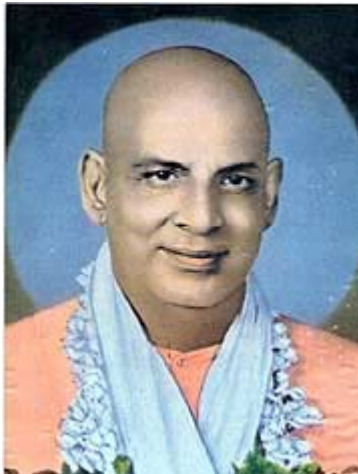


ADVICES ON SPIRITUAL LIVING

By

Sri Swami Chidananda



Sri Swami Sivananda
Founder of
The Divine Life Society



**SERVE, LOVE, GIVE,
PURIFY, MEDITATE,
REALIZE**

**So Says
Sri Swami Sivananda**



Sri Swami Chidananda

A DIVINE LIFE SOCIETY PUBLICATION

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FOREWORD

We are happy to present to all members of the Divine Life Societies in India and abroad as well as to spiritual seekers in general, these thoughts of Revered Sri Swami Chidanandaji that cover a variety of matters, all of which are however connected directly or indirectly with spiritual life and ethical ideals of man. These expressions of his inner feelings and thoughts were communicated from time to time to the world of seekers and spiritual aspirants, through a series of letters which Revered Swamiji wrote each month addressing the members of the Divine Life Society all over the world. They appeared under the caption of: "The President Writes" and later on as: "Sivanandashram Letter". The contents of this present handy little book comprise such monthly letters written over a period of five to six years soon after the passing of the Most Worshipful Master, Sri Swami Sivananda Gurudev. From the Holy Ashram in Rishikesh Revered Swamiji kept contact with the spiritual fraternity of all sincere seekers striving to lead a divine life by means of these monthly letters. These letters bring you in touch with Swamiji's views and vision which he seeks to share with you all. We owe this publication to the generous and loving gift of Mother Yvonne Lemoine of France, who had the eager desire that some inspiring teachings of Revered Swami Chidanandaji must be made available especially to the seekers in France and other European countries as well as the West in general during the occasion of his present birthday on 24th September 1974. Thus the present volume comes as a Birthday Gift from Mother Yvonne to all those who have had the opportunity of meeting Swami Chidanandaji and listening to his teachings during his travels abroad.

Our deepest appreciation of her generous goodwill towards all.

A special word of thanks is due to the Manchandani Brothers Proprietors of the Nilum Printing Press who very kindly worked with great earnestness to accomplish the printing work within less than three weeks in order to bring out this book in time. Our very grateful thanks to them.

24th September 1974

DIVINE LIFE SOCIETY

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Sivanandashram Letter No. 1

TO AWAKEN YOU SIVANANDA GURUDEV CAME

Blessed Atma-Swarupa!
Dear & Revered Member,

Glory Be to the Divine! God Bless you!

Thou art Immortal Soul! Thou art Atman, ever-pure, ever-free, ever-perfect, eternal and divine! Thou art Imperishable Spirit, ever existent, conscious and blissful. Remember this always! Your main purpose and important duty is to express and radiate blessedness and pure love and be aware of your true essential nature at all times and under all circumstances. Never forget this!

In earnest prayerfulness and deep worshipfulness at the sacred feet of blessed Master, our Gurudev Swami SIVANANDA I speak this above admonition unto you all, upon this first occasion, I have of addressing you all, through the pages of your own Wisdom Light monthly journal. I humbly speak thus in the holy Name of our Guru Sivananda Dev, as the merest instrument of His, through whom He carries on now, His sacred mission, of loving and ceaseless spiritual service of you all. My heart's fervent prayer is that this servant of His even as He worked all His dedicated and noble life during the past more than thirty momentous years. In this life I shall strive to translate this prayer into personal action and live to serve. This shall be my endeavour as a servant of Satgurudeva and as His instrument even as it is of my worthy Gurubhais here at this Ashram. In this endeavour His spiritual Presence shall be my guide and His grace, my sustainer, and His remembrance, my strength. May the Divine inspire and help me in this sacred labour of love!

Gurudev Sivananda came to awaken you all. He came, lived, taught and worked to awaken, inspire, guide, lead and to illumine. Swamiji awakened you to the true meaning and Goal of your life, inspired you to aspire and strive for that Goal, guided you on your path towards its attainment and led you onward towards illumination. You who have been most fortunate as to receive His awakening spiritual impulse and to get the inspiration of His thrilling teachings and be guided by them, you must now go onward and rise upward upon the spiritual Path with keen aspiration, perseverance and zeal. Let unabated be thy enthusiasm and sustained be thy fervour.

Be a sincere seeker and an earnest Sadhak. With joy lead the Divine Life. Adopt the twin motives of Sadhana and Selfless Seva. Become established in truthfulness. Deviate not from Virtue. Pure be thy heart and mind. Let kindness and love dwell in your thoughts, words and actions. May the spirit of Gurudev and His universal teachings light up your life and make all your actions luminous with the rare quality of Dharma and spirituality.

God bless you!

1.10.1963

—Swami Chidananda.

Sivananda Ashram Letter No. II

WHO IS DIVINE MOTHER DURGA?

Blessed Immortal Atman!
Dear & Revered Member!

Om Namō Narayanaya. Jai Sivananda!

When this letter reaches you, we would have just passed the solemn, auspicious and most joyous period of the sacred nine-day worship of the Divine Mother. It is now the holy period of Navaratri as I write this for your November Wisdom Light. The atmosphere is surcharged with deep devotion to Maha-Devi and vibrant with the fervour of worshipfulness, adoration and prayer. Our thoughts are filled with the glorious Divine Mother, and Her Blessed and wondrous manifestation as Durga-Lakshmi-Saraswati. She is the great Mystery, the inscrutable Power of the Supreme Brahman, who holds in Her Hands both bondage and Liberation.

The Grace of the Divine Mother it is, that enables you to walk the path of Divine Life. Through Her benign blessings you are able to shine as a sincere spiritual seeker and a man of Dharma. To worship the Mother with Devotion is to be immediately uplifted by Her Strength and Power. She works within your inner being as the triple force of destruction, evolution and illumination. Destroying the impure and vicious aspects of one's lower nature, the unworthy, base, and bestial in the individual personality, and helping evolve the human nature into sublime heights of goodness, nobility and the purity of beautiful virtue. She illumines the Jiva with supreme divine wisdom. Thus the Divine Mother is the very life and support of the aspirant's spiritual Sadhana. She makes your quest fruitful with Attainment. The Divine Mother grants Kaivalya Moksha or eternal release and immortality.

To worship and to adore the Blessed Mother is to welcome Her Divine Help in working out your highest good and everlasting welfare. When you thus seek Her divine aid, Her compassionate response is immediate. She sets to redeem you in Her own way. She sends experiences both pleasant and painful, through trials and difficulties. She moulds and strengthens you, through sorrow and suffering, She refines and purifies your nature. She enriches and blesses you with spiritual experience and raises you to exalted heights. She makes use of your very life and its experiences to make you perfect and bestow upon you divine Peace and Joy and the Illimitable Splendour of Self-realization. Therefore, O Beloved Seeker! learn to accept the joys and sorrows, the temptations and the trials of your life with wisdom and understanding. Seek to recognise their hidden meaning and purpose for your own evolution and supreme good. Find Her Divine Hand behind all occurrences and see the Mother's Will working through them. Then will you behold your entire life as the expression of the Mother's immeasurable Love for you.

Resolutely overcome all defects, faults and wrong tendencies in your nature and behaviour. Develop noble character. Grow in virtue. Ever walk upon the path of perfect righteousness. Seek the Immortal, Be thou an embodiment of Divine Life. Let the sacred name of Gurudev Sivananda be glorified by thy true discipleship into him. Personify his ethical and spiritual teachings. May the world find in you a source of inspiration. Let thy presence elevate all.

May the Divine Mother shower Blessings upon you! Jai Sivananda!

1-11-1963

—Swami Chidananda

Sivananda Ashram Letter No. III

LET VIRTUE RULE THY LIFE!

Blessed Immortal Atman!
Dear and Revered Members!

Om Namo Narayanaya!

Jai Sivananda! Salutations and adorations at the Feet of the Universal Being, the one Divine Reality, whom the prophets of all religions have realised in the innermost depths of their illumined Superconsciousness. May the Light of that supreme Divinity fill our lives, on this auspicious occasion of the celebration of the Bharatavarsha's national festival of lights, Dipavali, with His Divine Grace! May the choicest Blessings of God and Gurudev grant you all inner spiritual illumination.

Since all of you are devoted to the ideals of divine living, you would readily find the rows of lights lit for the Festival, illuminating the very meaning, purpose and Goal of human life. This earthly life is a glorious opportunity, granted to the individual soul to attain the conscious knowledge of its eternal oneness with the illimitable Light of Cosmic Consciousness.

This gift of human life is a rare opportunity, a splendid change, given to us by the benign Hand of the all-merciful God, for transcending all limitations, bondage, sorrow, suffering, pain, grief and weaknesses of all sorts, and for attaining that unlimited glory and that experience of immeasurable peace which emerges from your union with the Divine. That is the goal; that is the central meaning of life; that is the prime purpose of your existence here upon the earth plane.

With all its defects and imperfections human life has this great redeeming feature, that it is a passageway to the Light of Immortality. Live life in the Divine. Recognise your existence here as such and live in the light of this recognition, of this inner awareness, this inner knowledge. Let each day dawn for you as a fresh opportunity and occasion opening up before you to move one step further towards this great attainment of Divine Realization. Within yourselves, let there be, everyday, a Festival of Lights. And while you live a life of such unceasing and blessed quest towards the supreme Attainment, live a life of great virtues, a life of simplicity, humility, nobility.

Let all your life be a radiation of Virtue—the inner perfection that is inherent in each soul. Let life be an outflow and expression of the goodness, that is the truth of your being, because you are made in the image of God. Like Him, you are Divine, Goodness, Purity and Truth. Let your life, therefore, be an active manifestation of these divine qualities which are the essential part of your innermost reality. Thus alone would you prove that you have caught the true significance of the

outward ceremony of lighting several rows of lights that the observance of the Dipavali festival enjoins. Live, then, the life Divine.

Blessed Self! Withdraw the senses from the objects; withdraw the mind from the senses and establish yourself in your inner divine Centre. Be the unchanging one amidst the changing body-and-mind-personality. Let the spiritual Principle in you prevail. Let the spirit Divine enshrined in you express itself in all its glory, express itself through a life of Yoga, through the thought and motives of the mind, through the actions and deeds of the body. Let all actions be full of love, goodness and purity. That is real Divine Life.

Gurudev Sivananda always insisted on living a life of virtue. For, the life of virtue is the common basis of all Yoga, no matter whether it is Karma Yoga, Bhakti Yoga, Jnana Yoga or Hatha Yoga. A life of purity, virtue, goodness, self-control, selflessness, humility, forms the common foundation of Yoga, of all spiritual attainment and all practical religion. This is the basis, the indispensable preparation. Sincere aspirants can never afford to neglect or overlook this vital truth of spiritual life and realization—that Divine Unfoldment is based upon a life of purity, goodness, truth, selflessness and humility.

