venkatesananda and who ran an Ashram in Zimbabwe. He used to frequently visit Cape Town, where Ananda Van Zijl met him and became his disciple. Ananda Van Zijl is now a teacher of spirituality in America. As he was visiting

Cape Town, Swami Vidyananda invited Ananda to address our Satsang, which Ananda did beautifully on 9 May. He touchingly talked about his Guru Swami Nihshreyasananda, stimulating discussion re his life and teachings.

A special Easter Satsang was held on 3 April in which a flower offering was done to the image of Baby Jesus, Christian kirtans were sung and a talk was given by Swami Vidyananda.



22 April was the Holy Observance of the Advent of Sri Adi Shankaracharya, who as tradition has it lived around the 9th century CE.



Swami Vidyananda shared some insights into the life and teachings of this important sage of Vedanta. Sri Adi Shankaracharya taught from his own direct experience as well as profound scholarship that the Self and God are one, and that every human being can attain to that state.

27 April was a public holiday and Sri Dayananda and his wife Smt Kausalya invited devotees from



Ananda Kutir to attend a housewarming Havan and Satsang,

followed by a meal. It was wonderful to congregate in their home and to pray and meditate together. Such home Satsangs bring wonderful blessings to the family and also bring a closeness amongst fellow devotees.

Nature always calls the spiritual seeker, as she gives glimpses of the underlying Reality. Hence a hike with meditation was held on 3 May led by our friend Evelyn Hotzhausen. We walked in the beautiful forest above Hout Bay up to a waterfall, after which we sat for meditation and shared tea. Being in Nature certainly uplifts us all.



Swami Sivananda's Sannyas Diksha Day was observed on 1 June.

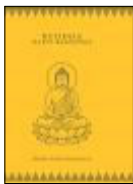
Swami Vidyananda shared some contemplations on the life of Swami Sivananda, and in what way his life was a teaching. Also, Swami Vidyananda emphasised that the formal path of renunciation does not require the consent of anyone, only one's own self, and is

considered to supercede all other obligations.



The third event dedicated to Mother Yogeshwari's Birth Centenary was the Soup Seva Day held on Madiba Day, 19 July, in cooperation with the Cape Town Hindu Seva Samaj. Devotees from Ananda Kutir as well as the Seva Samaj congregated in the morning at the Seva Samaj Community Hall to prepare soup and sandwiches for needy people in the impoverished communities of Hadji Ebrahim Crescent and Pook Se Bos. There was a beautiful atmosphere of camaraderie and compassion as devotees from both organisations lovingly prepared the meals and later distributed the food in the pouring rain.

The ashrama has been for some time now collaborating with Chiltern Yoga Trust (established by Swami Venkatesananda) to republish the Daily Readings of



Swami Venkatesananda. The first book set has been completed and a special satsang was arranged at which the set was offered to Swami Venkatesananda in spirit. We then read a page from each one. What marvellous service Swami Venkatesananda had done by translating these scriptures for our benefit.

Guru Purnima is the one Holy Day which should be observed by all seekers, as the guidance of the

guru or one's teacher is an immeasurable aid to one's spiritual path. This year Guru Purnima fell on 29 July, at which Puja was offered, Kirtans were sung and Swami Vidyananda spoke on the life and teachings of Swami Sivananda. Remembrance of enlightened Masters certainly ignites the inner flame and floods light on one's spiritual journey.



When Kundalini is awakened, it does not proceed at once to Sahasrara Chakra.

By further Yogic practices, you will have to take it from Chakra to Chakra, one by one.

Sivananda

Cosmic Links

“I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely.”

Jesus in Revelation 21:6

“The Kundalini dwells in the Muladhara (first chakra). When it is aroused, it passes along the Sushumna nerve, goes through the centres of Svadhisthana, Manipura (second/third chakras) and so on, and at last reaches the head.”

Sri Ramakrishna

“When the Kundalini awakens through the grace of the guru, all the lotuses and knots are pierced.

Shiva Samhita (Translation by James Mallinson)

“This Matsyendrasana, [which increases appetite by] fanning the gastric fire, is a weapon that destroys all the terrible diseases of the body; with [daily] practice it arouses the Kundalini and makes the Moon steady in men.”