Practise daily the virtues, Gurudev has listed in his “Song of Eighteen Ities” “serenity, regularity in Sadhana, magnanimity, absence of vanity,—ego. Ego is the great stumbling block. It is the great stone-wall that prevents the individual from rising upwards to the Universal Consciousness. Ego individualises consciousness; it is the seat of all petty likes and dislikes, all clingings, identification and selfishness. It is a false superimposition. The real personality, the real Consciousness Divine is forgotten and this erroneous identification with the body and the mind gives rise to the “I”-idea. It creates this false human personality and makes you forget your true Immortal Consciousness. You think of yourself as Mr. so, as this little mind and when the mind is in a wave of anger, you say, “I am angry”. How can that wave touch you, you who are the Changeless consciousness Supreme? But you lose knowledge and awareness of your true Nature and identify yourself with every passing wave and phase of body and mind. That is bondage; that is ignorance.

Be large-hearted; embrace all; feel oneness with all; realise the infinite inner Divine Self. Be tolerant towards all; regard all people as your own Self, and thus develop virtues and lead the sublime life, a real Christ-like life which all great saints and mystics have embodied in themselves. All those who have reached spiritual Illumination, have themselves been the very personifications of Virtue. Thus we see there is a fundamental connection between a life of virtue and the highest spiritual experience. Therefore, lead the Life Divine. May your inner life be a perpetual festival of Lights!

1st December 1963

—Swami Chidananda

Sivanandashram Letter No. IV

START A NEW LIFE NOW

BLESSED ATMA SWARUPA,

Om Namō Narayanaya: Namaskara.

May the Grace of Gurudev Swami Sivananda illumine this NEW YEAR with the brightness and radiance of Hope, Aspiration, and Inspiration. God grant you all Auspiciousness, Blessedness, Prosperity and Success. I wish you Happiness, Health, Progress upon the spiritual Path, and triumph over troubles, tensions and problems of life. May this New Year herald for you many more years of joy, peace, and plenty.

With this fourth Sivanandashram Letter, we leave behind a year that has been heavy with many sombre events, and look forward on to a fresh New Year, in which the world might emerge once again, from shadow into bright light, even like the sun unclouded. Traditionally too with the Makarasankranti in January, the sun takes once again the auspicious northern-path, Uttarayana. At this juncture of mankind's periodical reckoning up the debit and credit of life and of the taking of earnest resolutions, I speak to you all to say, "Blessed Seekers upon the path to Divinity. This year dawns for us without the outward physical presence of the one who was our guide and inspirer in our spiritual life. We have not him to whom our yearly resolutions were addressed hitherto. But this very absence entails the necessity of taking certain new resolutions that were not taken hitherto. These I shall mention. But, even before anything the first and the chief of them shall be that you make your life a dynamic expression of the practical gospel of Sivananda. This is Divine Life."

Beloved Member, in addition to your routine new-year-resolutions as a Sadhaka, the dawn of 1964, should see you getting ready to take up the work of Gurudev as his worthy child, pupil and spiritual representative wherever you are. Be you a follower or a disciple or even just a devotee of the Holy Master Sivananda, let your resolve be on record that you determine now at the dawn of this New Year to practise and to propagate his Divine life teachings every day of your life. Resolve that you will observe the principles of Satyam (Truth), Ahimsa (harmlessness), and Brahmacharya (Purity). Resolve that you will strive each day to be good, to do good, to be kind and compassionate to one and all. Resolve to excel in service, to progress in devotion, to persist in meditation and aspire for realization. Resolve to be charitable and pure, to be detached from worldliness and passing earthly objects and to attach yourself to Dharma and the spiritual ideal of life. Resolve to love all, to see the Lord in all, and to serve the Lord in all. Resolve to adapt, adjust and accommodate to yourself to all changing circumstances, to be tolerant towards all faiths and religions, and to ever seek to unify all by seeing the good in all, and the underlying unity in the midst of apparent diversity. Resolve thus to make your life Sivanandamaya. Let Sivananda radiate through your pure thoughts, your noble feeling, your kind words, and your selfless actions. Thus resolve to make Gurudev Sivananda immortal through your life and actions.

I have more to say, but that I shall keep for the Letter of February. For the present I shall confine this letter to this main request to you all. Thus loftily resolve and act upon this resolves with sublime determination. May the idea, the will and the Bhav fuse together into an irresistible

dynamic urge to do all that is conceived and to do it now. This would verily constitute the true fulfilment of discipleship in this age when ideals need to be actualised through living practice, I invite you to write to me your ideas briefly on the question of, “the duty of individual disciples towards Gurudev, and how disciples all over the world can each serve the great cause of dissemination of spiritual knowledge and the spread of Divine Life.” I shall be glad to receive and consider these letters for the benefit of all. Anyone who communicates to me on this specific matter, may kindly write upon the cover, “Sivanandashram Letter No. 4”, thus underlined.

God bless you all, and grant you Vichara and Viveka, firm determination, strong will power, unshakable faith, Sadhana-shakti and supreme attainment. Greetings again, and the very best good wishes in the name of worshipful Gurudev Sivananda.

1st January 1964

—Swami Chidananda

Sivanandashram Letter No. V

RESOLVE TO FOLLOW DIVINE LIFE

BLESSED ATMA-SWARUPA:

May the abundant Grace of the ever-munificent Lord Shiva, the easily-pleased-one, shower upon you on the eve of the most blessed Mahashivaratri day. In continuation of letter number four that appeared here last month, I have now to enlarge upon the theme of spiritual RESOLUTIONS which formed the central subject of that previous letter. Mention was made therein (vide page 11) that more was to be said and it would be said now. What is the place of resolution in the path of Sadhana? What part does such a resolution play in your life? The answer is that resolution is the very basis and origin of all endeavour and achievement. Spiritual aspirations and efforts are no exception to this. All the more is it so in the spiritual field. Specially because, here you are mostly to struggle alone. The comfort and consolation, the support and strength of group endeavours are not so much available to the Sadhakas as they are to people in other fields of secular endeavour. The spiritual seeker does not move in a set-up like that of a whole company of soldiers moving resolutely forward into determined action upon the battle-field. Because, spiritual aspirants and Sadhaaks are a scattered brotherhood, a small minority in this world, manfully endeavouring to ever press forward the Divine Goal in the face of a thousand obstacles and adverse currents. Great resolution is essential.

See what Gurudev himself says upon this point. Here are his words, “The spiritual path is thorny, precipitous and rugged. Temptations will assail you. Your will, sometimes, become weak. Sometimes there will be downfall or a backward pull by the dark Asuric antagonistic forces. In order to strengthen your will and resist the unfavourable currents, you will have to make, again and again, fresh resolves. This will help you to ascend the ladder of Yoga, vigorously and quickly. Stick to them tenaciously. Watch the mind carefully and keep a daily spiritual record.”

When you make these resolves, stand before the Lord's picture, with folded hands, and pray devoutly for His grace and mercy. You will doubtless get immense strength to carry out these resolves.

Even if you fail in your attempt, do not be discouraged. Every failure is a stepping-stone for success. Make a fresh resolve again with more firm and fiery determination. You are bound to succeed. Conquest over the weakness will give you additional strength and will-force to get over another weakness or defect. The baby tries to walk, gets up and falls down. Again it makes another attempt. Eventually, it walks steadily. Even so, you will have to fall down and get up again and again, when you walk in spiritual path. In the long run, you will steadily climb up to the summit of the hill of Yoga and reach the pinnacle of Nirvikalpa Samadhi".

Thus we see Iccha-Shakti is the motive force behind all Kriya or activity. Hence the ancients have clearly mentioned "SUBHECCHA" as the first level or Bhumika of the spiritual ascent when they enumerated the Sapta-Jnana Bhumika. With equal emphasis has the blessed Lord declared unmistakably that right resolution verily becomes turning point in one's life. (vide Bhagavad Gita Chapter 9, verse 30).

Such resolution is Daivi Sampatti. Such resolution does not contradict surrender or humility for it indeed constitutes the very expression of perfect trust in the Lord's Divine support and our faith in His graciousness to sustain us in our spiritual life.

Now coming to our specific position as the disciples at the feet of Sadguru-Dev Sivananda, there are certain definite points for you to resolve upon as the members of the Divine Life Society. You must embody Gurudev's teachings. And the essence of his practical instructions to you on the spiritual path have been summed up in five or six important admonitions of his. These, every member of the Divine Life Society must have at his finger-tips. They should be engraved in your heart, to follow them and to incorporate them in your life would be totally fulfilling Gurudev's concept of Divine Life. It will make your very life a living exposition of Gospel of Sivananda. Sri Gurudev laid the greatest importance to the observance of these sets of his personal teachings which I now give for your close attention. They are contained in the following:—

1. The RESOLVE FORM with its 18 items.
2. Twenty spiritual instructions.
3. The science of seven cultures.
4. A daily routine Time-table with well thought out, systematic programme from dawn till night. This may not be rigid but flexible according to dictates of common-sense.
5. The daily spiritual diary to be maintained in order to check up both upon your resolve from as well as your daily routine.
6. The Universal prayer beginning with "O Adorable Lord of Mercy and Love", which produces a complete pattern of the sublimest ideals of Divine Life in practice.

These six things constitute Gurudev's complete method for quick evolution and dynamic spiritual progress. They stand for the heart of Gurudev Sivananda's teachings. During more than 35 years of ceaseless spiritual propagation and dynamic awakening work Gurudev has consistently hammered upon these teachings, tirelessly preached them and broadcast to every nook and corner of the world. Even if all the rest of his spiritual literature were to be taken away from this earth, these six things alone would be amply providing the fullest spiritual guidance and practical teachings to the entire world. They alone would be enough to sustain the spiritual life of humanity. The teachings contained in these six items are comprehensive and are quite capable of guiding you and taking you right up to the great goal of highest spiritual attainments or highest Kaivalya Moksha. Take definite resolves and record them in resolve form. Draw a daily routine and follow it. Maintain spiritual diary. Follow twenty spiritual instructions. Live in the spirit of Sadhana Tattwa. Translate the Universal prayer into your actual life. Yes, the Resolve form, the twenty spiritual instructions, Spiritual Diary and Sadhana Tattwa represent Gurudev himself. They are the whole of Gurudev's teachings to modern humanity, in a nutshell. Enter into the spirit of these teachings. Assimilate these teachings. Make them your own. Live them. Thus you will be granted the highest spiritual blessedness and will attain the goal of all spiritual Sadhana. They can bring you face to face with God. May Sat-Gurudev make himself manifest to you through these six important Sadhanas of his. May His grace enable you to fulfil these in your life and become the partakers of the highest experience of Divine Bliss, Spiritual Illumination in this very life. Jai Gurudev Sivananda.

Your in the Lord,

1st February, 1964

Swami Chidananda

Sivanandashram Letter No. VI

NOBLE TASK OF TRUE DISCIPLESHIP

Blessed Atma-Swaroop:

Beloved Seeker of Truth,

Om Namo Narayanaya. Namaskars.

May the Sunshine of Joy, Health and Well-being illumine your life with the advent of bright Spring season with its beauty and fragrance of colourful flowers and fresh leaves upon the waking branches of wind-swayed trees. I am happy to tell you that several earnest disciples of Sri GURUDEV felt it their duty to respond to the "Sivanandashram Letter No: 4" and so I have their valuable thoughts and suggestions upon the question of—"The duty of individual Disciples towards Gurudev" and how, the disciples all over the world can each serve the cause of Dissemination of Spiritual Knowledge and the spread of Divine Life—sent in by them after reading the January issue of Wisdom Light. This present issue is therefore, going to bring to you their sincere views upon this all important subject of the practical implication of true discipleship and its active expression in the form of earnest Guru-Seva. All letters received here, cannot naturally find

sufficient place for inclusion in the pages of this publication, but this certainly does not at all mean that some were considered as of less value or importance and not given place. Far from it. Actually, whether published or not, all the responses received are being given our close attention and every idea placed before us, is being considered carefully. I am most thankful indeed to the many good friends and well-wishers to will thus graciously given their time and thought, to have responded to the previous letter. In doing this very act they have indeed fulfilled a vital part of their spiritual obligation towards their Guru's spiritual Mission. They have verily exercised the privilege of their discipleship by their guru's genuine interest in the progress of life-work and his handiwork namely, the Divine Life Society. An appreciable number of earnest disciples taking keen interest in their Guru's good work will ensure the enduring progress of this holy movement which he has left to them as a heritage. He has left this work to their hands as a part of their spiritual evolution and an essential part of their Yoga and their Jivana-sadhana.

Gurus are of two kinds. The one lives a lofty spiritual life and living thus he continuously instructs and guides his disciples to individually practise and live this ideal life themselves and attain the experience which he reached. The other lives a lofty life, instructs and inspires disciples to do likewise AND UNDERTAKES A GREAT HUMANITARIAN TASK AND LEAVES THIS IDEAL WORK TO HIS FOLLOWERS TO CONTINUE and bless others and bless themselves thereby.

Why certain sages develop into one type and certain others into the other type is a matter we have no knowledge about. May be it is that the needs of particular times call forth men suited to fulfil them, may be it is the prarabdha that decides this. Whatever it be, it is God's will that brings this about and the world is the gainer for it. Jagadguru Adi Sankaracharya was an uncompromising Absolute Monist Kevala Advaitin. He declared the Atman alone to be the sole Reality. Yet, he undertook to clean up Hinduism of all malpractices and launched a great revival and established a well-conceived institution to carry on this work in an organised and systematic manner. And the great following of his Monastic and lay disciples have been keeping alive this institution and furthering his work through this centuries since his day. Thus we see that this twofold trend in the Gurus upon the Indian spiritual scene is not in any way new nor by any means unusual or contrary to previous tradition.

Our worshipful GURUDEV has been indeed a very combination of both this trend, making himself a confluence of a powerful spiritual ideal, at once lofty and sublime, and a most significant spiritual work at once noble and great. You, my blessed Sadhak, are a disciple of Satguru Sivananda, the holy saint and loving helper of all mankind. Ideal discipleship would be manifested in you when you live the Divine Life and also further the Divine Life work in the service of mankind. The first part of this is an individual process. The second part of it requires the harmonious co-ordination with other D L members in your own city, town or village. Contact fellow-members. If there is a branch of the Divine Life Society in any place, it is the sacred duty of each and every individual member of that place to get in touch with the branch workers and to participate and to actively help in the programmes of the branch. Many a time the branch people do not know of the presence of enrolled members in their own town or city. This would not be. Also disciples even if they are non-members in the formal way, must take joyous interest in making contact with other disciples who are known to be in the same town or locality. And to further Gurudev's work one does not necessarily have to constitute a Branch (though it is good to do so) but

may arrange Satsangs, discourses, Asan classes even upon the individual level. In short, let me tell you this, an integral part of your spiritual life and Yoga Sadhana is propagation of the Divine Life Gospel and spreading Gurudev's teachings in selfless spirit of Karma Yoga and Guru-seva and Ishwara-arpana. Jai Gurudev:

Regards, prem and Om:

1st March, 1964

—*Swami Chidananda*

Sivanandashram Letter No. VII

STRIVE TO LIVE IDEAL LIFE

Blessed Atma Swaroopa!
Beloved Seeker of Truth,

Om Namo Narayanaya. Namaskars.

Om Sri Ram. Sri Ram. Sri Ram. Sri Ram.

This is a great and glorious month. It is verily a month full of rare blessedness and sanctity. For, this month we have the precious occasion and opportunity of offering our adorations to the grand ideal of our Nation, the supreme divine Person who stands for us all, as the greatest model of Perfection in life, nature, conduct and character, namely, the most blessed "LORD RAMA". The entire Nation will celebrate the divine Jayanthi or holy Birthday anniversary of Rama upon the 20th April: Bhagwan Ramchandra Maryada-Purushottama, who embodies in Himself and expresses through every movement of His life the highest exemplary behaviour in all fields of human relationship. The story of Rama's divine life is the story of sublime Idealism in actual practice. Its inspiration is perennial. Its appeal is Universal. Its wonderful power to elevate and to transform is unending. Its sublimity is unequalled. Ramayana is a treasure of Indian Culture, and National Heritage of utmost importance and significance of the very survival of our noble aspiration and aims. To worship in RAMA is to reassert our unshakable faith in Idealism in life and to pledge a new our loyalty to the concept of Dharma and Adhyatma-lakshya in life. Rama is the life-breath of India's moral life and ethical structure. Without Rama there is no Dharma and without Dharma there will be no India!

We shall try in this letter to receive some Light from the glorious RAMAYANA. May you all prepare yourself to worship the Divine Rama upon the approaching sacred anniversary. Purify your heart with humility, devotion and worshipfulness of spirit. Repeat His DIVINE NAME with great feeling and intense reverence. Ram-Nam is India's great Mantra of this age. It alone can make your life meaningful and purposeful in a world where the true meaning of life is lost in Hedonism and this disillusionment and frustration has overcome the majority of human beings.

Your life here is a means to the attainment of a glorious purpose. The aim of life is the attainment of the Divine Perfection. This earthly life is full of miseries, sorrows, defects imperfections and limitations. To overcome all limitations, to cross beyond sorrow and pain and to attain Immortality and Divine Bliss is the goal of life. By realising God one reaches this goal and becomes internally free.

Such realization and freedom is achieved by living an ideal life, by practising self-control and by worshipping God. Purity, self-restraint and worship constitutes the essence of Spiritual Life. Every Divine Incarnation comes to give this message of God-attainment, to remind mankind of its importance and glory, and to disclose the inner secrets of Spiritual Life and attainment, by the lofty examples of His own ideal life and conduct. In the Divine Leela of Rama's Avatara, we get much light and guidance and derive great inspiration upon the inner part of spiritual attainment. Different ideal personalities in the Nara-Leela of this great Avatara exemplify the different factors that characterize your ideal approach unto the Divine. Bharata, Sita, Lakshmana and Hanuman are the personified expressions of the different factors that make up or constitute our ideal approach unto the Divine.

Uninterrupted, continuous worship of God is the very essence of Spirituality. Worship that is characterised by the total absorption in the object of worship ultimately leads to Realization. Worship to be effective and fruitful must become gradually so intense that yourself is completely forgotten and God alone fills your concentrated and one-pointed mind. There must be no thought of self. The mind must be filled with God. The only meaning in one's life must be the love of God. Worship should become a positive passion and must be felt as more important than anything else in this world. You must understand that life itself is a worship. Life is meant primarily to be lived as an active worship of Divine, as a glorification of the Lord. Such worship has the power to awaken the Divinity that is dormant within every human soul. It will transform you into a Divine being. The ideal prince Bharatha verily made himself the very embodiment of such passionate, continuous, all-absorbing worship of Sri Rama. He forgot the world, he forgot himself and he forgot everything in his whole-souled devotion and adoration of the Lord Rama through Rama's sacred Padukas. Day and night, Bharatha was seen absorbed in the divine contemplation of Rama. Rama pined to see him. The moment His mission at Lanka was over, he sent Hanuman in great haste to go in advance to meet Bharata and announce his arrival to him. By true worship such as was demonstrated by Bharata, one powerfully draws the Lord to himself and makes the Divine one's own. The bliss of this spiritual union with the Divine is the fruit of such worship. It is indescribable. Remembrance of Bharata, contemplation on his personality will create in you the Bhava of such worship. Meditate upon the moving and inspiring life of this great prince among Bhaktas. You will imbibe the spirit of his deep devotion and passionate adoration of the Divine Lord Rama. Such devotion is the real wealth of wealths and the greatest pleasure in your life. Acquire this and attain immortality and bliss.

Self-restraint is the key to mind-control. The outgoing tendencies of the senses and their constant movement towards the fulfilment of the senses make the mind restless and agitated. Such a mind does not turn to God. Such a mind finds it impossible to worship with one-pointedness. Practice of self-control, checks the outward tendencies of the senses and helps you to attain calmness of mind. Self-control is distasteful and painful in the beginning. It becomes interesting, pleasant and joyful at a latter stage. Practice of self-control should be a daily discipline willingly

imposed upon themselves. It is a sign of our superior human nature. You will reap benefits in every way, physical, mental, moral and spiritual, by the practice of rational self-restraint. A self-restrained man alone can do effective service to his fellow-beings. Self-controlled person alone can truly worship God. Otherwise, with the thoughts scattered over innumerable objects and a mind distracted by various desires, you cannot truly worship or effectively serve the Society. The quality of service of a concentrated mind of a self-controlled person is bound to be ten times superior to the indifferent service that is done by a person who is himself a slave of his desires, cravings, personal ambition and secret passion. Service demands sincerity of purpose, earnestness and dedication. It demands readiness to sacrifice and willingness to bear and undergo troubles and difficulties with equanimity of mind. Nowhere in the annals of our Spiritual history do we find a more shining example of such a perfect self-control, immense self-sacrifice and unrelenting and unremitting service than in the amazing personality of the great heroic Lakshmana. Moderation, abstinence, the balanced life guided by the principles are all essential parts to self-control. Self-control implies Self-mastery. It is the bed-rock of all achievements, secular or spiritual. To the man of religion it must be the very life-breath. Without self-control there is no Sadhana. Without Sadhana there is no Self-realization. Without Self-realization you can neither have peace nor bliss nor freedom. He who wishes to be with the Lord must willingly part with the little self. He must be prepared to discard all thoughts of petty happiness and self-satisfaction upon the lower plane. The princely Lakshmana turning away from the comforts of Palace, pomp and royal living, chose to follow his Divine brother and voluntarily accepted the hardship of the severe discipline and self-denial. Thus he attained the unique and incomparable blessedness of continued Divine presence of Bhagwan Ramchandra.