Hatha Yoga Pradipika
(Translation by Srinivasa Iyengar and Tookaram Tatya)

“The awakening of the Kundalini is the beginning of spiritual consciousness, and its union with Siva in the Sahasrara [crown chakra], ending in samadhi [absorption in God], is the consummation.”

Swami Nikhilananda

“When you succeed in awakening the Kundalini, so that it starts to move out of its mere potentiality, you necessarily start a world which is totally different from our world. It is the world of eternity.”

C.G. Jung

“Finally, from a purely scientific and technical point of view, one of the yogas where celibacy is absolutely essential and indispensable is kundalini yoga. There is no compromise with that. Right from the beginning it is absolutely essential and indispensable. Otherwise it is dangerous to go into kundalini yoga which is based upon pranayama and many mudras, bandhas and asanas.”

Swami Chidananda

Kundalini Yoga

By Sri Swami Sivananda

Kundalini sakti is the coiled up, dormant, cosmic power that underlies all organic and inorganic matter. It is the primordial energy that lies at the basal centre (muladhara chakra) in a dormant, potential state. Kundalini yoga treats of kundalini sakti, the seven chakras (centres of spiritual energy), and the arousing of this sleeping kundalini.

Nadis are astral tubes that carry pranic currents. They cannot be seen with the naked eye. They are not the ordinary nerves, arteries and veins. There are 72,000 nadis. Three are important. They are the ida, the pingala, and the susumna. Susumna is the most important because kundalini passes through this nadi only.

The first step in kundalini yoga is the purification of the nadis. When susumna is pure, then only will the kundalini pass through it. Kundalini is awakened by pranayama, asana and mudras by hatha yogins; through concentration by raja yogins; through devotion and perfect self-surrender by devotees; through analytical will by the jnanis; by japa (repetition) of mantra (God's name) and the grace of the guru (preceptor).

That aspirant who has firm faith in the scriptures, who is



courageous, devotional, humble, generously merciful, pure and dispassionate, can easily awaken the kundalini and attain success in samadhi (superconsciousness). He should also be equipped with right conduct and self-restraint. He should constantly engage himself in the service of his guru and he should be free from lust, anger, delusion, greed and vanity.

When kundalini is taken to the sahasrara (the crown of the head), when she is united with Lord Siva, perfect samadhi (the superconscious, blissful state) ensues. Now the yogi drinks the nectar of immortality. May mother kundalini guide you all in your yogic practices! May her blessings be upon you all!

Vital Forces

By Swami Venkatesananda



I read a delightful article in the 'Reader's Digest' explaining how a germ entering the body is fought by other cells in the body. The cells behave as though they have an independent intelligence and total free-will. One detail which caught my imagination is that white cells function even after death. This means that one of the vital life forces functions even after I am dead.

According to hatha yoga, one of the pranas goes on functioning after life has left the

body. In other words part of the vital life force functions even after death. These vital defenders of our organism are manufactured in the spinal marrow. Those of you who have studied hatha yoga, especially laya yoga or kundalini yoga, will recall that all the vital centres, the chakras, are located within the spinal cord. There are suggestive similarities between these descriptions. So if we are all cells in the body of God we should function more or less in the same way as the body's cells – beautifully, harmoniously and lovingly.

Why is there no harmony in our life? Why is there this perpetual craving for this and that? We must learn to distinguish between being active and restless. Work and worry are also two different things. God created work, man created worry.

News from Children Of Light Educare

From Development Assessments to Youth Empowerment



This past week marked an important milestone for the Learning Initiative, as the occupational therapists began conducting individual assessments for 11 of our children, all aged 4 to 5. These assessments are a crucial step in understanding each child's current stage of development and tailoring support to their unique needs. During the assessments, the OTs focused on several key areas, including cognitive skills, gross motor skills, and fine motor skills.

With the assessments now complete, the programme is moving into its next phase. Starting next week, the therapists will work with a selected group of children in small group sessions, focusing on strengthening the areas where some children are still developing. This milestone is an important step in helping each child build the skills, confidence, and foundations they need to grow and learn.