The approach to the Divine experience is an ascent into purity. Spiritual life is a gradual but unceasing growth into the perfection of purity, Atman, all the absolute Divine essences variously spoken of as Amala, Vimala, Nirmala, Nitya, Shudha and Niranjana. Spiritual growth and progress implies a process of transforming yourself from the impure into the absolutely pure. He who approaches the Divine should go into the Divine Nature. The pure alone can have access in the realm of Divine Experience. Blessed are they that strive to be pure in thought, word and deed and make their life an embodiment of Purity. The Divine Sita and the great Hanuman stand as resplendent exemplars of this sublime ideal. Noble Sita was a blazing fire of Purity. She stands as the loftiest example of shining Purity in all the annals of Indian tradition towering high above all personalities and forever a source of living inspiration in the Hindu Society. Even amidst the severest of tests, trials and tribulations Sita adhered to the ideals without swerving even by a hair's breadth. No harm dared approach this fire of Chastity, Purity and highest Virtue. Equalling her in this rare virtue, shining as a symbol of supreme Purity, the heroic Hanuman strides across the sacred pages of the holy Ramayana. Hanuman is the Brahmacharin par excellence of Indian religious history. He is the object of worship and Ishta Devata of all those who aspire after life of perfect purity, continence and self-control. Personalities of Hanuman and the Divine Sita give unto us the secret key to success in this life of Purity. Ceaseless service and total dedication sum up this Spiritual secret. To Mother Janaki nothing existed in the world except her Rama. Hers was a life totally dedicated to her Lord ever since the moment her hand was placed in Rama's palm by her sage father King Janaka. Rama was her life's breath. There existed no other thought in her mind except Rama. No other place in her heart except for her Rama. Being absorbed thus in Ram, day and night dwelling in thought and feeling upon Him, Sita was filled with the Divine Fire which no impurity could dare to approach. And Hanuman too was similarly absorbed in Rama's thought, in

His dedication to Rama Seva. Ceaseless service of his Divine Master because the passion of his life ever since their first meeting in the hallowed ground at Kishkindha. Dedicated selfless service transmuted the energy of Hanuman into pure Daivee Shakti. The impossible became possible to the power of purity of this great Brahmacharin. Service of Lord Rama was the sole passion of Anjaneya's exalted life. This obtained for him the unique and coveted blessedness of an eternal place at the Divine Lotus Feet of Bhagavan Ramachandra. Purity, dedication and devotion of this mighty servant made him one of the dearest objects of the Divine Lord Bhagavan Ramachandra. Where this total dedication for spiritual ideals is, there the seekers shine with Purity. O my beloved friends, become absorbed in unceasing selfless service of saints, holy people, elders and of all. Be totally dedicated to the glorious spiritual ideals. You will rise to the highest purity and come face to face with God.

Lead the Divine Life. Live up to your ideals. Grow in Purity. Practise self-control. Dedicate yourself to the regular worship of the Divine. This sublime way of life unfolds itself before the votary of the holy Ramayana. Bharata, Lakshmana, Sita and Hanuman give you a dazzling revelation of this radiant path into perfection, Purity, self-restraint and dedication unto worship are ideals to be ever pursued with unabated zeal and earnestness. There are those who would say that ideals are impracticable. I say unto all such that it were far better to be impractical idealists than to successfully be practical bests. Without Idealism humanity is savage. Take away idealism, then the jungle will invade the most urbane society. Ideals need not be totally and entirely realised in practical life. Nevertheless, without them we shall perish as a civilisation and a culture. Ideals should ever be pursued. No matter how difficult of attainment they may seem, yet in constantly striving to approach them, lies the true greatness of a people. Such ideals impart the quality to our life and give it the correct direction. What our life is, depend upon what our ideals are. To move constantly towards definite, lofty ideals is the greatest blessedness in the life of any individual. Ideals are important not because they are immediately and fully practicable, but because they impart the right pattern to the practical living of our lives, individually as well as collectively, here and now. Ideals come foremost. Then follows the practice. And to one who is truly earnest nothing is impracticable. The practice may not be easy but to strive your best to practise, is your duty. Trust in Lord Rama, take His Divine Name and start to lead a sublime life of noblest idealism. You will triumph over all obstacles and shine resplendent as a true child of Bharatavarsha.

Om Sri Ramaya Namah! God be with you!

1st April 1966

—Swami Chidananda

Sivanandashram Letter No. VIII

MAY THE GREAT ONE INSPIRE YOU

Blessed Seekers after Truth,

The present month is a month of powerful reminders to certain most sublime and sacred ideals that have formed vital factors in the evolution of our great country's unique culture and view and way of life. We had occasion to note last month how the great ideals propounded and radiantly expressed through the Divine Leela of Ramavatara continued to be moving force in the stream of our nation's social life and ethical consciousness. We saw how sublimity and purity of your national character both in the individual as well as in collective social life had their very basis and their sole hope in the adoption of these ideals.

Solemn reminders to ideals upon a still higher dimension of our life, in a more inward and deeper depth of our being come to us during the course of this month through the occurrence of a number of anniversaries in this current month of May. The Religious Calendar announces the occurrence of the thrilling birth anniversary of the valiant Parashurama, the glorious Sankara Jayanti, the holy Narasimha Jayanti and the sacred and solemn Buddha Jayanti. These great anniversaries have the specific purposes of the periodical re-infusing of fresh vitality into those living ideals that form the very soul of the Bharateeya Samskriti. They have the specific purpose of recreation of the renewed waves of a living faith, inspired enthusiasm and dynamic dedication. These anniversaries are effective periodical reassertions of our abiding loyalty to enduring cultural values and provide indispensable recurring occasions for the vigorous re-adoption into our lives of concepts and principles, aims and ideals that constitute the living roots and life breath of our national life. It would not be an untruth to say that these numerous anniversaries provide in fair measure the factors that have been the subsistence and the support of the fabric and the structure of our ancient Way of Life. They impart unbroken continuity to it.

Blessed Sadhak: Let us move along the luminous pathway of esoteric understanding and an inner vision to look for a moment into the heart of these anniversaries. Let us have a glimpse into their hidden meaning and message that they come to convey. While bowing in devout homage to the radiant Parashurama, valour Incarnate, may you recognise and receive the message of supremacy of the subtle over the gross. His life is a call for overcoming of the Rajas, of passion and of desire by their relentless higher dynamism of a purified Sattva. The Leela of this Avatara breathes the eternal lesson of the unfailing triumph of the spiritual over the merely temporal and material. It is the repeated and continued predominance of Sattva Guna that makes for the perfect establishment of supreme virtue or Daivi Sampatti in this human field ("Kshetra") and paves the way for Divine Attainment. This sums up the very essence of the inner Yogic process that transforms the individual from Tamas and Rajas into pure Sattva and thence transports him into highest spiritual super-consciousness.

The nation also venerates and pays homage to the greatest of its philosophers, the brilliant and peerless world teacher, Jagadguru Sri Adi-Sankaracharya of immortal renown. To him India owes an unforgettable debt of gratitude for his exposition of the pure Vedantic doctrine of the absolute Unity of the ultimate Reality and the Oneness of all mankind in the spirit. He reasserted the

truth that all faiths and religions led to the same ultimate Truth and thus stood for the perfect reconciliation of apparently conflicting faiths under the universal banner of Advaita Vedanta. Tolerance is the great gift of Sankaracharya's life and teaching and equal vision and brotherhood, his message to mankind. Love all see Atman in all names and forms and attain the great Reality in this very life, here and now. Become a Jivanmukta. This is his call to us all.

The nature of God is an indescribable Divine mystery. God is love. This transcendental infinite love is simply beyond the ken of human mind and intellect. Words fail to define it. Yet, aspects of Divine power can at times take such awesome and terrible manifestations that one is puzzled how to reconcile them with the All-Love that is the Divine. The Lord Himself describes his advent as, 'Paritranya Sadhunam Vinasaya Cha Dushkritam' i.e. for the protection of the good, for the destruction of the wicked. The latter expression may well take on the appearance of such modes as normally prevail upon this plane of relative phenomena. Nevertheless, the perfect love of the Supreme Divine Essence remains uncontradicted despite the transient modes assumed by its manifestation. Delving into this mystery one comes to know that even the most awesome expression is but a manifestation of that Highest Love. This immediate co-existence of factors that seemingly contradict and exclude each other according to the normal human standards is found marvellously expressed in the divine Narasimha Avatara. Bhagavan Narasimha combines fearful grandeur with perfect protection. The destructive divine might of Narasimha was entirely to rescue the boy-devotee Prahlada from the villainous persecution of the Asura. It was to keep up the great promise "Na Me Bhaktah Pranasyati", my devotee shall never perish. Narasimha is the mighty symbol of eternal Divine protection. Prahlada is the living symbol of the great way. Deep devotion, firm and an unflinching faith and trust, complete self-surrender and a constant ceaseless remembrance of the Divine constitute this way. It is the Supreme Bhagavata Dharma, the one unfailing path to God-realisation. The sure and certain method of attaining God-realisation. Blessed are the pure in heart who follow this Supreme path of devotion and surrender, for they shall be dearly beloved of the Lord. They shall ever abide in Him.

The beautiful, serene full moon of the auspicious month Vishakha shall shed its soft radiance on the 25th of this month. All nature rejoiced upon this great day and the celestials showered flowers, for the great Buddha made his advent upon this most memorable day. His great call to right living, his message of the Good Life and his unforgettable shining example of supreme virtue have left an indelible impress upon the consciousness of people of Bharata. His love and compassion, gentleness and peace are the essence of ethics and Dharma. Dharma forms the bed-rock of our culture. Dharma is the sole basis of supreme attainment in human life. This is the first of the great fourfold Purusharthas that impart the correct direction to our lives and govern and regulate our activities and endeavours. The goal of Divine Realisation is the highest ultimate attainment to be striven for. Without the first the last is impossible. Without the primary basis the Ultimate goal shall ever remain an idealistic Utopia. With the perfect fulfilment of Dharma, the realisation of Moksha and experience of Jivanmukti becomes a practical possibility. The noble way of Dharma demonstrated by the great Buddha makes for human happiness in our lives here and now, while transcendental realisation emphasised by the great Sankaracharya renders it into an eternal experience that shall for ever lift you into a realm of perennial Bliss and infinite Peace.

Buddha bade mankind to seek the solution to life's problem through diligent self-effort, ennobling of the human nature by the adoption of a perfectly virtuous life. Purity of personal life

can alone ensure your welfare, bring happiness and grant peace. Abandon Virtue and you destroy your welfare and usher in untold sorrow. Happiness is where Virtue abides. Sorrow is the direct fruit of vice and evil living. Grow into goodness and the inner godly nature will manifest itself in thy life. You will attain the Highest by the merit of thy blameless life. Waste no time in dry discussion and vain debate but rather LIVE THE NOBLE LIFE:

Living inspiration we thus receive from these four great expressions of the Divine Essence; the radiant Parashurama, the mighty and majestic Lord Narasimha mellowed by the melting devotion of Prahlada, the Prince among lovers of the Lord, the great Sankaracharya and the noble Gautama Buddha. The Jagadguru, inspired World teacher Sankara uncompromisingly holds aloft before our gaze the grand Transcendental Goal of human life. Buddha's lofty example and unforgettable teachings state the indispensable basis of this sublime attainment. Prahlada demonstrates the one sure and unfailing method of attaining this Divine Goal. Parashurama emphasises the need for ceaseless, unremitting endeavour in this process. The Avatara Narasimha gives perfect assurance of absolute and fullest protection of Grace to one who launches forth upon this noble path of purity unto perfection.

Beloved Seekers: followers of the Divine Life diligently strive to become established in Virtue and advance in Devotion. Be ceaseless in thine Worship. The Goal of God-realisation be ever before thy vision every moment of thy life. This is the Ancient Way of Bharatavarsha. This is the Way to Peace, Joy and eternal Welfare. There is no other way. Onward upon this Path. God be with you. May you reach the other shore—Immortality.

Om Tat Sat

Yours in Sri Gurudev

1st May 1964

—Swami Chidananda

Sivanandashram Letter No. IX

MAKE RENUNCIATION THE BASIS OF YOUR LIFE AND ACTIONS

BLESSED ATMASWAROOP:

Om Namō Narayanaya. Namaskars.

Greetings to you from this Holy Abode of Sri Sadguru Bhagawan Sivananda Maharaj. May this letter from this sacred Ashram find you all in good health, peace and joy. Let Guru Kripa bring into your life the Light of Discrimination, Strength of Self-Control, the Joy of Selflessness and the Loftiness of Loving Service and Spontaneous goodness or Paropakara.

This month holds for us a message of significance and importance. It brings to memory of a momentous event that resulted in an immeasurable good and blessedness to countless soul in this troubled century. Exactly forty years ago, in the June of the year 1924, Gurudev Swami Sivanandaji renounced his secular career to embrace a life of Sannyasa. He entered into the glorious path of Nivritti, plunged into a period of asceticism, seclusion, intense Sadhana and deep meditation. Thus he attained realisation and launched his great mission of spiritual awakening to inspire mankind and guide the seekers along the path of Divine Life and God attainment.

His renunciation resulted in world welfare. Verily Tyaga is indeed for Loka Hita. We celebrate the auspicious and holy anniversary of Gurudev's renunciation and Sannyasa this month. I would urge you all to reflect a while upon this great ideal of Tyaga. What is the role of Tyaga in your life? Is renunciation a negative movement? Does renunciation imply denial of the world and your relation to it? Is Tyaga a virtue for Sannyasins alone? What is true inner significance of Tyaga?

Dispassion and renunciation comprise the key to inner peace. Such peace alone makes happiness possible. Without peace, there is no happiness. Thus, it is clear that any one who wants peace and happiness must cultivate Vairagya and Tyaga. Attachment and selfishness constitute terrible bondage. Vairagya eradicates attachment. Tyaga cuts at the root of selfishness. They make you free and bring you peace and joy.

Life is a great and sublime Yajna. Yajna means self-offering, a noble giving of oneself for the good and the benefit of others. Paropakara is the overall governing principle of man's life. You can engage yourself in doing good to others, in bringing happiness into the lives of others, only when you shed your selfishness. This is real renunciation. The secret of renunciation is the renunciation of selfishness, egoism and personal desires. Renounce personal selfishness and live in the world, enjoying what Providence brings to you as your due. This is an admonition of the Seer of the Isopanishad.

We now see that renunciation is a virtue and a noble quality to be cultivated by every individual in human society. By this alone will the principles of Yajna and Paropakara be fulfilled. Tyaga is not the monopoly or the exclusive duty of the Sannyasins. It is a pervasive virtue that is to permeate and penetrate into every moment of your daily life. Then alone will your entire life flower forth into a thing of countless blessings unto your neighbour and of the society.

The loving mother is a true Tyagi. She renounces personal comfort, conveniences and happiness for the sake of her children and their welfare. The father of a family denies himself and renounces many a personal pleasure and profit to serve his family and children. The devout wife renounces all personal considerations to serve and to care for her Lord and Master. The faithful servant renounces personal happiness and comfort to serve his master and carry out his behests in loyalty and devotion. The doctors and nurses renounce sleep, rest and comfort and even forego food at times to look after the sick and the suffering. A brave patriot and soldier stands ready even to renounce his very life for the sake of his country's safety and welfare. A true social worker and leader of the people renounces everything to dedicate his life for his people's welfare. A true teacher renounces all personal ambitions and desires in life and dedicates himself to bring the light of learning, knowledge and wisdom to the young people who pass under his care. A saint renounces the whole world and everything in it to worship God and to serve mankind. It is this quality alone

that ennobles human nature and makes life beautiful. Renunciation in the individuals renders sweet all relationship he has with the rest of mankind. Yes, renunciation is to be understood as a pervasive virtue, which rises Vyavahar to pure heights, and adds to the joy, welfare and unity amongst the mankind.

Beloved seeker, reflect well over this universal aspect of Tyaga. Renunciation alone enables you to become selfless. Selflessness is soul of life. Selfishness is the bane of mankind and the root of all conflicts, problems and unhappiness. By renunciation, rout out selfishness and become a blessing unto others. Diligently cultivate renunciation in your everyday life.

Practise renunciation day after day at home, in thy family, with thy neighbours, playing thy profession, walking the streets, in the market place, everywhere act with renunciation. Grow in this great quality day by day. Never allow selfishness to make your life ugly. Permit not pernicious desire and personal avarice to poison thy life. Shine resplendent with the radiance of true renunciation. Be rooted in true Tyaga. In thought, word and deed, be egoless and selfless. Renounce desire and be filled with peace. Renounce petty selfishness. Become a personification of Paropakara. Renounce Egoism; become an embodiment of egoless simplicity, humility and purity. Such a life is even greater than the life of mere external Sannyasa, which may not be filled with this spirit of real renunciation.

Thus has Sri Sadgurudev taught this servant of His. Even so do I speak this unto you in the name of Sri Gurudev, through these pages that bring the Light of His Wisdom to you, who are dear to him. Beloved Brother in the Spirit: Live to uphold this noble ideal of our great culture. Become a Tyagamurti in all walks of life. Even the care that you bestow upon yourself and your personal welfare, let it be based upon Tyaga. Look after yourself that you may preserve and keep fit this body instrument of thine so as to make it an effective instrument for service unto others and to achieve their maximum good and bring happiness into the lives of all. May your life be a witness to this great virtue and left all that you do, be a demonstration of what this noble principle of Tyaga truly means.

I close now with my best regards and Prem. We are moving towards a very sacred and significant event, namely the auspicious Punyatihi Aradhana of the first Anniversary of Gurudev's Maha Samadhi. At this Holy Ashram of Sri Gurudev, we are all earnestly engaged in drawing up a suitable spiritual programme of earnest Sadhana during the whole week, leading up to the Punyatihi anniversary on the 2nd of August. More of this we shall dwell upon in the coming issue of Wisdom Light. Until then, may you all dwell in the abiding peace and bliss of Divine Grace and Blessings. Jai Gurudev.

1st June 1964

—Swami Chidananda

Sivanandashram Letter No. X

ENSHRINE THY GURU IN THY HEART!

BLESSED ATMASWAROOP,
BELOVED SEEKER OF TRUTH,

Om Namo Narayanaya. Namaskars.

Your blessedness and unique good fortune in this present life is something for which you have to constantly lift up your heart in gratitude and thankfulness to God. Rare indeed is it to obtain a human birth; rarer still is to have aspiration for Moksha; and rarest of all, is the blessedness of the contact of association with an illumined saint and sage.

O, Beloved Seeker: Can you realise now your blessedness? Endowed with the first two, you have had the greatest boon in the form of your contact and association with the Holy Master, the illumined Sadguru, Pujya Swami Sivananda. Awaken to this holy privilege. Count this blessedness rightly. Understand your wonderful good fortune. Be fully worthy of it. Ceaselessly seek the immortal. Aspire for liberation. Adore the Divine. Worship Him in gratitude. Pray to Him in thankfulness. Realise the grace. He has showered upon you. Utilise this wonderful life. Rise to sublime heights. Shine radiantly as an ideal person and a noble seeker and sadhaka.

Prepare to worship the Holy Sadguru. The sacred Guru Purnima now draws high. It is the great day of all days to every sincere seeker and disciple. Cast your thine eyes back upon this previous year. See how you have lived these 12 months. Has your life been a divine life? Have you radiated the Master's Gospel through daily activities? Have you served thy neighbours selflessly? Have you engaged in humble Seva? Have you increased in thy love and devotion to God and Guru? Have you shared and given what He has granted you? Have you diligently sought to purify yourself and cultivate noble virtues in thy nature? Have you remembered God constantly and meditated upon him? Have you aspired after Divine Realisation with sincerity and earnestness and intensity of purpose?

Gurudev insists that from the very commencement of our sadhana, we should hold before the mind the ideal of an integral and harmonious development of all the aspects of the personality. Therefore the Sadhaka's daily routine must contain element of all the four Yoga Margas. The mainstay of the daily routine should be the spiritualisation of the entire life of the Sadhaka. The goal of life should be ever remembered. This goal is the attainment of God-realisation. Whatever the external form the Sadhaka's life be, the aim of his life should be God-realisation. Keep up the Nishkama Bhavana in all your daily activities. This is the 'easy sadhana' of Gurudev. Never miss an opportunity to serve humanity.

Are you striving to be a true Sadhaka? Are you engaging in earnest sadhana? For, primarily Gurudev came to teach us the essence of Sadhana. He came to train and guide us in practical spiritual life. He wanted that our life should be 'sadhanamaya'. Plunge into Sadhana; that is Sivananda; that is true discipleship, Sadguru Swami Sivananda stands for spiritual Sadhana in life.

Be intent on Sadhana. Make your life an integral Sadhana. Stick to your path of Sadhana. Combine all your paths as harmonious helps.

Without Sadhana, Self-realisation cannot be had, Sadhana is indispensable. Regularity in Sadhana is indispensable. Sincerity and earnestness are the essential conditions for the fruition of all Sadhana. Make the coming 10-day period from Guru Purnima to Aradhana the commencement of new life of earnest and sincere spiritual Sadhana. Be sincere. This is the key-note of spiritual Sadhana. Let these 10 days be a period of intense spiritual Sadhana, for you, no matter where you are; at home, or at the Ashram. Let this period inaugurate a future of life-long dedication to ceaseless spiritual sadhana, in and through your ordinary daily life in this world.

To be a disciple is to be a Sadhaka; always remember this. Gurudev asks you; He looks and sees and tries to perceive what you—His disciple—have been. Look at thyself. Try to be transformed. Aspire nobly. Prepare to worship the Sadguru upon the holiest of Holy days—auspicious Guru Purnima. As the sacred Guru Purnima approaches, with its period of Sadhana, leading up to the solemn Maha Aradhana next month. I send out to you all, my prayerful good thoughts for your all-round welfare, spiritual progress and divine illumination. Even as the moon receives on the full moon day the glorious radiance of the sun in the fullest measure and shines brilliantly; even so, upon this sacred Guru Purnima Day, may you all receive the radiant spiritual light of Gurudev Sivananda in the fullest measure and shine brilliantly with Wisdom, Bliss and Divine Life. May joy and Blessedness be yours. God bless you.

My regards, Prem and OM to each one of you.

Jai Gurudev Sivananda:

At His Feet,

Sivanandashram, 23.6.64.

Swami Chidananda

Sivanandashram Letter No. XI

PRACTICE GITA TEACHINGS

Salutations to you all, from this sacred Samadhi Shrine of Sri Satgurudev. The holy name of Sivananda has filled the Ashram with its solemn sound this day as devout disciples and devotees congregated for this most auspicious Puja of the Guru. The heavens blessed the day with heavy downpour of rain. A period of serene silent meditation in the early morning attuned the hearts and minds of the earnest seekers with the holy Spiritual presence of Gurudev. Peace and calm pervaded the morning hour. After sunrise, at 8-30 A.M. the principal Puja to Gurudev through His sacred Samadhi commenced with auspicious Abhisheka, Archana with deep devotion, Alankara with profusion of flowers and garlands and Arati. Lord Gurunatheswar Siva shone radiantly with the beautiful silvered Seshanaga and Prabhavli presented by the devotees of Rasipuram. It was a glorious sight. The soft marbled beauty of the Samadhisthan was brought out more fully by the colourful floral adornments. The Divinity of Gurudev was felt in all hearts.