Speaking of confidence, we also have an exciting programme coming up for our youth. The Art

of Living will be hosting a programme at the end of the month designed to empower our young learners by building self-confidence, improving concentration, and developing a calm, focused mind. Through a combination of meditation, breathing techniques, interactive exercises, and fun group activities, the children will experience a programme that encourages them to express themselves, connect with others, and grow both emotionally and socially.

A Term to Remember



Term 1 has officially come to a close, and the past few weeks have been a meaningful and memorable time. From the build-up to our charity golf day, to a beautiful autumn festival, and the start of the Art of Living youth programme.

Our Golf Day, held on the 26th of March, was a resounding success. We welcomed 40 golfers out on the course, followed by more than 50 guests who joined us later for dinner, the auction, and prize giving. The atmosphere throughout the day was vibrant and the most unforgettable part was having six of our children with us. They got involved by throwing some of the golfers second shot for them, which added a fun and memorable twist to the day. In their own lively and slightly chaotic way, they brought joy not only to themselves but to everyone around them. More than anything, their presence was a powerful reminder of what the day is really about, giving our supporters the chance to see who they are supporting and the difference they are making.

The following day we then gathered to celebrate our autumn festival, a tradition rooted in the Waldorf education philosophy, which places strong emphasis on learning through the rhythms of the seasons. The teachers put so much effort into creating a space that truly reflected autumn. The classroom was filled with warm orange tones, decorated with seasonal ornaments and the children shared a meal made from seasonal ingredients.

To round off this special time, our youth programme with the Art of Living began on Saturday. The excitement from the

children has been incredible, they are so happy to be part of it, and their enthusiasm is infectious. It's really uplifting to see them step into something new with so much curiosity and openness.

We end the term feeling grateful, for the experiences we have shared, the moments we have celebrated, and the sense of community that continues to grow stronger.

Small Moments, Big Growth



The start of a new term is always a great opportunity to pause and reflect, especially for our teachers, who have been watching how the children have settled into their environment and grown more comfortable in their daily routines.

Our Daisy Class has shown fantastic development. Their confidence levels have really grown, and the children are interacting more freely with one another while becoming increasingly confident in expressing their needs. Similarly in the Sunflower Class, the enthusiasm has just been inspiring. The children have fully

immersed themselves in their activities and are clearly enjoying their learning. From creative art projects to developing their crayon and pen skills, there has been steady progress in both focus and ability.

While our teachers carefully follow the curriculum, they also make a conscious effort to create opportunities that go beyond structured learning. Every child is unique, and nurturing their individual strengths is just as important as academic progress. One lovely example of this in action is a Sunflower student whose curiosity and initiative really shines. She eagerly helps prepare snacks, assists with serving lunch, and makes sure both her peers and teachers are taken care of. Her natural leadership is being thoughtfully nurtured, allowing her confidence and abilities to continue to grow.

Another exciting development is our Blocks for Growth Programme. Yesterday marked the first training session for our teachers with the occupational therapists as part of their initiative. The programme is designed to strengthen the support we provide, ensuring that each child's developmental needs are met.

Overall, it has been a wonderful start to Term 2, and we are excited to see the continued growth and development of our children.

Our Visit to the SEED Garden



The children recently enjoyed a visit to the SEED Garden. Below, Teacher Juliet shares a glimpse into their day at the garden.

Our group of 16 Educare children enjoyed a beautiful and enriching visit to The SEED garden. From the moment we arrived, we were welcomed with warm hands and friendly smiles, making everyone feel at ease. The children gathered under the gazebo, where we were greeted and introduced to a lovely song about tree planting, setting a joyful tone for the day.

We began our guided walk through the vegetable beds, where the children explored a variety of growing vegetables and learned how they are cared for. We then visited the banana tree patch, where they discovered interesting facts about how banana trees grow.

One of the highlights was learning about lavender. When asked if they knew what it was, our little gardeners proudly recognized it. The facilitator gently guided them as they walked in a line, taking turns to smell and rub the lavender, enjoying its soothing fragrance while learning about its uses.

At the seedlings shed, the children were introduced to a variety of young plants, including kale, lettuce, carrots, flowers, and pot plants. As part of our experience at The Seeds, they also explored the worm farm, learning about composting and the important role worms play in keeping the soil healthy.

A very special moment was when the children left their mark by planting flowers in a prepared flower bed, taking part in nurturing new life. The excitement continued as they harvested carrots straight from the ground and enjoyed a fresh, healthy carrot snack.