25 and 26th: The earnest Sadhana has now commenced. Prayer for world welfare and silent Meditation occupies the early morning hour. Worship, Japa, Kirtan, Bhajan, Sravan, Swadhyaya keep all devotees continuously absorbed in God-Remembrance and prayerful mood. They are finding it verily a period of spiritual renewal and revitalization. I have no doubt that most of you too, who have not come to Ashram, have been carrying out a similar programme of Spiritual Sadhana, inward contemplation and worship in the holy memory of Gurudev. Taking advantage of this wave of worshipfulness, seekers all over the world are renewing their inner contacts with their Holy Master Sivananda. As I write these lines my prayers are going out to you, to one and all of you, that the Grace of the Divine and the choicest blessings of Gurudev Sivananda may be showered upon each one of you in abundance. May you all now enter into a new life of spiritual Blessedness rich with higher Experiences.

The nation will now turn its heart and mind towards the great ideal of the land, namely, the resplendent Lord Krishna. For on the 30th August we shall celebrate the joyous Krishna Janmashtami Day. Krishna is the Divine Darling of millions of devout hearts. Contemplation of His life is a soul-purifying Spiritual exercise, at once sublime and blissful. Turn to the lofty message of the Lord, the Gita Sandesha of unattached living and selfless loving services unto all beings. Adopt His admonition of constant God awareness during all your activities.

Remember—maam anusmara, mayi eva mana aadhatsva, mayi buddhim niveshaya—root yourself in God and perform all activities with joy. May Lord Krishna bless you.

At the time of the sacred Maha Puja during the Punyatithi Aradhana day (2nd August), I shall remember you all and offer flowers to Gurudev on your behalf. I shall take extra dips in the holy Gauge for your sake when I bathe upon that most auspicious Day. I shall do Parikrama around the holy Samadhi Shrine thinking of you all. About this worship, in my next letter. Until then Jai Gurudev.

My regards, Prem and Pranams,

July 1964

Swami Chidananda.

Sivanandashram Letter No. XII

HOW BEST TO CELEBRATE SIVANANDA-JAYANTI

Immortal Atmasvaroopa:
Blessed Seeker of TRUTH:

Om Namo Narayanaya: Loving Namaskars.

Glory be to the Divine and to Gurudev, the visible expression of the Divine upon this human place. My salutation to you all, travellers upon the shining highway of Divine Life, pilgrims to the shrine of the Eternal.

Jai Sivananda: This letter is the holy Sivananda JAYANTI letter. It brings you my special Birthday-greetings for the auspicious 8th September, which is a great day to us all. It is a day which held the seeds of our blessedness and Spiritual awakening. Upon this day 77 years ago, there took place the dawn of our good fortune or our Bhagyodaya. At the close of the last century, this day granted to us our wonderful Spiritual guide, our inspirer, friend and well-wisher. On this holy day was born our spiritual father, our Gurudev. Sivananda JAYANTI is the day of auspiciousness, joy and extreme sanctity. His advent meant a Spiritual rebirth to all of us who were born into Divine Life through our contact with Gurudev Swami Sivanandaji. Upon this day, the true significance of that ancient prayer of our land—

Asato ma sadgamaya
Tamaso ma jyotirgamaya
Mrityorma amritam gamaya

dawned upon us in a luminous way. For, verily, that great soul who took birth upon that day came into your life, awakened your spirit and set you upon the road to the great Reality, Light and Immortality. Such is Sivananda JAYANTI.

May your thoughts flow towards his sacred feet in worshipfulness and love! May the Bhava and Bhakti of your heart wind their way up to him now in his tranquil transcendence and silent splendour. May all your energies be directed and applied with determined will and devout loyalty to the vigorous furtherance of his Spiritual Mission of awakening Divinity in the hearts of men. May your time, energy and abilities be dedicated to the leading of the divine life of the Truth, Purity, and Selflessness which Gurudev demonstrated. This is indeed the great privilege of your discipleship. This is indeed the most fitting token of your devotion. Such is indeed the celebration of Gurudev's sacred JAYANTI.

Now a word about the recent Aradhana. It is my deep privilege to tell you all that on the 2nd August upon the most holy Punyatithi Aradhana Day you all did offer worship to Gurudev's Divine Presence through this servant, who represented you all. In keeping with my solemn promise to you in the August, Sivanandashram Letter, I stood in the holy river Ganges, thought of you all, adored Mother Ganga in your name, and took the sanctifying dips on behalf of you. Then filling a vessel with the Sacred waters. I went up to the Samadhi Shrine, the Gurusthana, vibrant with his silent

Presence, and offered the Ganga-water in ceremonial Abhisheka for your sake. I then offered flowers and worshipped Gurudev's marbled Charan-Paduka feeling myself only as a representative of you all in the presence of Gurudev. Thus while I apparently worshipped yet, in reality, YOU offered worship. When the elaborate Puja was ultimately concluded by midday and the rush of devotees was over, I went silently and did Pradakshina (Prikrama) around the Samadhi. And while I thus Perambulated it was verily you who walked around the holy one. While this servant thus worshipped, a photograph was taken, perhaps in the next issue you will see it.

A special event that took place during the Aradhana, I wish to recount for your benefit. One day the glory of the Divine Name and the Supreme importance of Japa Sadhana was discoursed upon. In this connection it was later on mentioned how the method of Mantra Purascharana found an effective way of progressing in Japa. I called upon the assembled Sadhaks to come forward and undertake such Mantra Purascharana right then. Numerous Sadhaks readily took the pledge to start and complete Mantra Purascharana before the end of Chaturmasa (i.e. 15th November, 1964). Forms were signed to confirm this undertaking. All commenced it in the Ashram during the Aradhana Period itself. One of the Sadhaks has even continued the Japa in the Ashram itself and will be concluding it by the holy Krishna Janmashtami Day. We are arranging for the customary sacred Havan at the conclusion of this Sadhak's Purascharana. She is the venerable Mrs. Raj Devi Shivraj of Delhi. Despite considerable bodily discomfort, she had determinedly persevered in her Purascharana. She deserves our congratulations.

Two days after Gurudev's Birthday falls the Vinayka Chaturthi or the holy Ganesha Chouth. Lord Ganesha represents the Divine power in the functions as a force overcoming all obstacles and bestowing success to all undertakings. Therefore, he is called variously Vighna-Vinayaka, Vighneshwara, Siddhi-Vinayaka etc. It is a day of supreme and unique importance on which to commence any new undertaking in your life. Do not let this rare occasion go by. Make new resolutions. Commence any fresh activities. Start any important programme which has been eluding you so far. Ganesh Chouth is wonderful juncture to assure successful commencements and obstacles-free progress in undertakings. Worship Lord Ganesh upon this day. Offer your adorations. Make auspicious beginnings of worthy achievements. May Lord Ganesha bless you with all success, prosperity and progress.

I am glad to tell you that Sri Swami SIVANANDA CULTURAL ASSOCIATION, DELHI with its newly constituted executive body is launching into a new programme of public Satsangs in different parts of the Capital to spread more effectively the gospel of Good Life, Pure Conduct, and Divine Living. As an inauguration of these new activities, the Association has decided to celebrate public function of Sivananda Jayanti on 13th of the month (13-9-1964). On the day before, it being second Saturday, it will also hold certain programmes. This servant is to go to Delhi to attend this two-day programme. Incidentally, this enables Delhi devotees to attend the Ashram Jayanti Celebrations on 8th September, I wish the Sivananda Cultural Association all success during the year ahead of them.

From Delhi to Dehra Dun, en route return to Ashram, I go because Dehra Dun devotees would like to revive the activities of that centre which have ceased due to misfortune and bereavements of the main organisers of the Divine Life Branch there. Sri Chandravati Singh, Mr. & Mrs. B.N. Kaul, the family of our late revered Gurubhai Dr. R.R. Anand and other friends intended

to arrange some Satsang function. I must not forget to tell you that during Sadhana week preceding the Punyatithi Aradhana, many Sadhaks took down notes of important talks and discourses, Dr. Sivananda Adhvaryoo of our Gujarat Centre proposes to compile, edit and bring out a Sadhana Souvenir. It is in preparation. I look forward to its early publication, may be before the end of this year. This reminds me, the present letter now completes a full year of the Sivanandashram Letters. This one, as you will see is the letter No. 12. I hope they have conveyed, to some extent at least, the Bhava with which our worshipful and beloved Satguru Sivananda is making this servant of his work and offer his Seva to His Divine Life fraternity, scattered throughout this country and abroad. These letters, it has been my intention are to convey to you my true feeling my wishes for you and ideas of how we may serve the cause of Divine Life. I am happy to have this opportunity and privilege of thus speaking to you all through these lines. I must now conclude for to be too lengthy would mean depriving you of other matter that comes to you through this "Wisdom Light".

May God bless you all. May health, strength, prosperity and joy be with you all the days of your Life. Be always happy. Work with good cheer. Lead a pure life. Be rooted in God-remembrance. Jai Gurudev Sivananda.

With regards, Prem and Om,

Ananda Kutir

1st September, 1964.

Yours in Gurudev,

—Swami Chidananda

Sivanandashram Letter No. XIII

**MA ANAND MAYEE GRACES
SIVANANDA-JAYANTHI-CELEBRATIONS**

Immortal Atmaswaroopa:
Blessed Seeker of Truth,

Om Namo Narayanaya. Loving Namaskara.

Salutations in the name of Gurudev Sivananda and in Divine Life. Your worshipful offering and wonderful response has enabled us here to conduct this year's birthday Anniversary of Gurudev in a very befitting and satisfactory manner. I am very thankful and grateful indeed for this noble help that came from very amongst you. Last year upon this date I could not participate in the Birthday functions because the Sivananda Cultural Association of Delhi had insisted upon my presence at their function where the Foundation Stone for their Sivananda Satsang Hall was laid by H.E. Rashtrapatiji. This time however, Gurudev granted me the privilege and joy of joining the Gurubhais in this auspicious worship of our holy Master. It was grand and elevating. All gathered devotees felt blessed by this solemn, sacred annual worship.

A coloured Pada-Puja full pose was set up on Gurudev's big sofa-chair under the spangled pink canopy of a silk umbrella. A profusion of floral garlands and coloured flowers adorned the glowing picture of the Master. The sandalwood Padukas, which Gurudev used to wear during Pada-Puja time, were placed in the centre of a huge brazen plate around which devout disciples sat in a ring for the Puja. There was Abhisheka, with chant of Purusha Sukta, and then offering of fragrant Chandan and Kumkum. Then commenced the Archana and flowers started raining from all directions through numerous hands. Prasad was offered. Beautiful Arati then followed to the singing of the new Arati composed by the family of Chaman Lal Ji of Chaudausi. He and his daughter Gita were present to lead the Arati upon this auspicious day. A beautiful silken cloth, covered with Pranava-Mantra designs all over, was offered by them for Gurudev's decoration during the Puja of that day.

A wonderful event of this occasion was the visit of the Holy Mother, Sri Ananda Mayee Ma, the great saint well known in India and abroad. This worshipful Mother, a great soul illumined with spiritual radiance graced us all with Her Darshan and blessed with her Satsang all the assembled devotees in the Bhajan Hall upstairs. She arrived first at the Sivananda Eye Hospital at the eager request of Dr. S-Hridayananda Mataji, who wished MA to come and sanctify the hospital by her presence and benediction. After a brief halt there and some little refreshment the holy Mother left for the Samadhi, up the hill. She was highly pleased to see the hospital and know of the good work, being done for countless eye-patients.