We closed off the day with our heartfelt “Blessings on the Blossom,” ending a day filled with learning, joy, and connection with nature.

We are truly grateful to The Seeds team for their warm hospitality and for creating such a memorable experience for our children.

A Heartfelt Thank You to Our Community



Last week ended with some devastating news as some of our students’ homes burnt down, resulting in the loss of all their belongings. After putting out an urgent appeal, we were deeply moved by the incredible support from our community. The staff at COLT, alongside the family, would like to sincerely thank everyone who reached out, donated and offered help during this difficult time. Your kindness and generosity have truly made a difference.

Witnessing such generosity reminded us of the heart of Children of Light and the values that guide our work. With our

school van currently undergoing repairs, the staff at COLT were also able to spend time together in reflection, exploring what it truly means to be part of Children of Light and the lasting impressions we leave on the children in our care. We took part in creative activities that encouraged us to step into the children's world through storytelling, painting, and sensory experiences.

These past few weeks have served as a meaningful reminder of the importance of compassion and creating safe spaces where children feel supported, seen, and encouraged to grow. We are deeply grateful to be part of a community that continues to embody these values and walk alongside us in supporting the children and families of COLT.

Update on our Educare



Over the past couple of weeks, our van has been out of operation due to necessary repairs, and unfortunately the children were unable to attend the Educare during this time. We are very happy to share that the van is now back in working order, and

from Wednesday onwards, everything will return to normal.

In the meantime, some staff members and one of our students visited the Children's Museum to assess its suitability as an outing for all our children. The museum offers a wonderful balance of history and play, creating an engaging and interactive learning environment. It highlights important themes such as children's rights and shares powerful stories about the experiences of children in South Africa.

The museum also features a variety of exhibits, including displays of toys, medical history, and what life was like for children in earlier times. Overall, it is very well suited for both our students and teachers and will definitely be a winter outing in the near future.

On that note, we are also nearing the end of term and are looking forward to a number of upcoming events, including our Winter Festival and our monthly youth programme, which will include a few fun surprises.

From Tie-Dye to Lantern Light

The last few weeks of term have been full in the best way. From our monthly Youth Day and hosting our Winter Festival to receiving generous donations for



our children, it was a great way to wrap up the term. Here's a look at some of the highlights before we headed into the winter break.

Our Youth Day included many new activities that made the day extra special. We began the morning with a calming yoga and chanting session, allowing everyone to slow down, connect with themselves, and prepare for the day ahead. It created the perfect atmosphere for our workshop facilitated by the Child-Centred Governance Academy.

During the session, our children explored the importance of their rights through the three pillars of children's rights: Provision, Protection, and Participation. Rather than simply

learning the definitions, they reflected on what each of these principles mean in their own lives. They shared what it means to feel protected, what they need to thrive, and why it's important for their voices to be heard. It was wonderful to see them engage so thoughtfully with these ideas.

After a productive morning, everyone gathered for lunch, followed by a storytelling session that encouraged important conversations about safe, respectful relationships and the responsibilities adults have in protecting children. The afternoon brought a burst of colour as we partnered with SolTees Apparel for a tie-dye workshop. Every child embraced the chance to get creative, each adding their own twist to the designs. No two shirts were the same, and it was great to see everyone's creativity come to life.

Spirals weren't only part of Youth Day, they also featured in our Winter Festival. While the day began with singing together in a circle, the main event was the lantern spiral walk. Carrying lanterns glowing with candlelight, the children quietly made their way through the spiral in a peaceful tradition observed during the darkest days of winter. The lantern walk symbolises patience, hope, and the journey towards finding our own inner light. Afterwards, everyone enjoyed a warm bowl of soup before ending

the day with storytelling.

To finish off the term, we received a generous donation of towels and blankets for all of our children from BAPS Charities, along with hygiene packs from Rylands Homecraft. These donations will help keep everyone warm, comfortable, and well-equipped over the colder months, and we are incredibly grateful for their support.

As we head into the holiday break, we'd like to say a big thank you to our children, families, volunteers, partners, and supporters for making this term so special. We look forward to seeing everyone again next term.