Offering Her Pushpa-anjali at the Samadhi of Satgurudev, MA shone with a rare light of Divine Prem. Her regard for Gurudev is really immense. She was received by Rani Kumudini Devi of Hyderabad as she arrived at the entrance of Bhajan Hal and then conducted a special dias arranged for her. Swami Vidyanandaji, and his students, gave a Veena recital chanting Sanskrit compositions of great saints, and also did Sankirtan. A blissful atmosphere prevailed, and we all felt spiritually uplifted by Holy MA's divine presence. I share this wonderful experience with you all, through these lines.

I take this opportunity to send you all my greetings and Good wishes for the holy Navaratri period and Dussehra. My VIJAYA greetings specially to Calcutta Gurubandhus and all devotees throughout Bengal. May the Divine Mother PARA-SHAKTI shower her grace and Blessings upon all of you and grant you all prosperity, happiness, success and highest spiritual blessedness. Worship the Mother with the deepest devotion, one-pointed mind and heart and pray to her to make you childlike in nature, namely, innocent, simple, pure, humble, and egoless and unattached. To be born anew in absolute simplicity and humility of nature is the true means of drawing close to God, the Universal Mother Principle, that broods over all existence with Cosmic Love and Protective Grace: Jai Ma Durga:

Last month's function organised by the S. S. Cultural Association at Delhi was indeed very successful and satisfactory. Well attended and keenly appreciated by all who attended them, both the Satsangs created a spiritual atmosphere effectively. It was very glad to participate and observe the success of this programme which was Gurudev's Birthday celebration for the public of Delhi. The two big sized coloured pictures (one was a huge photo-enlargement) of Gurudev dominated the stage and looked beautiful and grand. Exquisite rendering of devotional Bhajana in classical style

by artists like Shanta Saxena and others was highly elevating. I am looking forward to this month's Satsang which will probably be on 10th and 11th Oct.

Very glad to tell you all that the Andhra Pradesh D. L. Societies have ultimately fixed up the dates for their 8th Annual D. L. S. Conference. It is to meet at Mehbubabad on 11th, 12th, and 13th December. I have just received a telegram, a few days ago from Sri B.V. Guptaji of that place, who is the convener. I urge upon all the Andhra Pradesh centres of Divine Life to arise and join up and help him in every way to make this year's Conference of theirs a thorough success, even as the last one of Tanuk was successful. This is their promise as also mine to personally attend it. I hope to meet organisers of all the A.P. DLS. branches in December at Mehbubabad. Tanuk and Hyderabad branches must give special help to Sri Gupta Saheb in every way.

Winter weather is gradually setting in now and the breeze has become a wind and it now has a chilly edge that makes you want to draw your cloth closer around you. End of last month after two days of almost non-stop rain the Ganges rose up in flood. One wondered if Gurudev's Kutir would be threatened like last year. But fortunately the rain ceased on the third day and the flood level slowly subsided. Today the sun shone bright and the sky is a beautiful blue and it seems that the rains have taken leave of us for the present. The thatched shed we had put in front of Sri Gurudev's sacred Samadhistan for the Aradhana functions of 2nd August has indeed weathered the season. It has now become very helpful and convenient for devotees and worshippers, who are visiting the Samadhi in increasing numbers.

Our brother Sri Swami Sharadanandaji who was for five years in the icy upper Himalayas near Gomukh and Gangotri has now returned to Ashram and is taking keen interest in imparting Yoga-training to eager young seekers, who came to this place, seeking practical Yoga instructions. Some students from France are also reaping the benefit of his kind and selfless efforts in this direction. Thus the work of Gurudev goes on under His benign inner guidance and unseen help of His Spiritual Presence. May Gurudev's benediction be upon you all. I shall now leave you to prepare yourselves for the forthcoming solemn and auspicious nine-day Pooja of the blessed Divine Mother of the Universe—the great Bhagawati Para-Shakti. Worship Her with all thy heart's deepest devotion reverence and loving adoration. May SHE grant you all health, long-life, prosperity, all divine Aishvaryas and Vidya, Pushti, Tushti and Parama Shanti. Glory be to the MOTHER. Hari Om Tat Sat. I close with regards, Prem and Pranama.

Sivanandashram,

Yours in Gurudev

1st October, 1964.

Swami Chidananda

Sivanandashram Letter No. XIV

STRIVE TO MAKE LIFE A PERENNIAL DIVALI

IMMORTAL ATMA-SWAROOPA:
BLESSED SEEKER OF TRUTH,

Om Namo Narayanaya: Loving Namaskaras.

Salutations in the holy name of Gurudev Sivananda and in Divine Life. Let me first of all offer you my best Goodwishes and Greeting for a Bright and HAPPY DIVALI DAY. May Joy, Brightness and Auspiciousness fill your life and may Divine Mother Lakshmi smile upon you as prosperity, plenty and progress in everything you do. Happy DIVALI to you and to all in thy home and thy friends too.

The spirit of Divali is the spirit of gladness and friendliness unto all life. Joy is the essential nature of Man and love and friendliness is to man the natural relationship with his fellow-beings. The significant act during Divali is the lighting of lamps to brighten every nook and corner so that all darkness is put to flight. In your life the Light of virtue, purity and goodness shall verily banish the darkness of impurity and evil. Joy comes where virtue abides. Peace prevails where goodness fills the heart. Suffering and sorrow are the result of selfishness and hatred. Ignorance is the source of evil. Wisdom is the Light to dispel this Darkness of spiritual Ignorance. The Presence of God pervades this universe. O Man: Know this and live in virtue and holiness. For thou art ever in the Presence of the Most High. HE alone is the reality indwelling all names and forms and all beings are verily His moving tabernacles. This is Wisdom. Light up thy life with this wisdom and dispel the darkness of worldliness and materialism from your life.

Live to bring the light of Joy into the lives of one and all. Light up bright little lamps of kind words, kind actions, helpful deeds, loving good thoughts and smile upon one and all by looking upon everyone as your own. No one is a stranger to you in this universe. All are your own. Thus love all and seek to serve and to bring comfort, joy and well-being into the lives of all. By your own life strive to make life a perennial Divali unto others. Within the interior of thy own being do likewise and light the lamps of devotion and prayerfulness. Let not the darkness of desire or of selfishness mar the inner chamber of thy heart-shrine. Bright and clean keep thy heart fit to install the Lord therein and to worship Him with the flowers of Devotion, Truth, Self-control, Forgiveness, Compassion and Penance. Feel happy at the happiness of others; then your life will become filled with the Radiance of a constant Joy which nothing can mar. The selfish individual has a very limited unit of happiness available to him. But who finds joy in making others happy, his happiness is ever expanding and knows no limit. This is a secret of Divali. The more lamps you light the greater the radiance you become bathed in.

Is it not happily significant that the Divali follows soon after the nine-day worship of the Divine Mother? Does this not perhaps give you an insight into a great and sublime Law of Life? He who adores the Divine and propitiates the Universal Mother draws down the Grace of the Supreme and finds his life becoming filled with Light, Joy and Auspiciousness. Life smiles upon him and he

now rejoices in the blessed radiance of God's Grace. Navaratri brings Divali in its wake. Therefore, O Man: worship the Divine and reap joy and peace.

This season holds for you a great lesson on the place of wealth in human life. You know very well indeed that all great Teachers of Mankind, all saints, sages and holy men have declared that money is the root of all evil. It is the seed of sorrow and the prolific source of corruption and sin and vice. Kalipurusha is said to have made gold the seat of his residence. Renunciation of money has ever been the indispensable condition of entry into spiritual life. Renunciation of 'Kanchana' is the first step in the quest of God. Yet in the Divali season we know that heaps of coins, silver and gold are actually worshipped in many parts of India. Lakshmi Puja is widely observed by the business communities everywhere. What does this mean? Is it totally against tradition and accepted beliefs? No, this is not so. There is a deep lesson in this. It serves to teach you the sanctity of wealth. Money and wealth are manifestations of the Divine Mother Maha-Lakshmi and are truly a sacred trust placed at your disposal to be used for the purest purposes and in the noblest way. Money does not constitute evil. Greed for money is evil. Living for money is the worst evil. Sheer selfish utilisation of money is the bane of human life. Money can ennoble or degrade according to man's concept about it and attitude towards it.

With money you can build a hospital or erect a slaughter house. With money you can raise a temple and a house of prayer or start a gambling house or a liquor shop. It can be utilised to help countries and people or to make war and destroy. You can use wealth to ennoble human nature or to debase human lives. It can bring happiness or cause sorrow. This is money. Regard it as a sacred trust to enable you to fulfil your moral obligations and duties and use it selflessly for Paropakara and Lokahita.

Charity is the main function of wealth. Its secondary function is one's own survival and comfort. Charity is a great purifier. It "covereth a multitude of sins". Exclude all greed and selfishness in regard to wealth. Know it to be Divine Shakti. Treat it with reverence. Approach it with purity of heart. Utilise it WORSHIPFULLY. This is Lakshmi Puja and its lesson. It is in this light that wealth has been given a place in human life by our ancients. Thus conceived, has it been included as one of the four Purusharthas by our sublime Culture. Acquired honestly and by pure means, handled without greed or attachment and utilised in reverence and worshipfully, your wealth can enhance Dharma, purify your life, free you from bondage and take you towards Moksha. It becomes filthy Lucre when you abandon Dharma for the sake of money and sacrifice virtue at the altar of Kanchana. Remember this and keep up the sanctity of wealth and utilise it worshipfully All auspiciousness will come into your life.

Perhaps, you know that during this month four great Spiritual Anniversaries sanctify our lives. The six-day worship of Lord Kartikeya or Skanda commences on the 5th and concludes on 10th. Then we have on 14th November, the Yajnavalkya Jayanti of tremendous significance in our Culture. The discourse between sage Yajnavalkya and Maityeri is one of our most treasured heritages. Next comes the holy Tulasi Puja, a sacred day for all devout ladies. Tulasi symbolises the ideal feminine virtue in this Land. Women all over India worship the sacred Tulasi praying to be blessed with the precious wealth of modest purity, modesty, chastity and Pativrata Dharma. This is the bedrock of Indian Spirituality. The full-moon this month marks the birth Anniversary of the most worshipful saint GURU NANAK. He came to spread the true religion of Spiritual living in

this land of five rivers. He restored the spiritual ideals to our religion which was being weighed under the mass of dry ritual. Religion is to be lived not merely believed in.

A life of truth, selflessness, devotion unto God, love of all beings, Purity of conduct and humility, selflessness and compassion constitute the true religion that the great Guru Nanak proclaimed.

O beloved seeker: What most precious wealth does not our Cultural heritage hold for us? Leaving this priceless treasury of gems why should you imitate the West and run after the worthless fashions and meaningless values. Enrich yourself with that which is your own by inner wealth of Mother India which knows no parallel and is inexhaustible. Come: be a true child of Bharatavarsha: Be a true heir to great illumined men of wisdom who founded our culture. Manifest Divine life. Be a noble Sadhak. May God bless you. I close with regards, and Pranams. Jai Sri Gurudev.