And We're Back! Term 3 Has Officially Kicked Off

The holidays may be over, but we couldn't have asked for a more meaningful way to begin Term 3.

Before the new term officially started, the Ananda Kutir Ashrama marked Madiba Weekend with a special soup and sandwich Seva in honour of Mother Yogeshwari's Centenary Year. Volunteers gathered at the Samaj Centre to prepare the meals before heading out to the Hadji Ibrahim and Mohan Avenue communities, where approximately 600 people received food. It was a beautiful reminder that service to others is at the heart



Term 3



of everything we do and the perfect way to begin a new term.

When our children returned the following Tuesday, there was even more to celebrate. We had several birthdays during the school holidays and at the start of the new term, and at COLT, birthdays are a very special occasion. Every child deserves to feel celebrated and valued, and we make sure their day is filled with smiles, cake, singing, and lots of love. These moments may seem small, but they create lasting memories and remind each child just how important they are.

As part of the Madiba Weekend celebrations, our children also attended a community event that recognised

the everyday heroes who serve and uplift others, including police officers, librarians, and firefighters. They also enjoyed an informative safety talk, learning valuable lessons while meeting some of the dedicated people who help keep our communities safe.

With Term 3 now in full swing, we also welcomed our parents back for our first parent meeting of the term. These meetings are an important part of building strong relationships with our families, keeping them informed about the months ahead, and ensuring we continue working together to support each child. Parents also received their food parcels; each one carefully packed with care to provide a few essential items and support their families as they begin the new term.

More Than Just a Day at COLT



Fridays are normally our day for a trip to the park, but sometimes we simply need a cosy day indoors to relax, watch a movie and enjoy some quiet time

together. Last Friday was exactly that kind of day for our children. They sat quietly and intently watching Ferdinand, completely absorbed in the story and thoroughly enjoying themselves. Days like these are just as valuable as our outings, as they give the children the opportunity to learn and engage through different sensory experiences, while also allowing them to slow down and simply enjoy being together.

Another very special sensory experience was our visit to Long March to Freedom, an exhibition featuring more than a hundred life-sized bronze statues. While our children are still very young and may not yet fully understand the historical significance behind the statues, the experience provided them with an opportunity to explore, observe and interact with their surroundings in a meaningful way.

Our day began with a small scavenger hunt, where the children were challenged to find different items and details that appeared on the statues. The minute the tour guide said, "Go!", it was pure adrenaline and excitement! With plenty of guidance and encouragement from the teachers, the children eagerly explored, touching, looking, pointing and excitedly identifying the different details they had been asked to find.

After the scavenger hunt, the children enjoyed a snack and a

drink before settling down for a drawing session. Then came everyone's favourite part, a dance break! Some of our learners were right at the front, dancing with so much enthusiasm to 'Baby Shark' and 'The Wheels on the Bus'. It was wonderful to see their confidence and joy. The day ended on a perfect note, filled with songs, games and plenty of laughter.

We also love hearing about the journeys of our children long after they leave us, and one such story is a wonderful example of just how meaningful those early years can be.

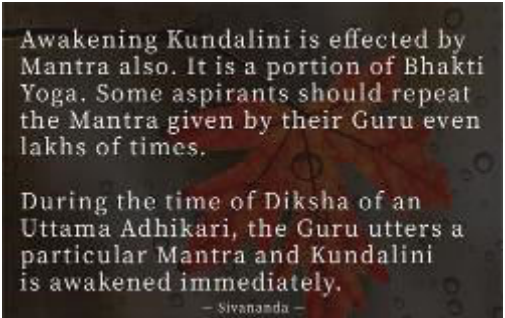
When he first came to COLT, his mother was still a teenager and, at the time, was not in a position to care for him. His mother's sister was living in Atlantis, and through many conversations, encouragement and gentle persuasion from our side, she was able to take him into her care. When he eventually left COLT, he moved to Atlantis to live with his aunt, where he has remained ever since.

He was with us for just over a year. During his time at COLT, he was an eager learner with good behaviour and a lovely attitude towards learning. His aunt was incredibly appreciative of the care and foundation he received with us. In fact, his time at COLT helped her realise just how important his education would be for his future, and she continued supporting his education after he left us.

We are fortunate to receive updates about him every year, and it is so special to hear how well he is doing and how much he continues to thrive.

Stories like this truly show the lasting impact that early childhood education can have. Sometimes, we may only be one small part of a child's journey, but the foundation we help build can give them the confidence and love of learning they need to flourish long after they leave our care.

And that is what makes the work we do at COLT so incredibly worthwhile.



Awakening Kundalini is effected by Mantra also. It is a portion of Bhakti Yoga. Some aspirants should repeat the Mantra given by their Guru even lakhs of times.

During the time of Diksha of an Uttama Adhikari, the Guru utters a particular Mantra and Kundalini is awakened immediately.

— Sivananda —

Prana and Pranayama

By Sri Swami Sivananda

Breath is external manifestation of prana, the vital force. Breath, like electricity, is gross prana. Breath is sthula (gross) and prana is suksma (subtle). By exercising control over this breathing you can control the subtle prana inside. Control of prana means control of mind. Mind cannot operate without the help of prana.

The vibrations of prana produce thought in the mind. It is prana that moves the mind. It is prana that sets the mind in motion. It is the suksma prana or psychic prana that is intimately connected with the mind.

Breath represents the important flywheel of an engine. Just as other wheels stop when the driver stops the flywheel, all other organs stop working when the yogi stops the breath. If you can control the flywheel you can easily control the other wheels.

Likewise, if you can control the breath, the external breath, then you can easily control the inner vital force, the prana. The process by which the prana is controlled, by the regulation of external breath, is termed pranayama.

Just as the goldsmith removes the impurities from gold,

by heating it in the hot furnace and by strongly blowing the blow-pipe, so also the yogic method removes the impurities of the body and the indriyas (senses), by blowing the lungs - that is, by practising pranayama.

The chief aim of pranayama is to unite the prana with the apana and to take the united pranapana slowly towards the head. The effects, or fruit, of pranayama is the awakening of the sleeping kundalini.

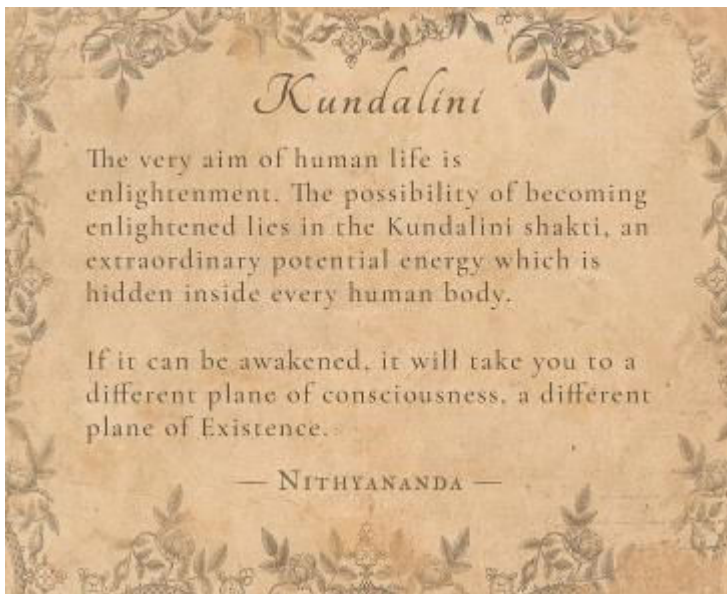
"He who knows prana knows the veda," is the important declaration of the srutis. In the Vedanta Sutras you will find: "For the same reason, breath is Brahman." Prana is the sum total of all energy that is manifest in the universe. It is the sum total of all the forces in nature.

Prana is the sum total of all latent forces and powers which are hidden in men and which lie everywhere around us. Heat, light, electricity and magnetism are all manifestations of prana. All forces, all powers, and prana, spring from the fountain or common source - the atman.

Wisdom from Mother Yogeshwari

COMMUNICATION

Talking, typing, driving, flying,
Smiling, winking, groaning, crying,
Signify communication,
Which may shock or cause elation.
Cars compete to be the slickest,
But kundalini is the quickest.
When there is no my or me
Transport happens instantly.
We go beyond all time and space
Performing actions by God's Grace.



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 _____

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Bank: Standard Bank
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Bank: Absa
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