1-11-64

Swami Chidananda.

Sivanandashram Letter No. XV

THE MYSTERY OF THE SUPREME DIVINITY IS REVEALED IN SRIMAD BHAGWAD GITA AND THE BIBLE

Immortal Atma-Svarupa:
Blessed Seekers of Truth:

I greet you all in the name of our blessed Lord Gurudev Sivananda and in Divine Life.

I greet you all in the name of our blessed Lord Jesus the Christ, the Great Messenger of God, who incarnated upon earth to teach men for all times, that way of life that brings you face to face with God. In the history of mankind, there has rarely been a life as holy, as pure, as divinely compassionate and sublimely truth-filled as the life of Jesus. He was the very personification of loftiest virtue. Very few in all the range of human history have been the beings so full of a motiveless, spontaneous and all-encompassing love and Divine compassion radiated through every atom of this Godly being. Jesus verily lived the highest ideal of Divine Life.

This month is the holiest of all months in the calendar for it is the blessed advent of this great Teacher of mankind. Christmas is the holy period for Spiritual joy and inspiration unto a higher life. The pattern of life demonstrated by Jesus is one of intense and almost effortless doing of good deeds to help others and to bring joy into their life. His ideal saintly life rested upon a foundation of deep devotion, prolonged prayer, much penance and inner contemplation. His was not a soft life of ease or comfort. Austere simplicity, strenuous and rugged open air life, food that chance had brought and no fixed abode,—such was the life of the Master. His flaming spirit of renunciation, his absolute desirelessness and his total surrender to the will of God constitute his fundamental call to modern man. Humanity of today has created a Hell upon earth for itself by its extreme egoistic self-will, its insatiable desires without end and its intense greed and clinging attachments. To live as Christ lived

would be to free oneself at once from this binding net of man-made sorrow and to experience peace and joy of God's Kingdom hereupon earth. If only the world today could observe Christmas instead of celebrating it, it would soon be walking out of darkness into light. May the spirit of Jesus help man to move towards God. The Lord be with you: May His Light lead you on the pathway of life through all the coming years.

In this month of Margashirsha it is that, many centuries ago, Lord Sri Krishna delivered His immortal message to mankind through His disciple Arjun. Sacred Gita Jayanti is to be observed on the 15th of December, throughout the length and breadth of India. Arrangements are afoot to conduct this memorable Anniversary at Kurukshetra continuously for a period of eighteen days (from December 15th, 64 to January 1st, 1965) with a programme of holy gatherings, religious Conferences and Spiritual discourses. This servant of the Master has been invited to participate in at least one entire day's programme there. It is possible I may make this immediately after conclusion of the Chandigarh All-India Divine Life Conference which ends on 27th December, 1964. On the 28th or 29th December I am thinking of taking as many of the delegates and functionaries of the Conference as are willing to accompany and go to Kurukshetra for a day's camp and service there. It will be as Gurudev may wish it to be. I would urge everyone of you to take to a systematic study of (and a devout and humble study at that) the Bhagavad Gita and the New Testament of the Bible from this month onwards. This will bring about a transformation in your entire life, I promise you. And if possible make your acquaintance with Thomas A' Kempis's "Imitation of Christ" as well as the 11th Skandha of the Bhagavata Mahapurana. An English translation of this letter text is available from the Ramkrishna Mission Publication Department. Srimad Bhagavad Gita and the 11th Skandha of Srimad Bhagavta Maha Purana, containing as they do the direct personal teachings of Bhagavan Himself, sum up the entire range of spiritual wisdom and highest Upadesha. The mystery of the Supreme Divinity is revealed therein.

Learn from this world. There is much it has to teach. Life itself is a school. Life is full of essence. Everything perceived through the senses could verily be more than books and sermons if you would learn to see the hidden wisdom underlying such perception. All your experiences come with a message to you. Those who have eyes, can see. Be a learner always. Wisdom can be gathered between each sunrise and sunset. Thus at each eventide can you find yourself wiser than you were at daybreak. Even the very elements exist to teach. Thus declared the great teacher of mankind Sri Dattatreya, the Parama Avadhuta. This shared wisdom of his is to be got in the 11th Skandha as well. The holy Birth Anniversary of the Lord Dattatreya that occurs on the 18th, brings to my mind this great wisdom-treasure imparted by Avadhuta Dattatreya to the great Yadu. Study it in Adhyayas 7, 8, 9 of Skandha 11.

Last month has been a month of great spiritual activity in different parts of India. An important one among them has been the Maha-Rudri-Yajna conducted at Amritsar in Punjab under the direct personal blessings and presence of their exalted Holiness, the three great Jagadguru Sankaracharyas of Dwarka, Joshimutt and Puri. Blessed indeed were the fortunate souls to have the Darshan of these great Spiritual luminaries. The Vedanta Conference of H. H. Swami Nirmal and the Punjab Gita Conference of H. H. Vedavyasji created Spiritual waves too. This servant's visit to Lucknow, the Capital of Uttar Pradesh provided scope for much spiritual service. Two new branches of the Divine Life Society have been started in Aligarh. This month too is proving to be a

month of much activity. I am soon to leave to South for the 8th Andhra Pradesh Divine Life Conference at Mehbubabad. Shall be at Hyderabad on 8th December and attend the conference at Mehbubabad on 11th, 12th and 13th December.

On my way back to North to participate in the 17th All India Divine Life Conference at Chandigarh I shall break journey for a day at Kirkee (Poona) to meet the Divine Life workers of that branch as also to go to have Darshan of the venerable Sadhu T.L. Vaswanji and offer my love and respects to the holy man of God. There was deep affection and Spiritual friendship between revered Sadhuji and our worshipful Gurudev. From Poona straight North to be in good time for the Chandigarh Conference. Significantly, this conference opens upon the holy Christmas Day. I am hoping to be back at the holy abode of Sri Gurudev by the 31st of December to be present at the sacred Pratishtha Anniversary of the holy Sri Vishwanath Mandir of the Ashram. This also means the new year's eve, for the Mandir Anniversary is on the last day of the year.

Before I close now let me request all of you to sing the most sacred and exalted Mantra of this Kali Yuga, namely, the supreme MAHA MANTRA. It was in this month (on the 3rd) twenty-one years ago that Gurudev initiated the Akhanda Maha Mantra Kirtan Yajna at the Ashram Bhajan Hal for World-welfare and peace. This great Mantra raises you to sublime level of God Experience:

Hare Rama Hare Rama Rama Rama Hare Hare
Hare Krishna Hare Krishna Krishna Krishna Hare Hare

Repeat this every night before you retire, breathing a prayer for the world-welfare and peace. May God bless you.

With my deepest regards and Pranams, Jai Sri Gurudev.

Ananda Kutir

1st December, 1964.

Yours in Sri Gurudev,

Swami Chidananda.

Sivanandashram Letter No. XVI

THE HOLY TRAIL BLAZED BY THE LIVES OF SAINTS

Immortal Atma Swarupa!

Om Namō Narayanaya! Jai Gurudev!

Please accept my most reverential salutations at thy holy feet and my loving greetings and good wishes for this NEW YEAR. May all health, prosperity, happiness and fulfilment be yours throughout this year and the years ahead. God grant you joy, wisdom and grace and bless you, thy home and all that are dear to you with auspiciousness and highest good.

My prayerful good thoughts go out to you all, wherever you may be, and I seek from the Almighty thy welfare and advancement, here in this world, as also thy highest blessedness and illumination in the spiritual realm. May the Divine abide with you! And may you abide in Him! At this auspicious beginning of a bright New Year, let us sanctify ourselves by the devout remembrance of the great holy men of God, the saints, sages and divine messengers of this world, who have declared to us the true meaning and lofty purpose of our life, shown us the way of its fulfilment, and inspired us to follow this holy upward path towards God and divine experience. Let us sanctify ourselves by remembering their ideal lives and exalted teachings. Turn your thoughts now, and lift up your thoughts to a devout and joyous contemplation on sage Vyasa and Vasishtha, on Narda and Valmiki. Contemplate on the glorious Lord Buddha, Jesus the Christ, prophet Mohammed, the noble Zoroaster (Zarathushtra), Lord Mahavira, the holy Guru Nanak. Think of the great saints and sages of all ages, like Yajnavalkya, Dattatreya, Sulabha and Gargi, Anasooya and Sabari, Lord Gauranga, Mirabai, Saint Theresa and Francis of Assisi. Remember St. Augustine, Jallaludin Rumi, Kabir, Tukaram, Ramdas, Ramakrishna Paramhansa, Vivekananda and Rama Tirtha. Adore in thy heart the sacred memory of Mahatma Gandhi, sage Ramana Maharishi, Aurobindo Ghosh, Gurudev Sivananda and Swami Ramdas. They verily are the inspirers of humanity towards a life of purity, goodness and godliness. Their lives, their lofty examples, their great teachings constitute the real wealth and greatest treasure of mankind today.

To think of these saints, to carefully study their lives and to live by their teachings is the only way of rising above suffering and sin, of going beyond pain and death, and attaining true peace and perennial joy in the Divine. There is no other path to true welfare and blessedness than to follow the footsteps of the holy men and saints. There is no greater blunder than to forget the saints and live an aimless life. It is a great loss to waste away your life in meaningless pursuits of fleeting sensations and perishable objects here. There is no greater folly than to ignore and neglect the teachings of these great souls and destroy your own welfare and weep at the time of death.

Beloved child of God! Awaken to thy great heritage. Walk the way of purity, truth and goodness. Serve the world and worship God. Diligently work out thy supreme welfare. Fulfil Dharma at every step. Remember God at every moment. You do not belong to this material world. Beyond this physical and mental existence, there is a life spiritual. Therein lies your true avocation and true and loftiest function. Live in this Spirit. Know thy true Swarupa. It is Satchidananda. Thou

art immortal Spirit. Thou art the deathless Soul. Thou art eternal Self. Thou art divine. Live divinely.

Live in God. Wherever thou art, whatever thou doest, in whatever condition you are whether in joy or sorrow, whether in health or illness, whether at home or in foreign land—live in God always, everywhere, in all conditions. This is wisdom. Herein is happiness. Herein lies thy true good. Do not postpone for tomorrow that which you ought to, and must, do today. “Tomorrow” is a deceptive thought that ensnares soul the unwary and binds him in the net of forgetfulness. Time is fleeting. Days, nights and years pass away. Death snatches you suddenly. This rare opportunity is lost. Beware. Remember death Cultivate virtue. Do good deeds. Live for God. Do not waste time. Be up and doing. Utilise every moment in virtuous living and spiritual Sadhana. Remember death.

There is no pleasure in the perishable objects of this world. There is no true happiness and peace here. Senses deceive. Mind is the enemy. Samsara is full of defects, pain, bondage, fear and a thousand afflictions. You must transcend them all by attaining God and realising the self. This is the true aim of life. This is life’s ultimate goal.

God is bliss. God is peace. God is eternal life. To attain Him is to go beyond all sorrow, pain and suffering and enter into a state of unalloyed joy, fearlessness and freedom. This is the supreme blessed state you have come to achieve. The sure and unfailing way to this attainment is shown by the radiant lives of saints. Live in the light of their shining lives. Thus is the path unto perfection. By their lives, the saints show you the gateway to God. O man wander not any longer in this vast forest earthly existence. Tread the radiant path that leads to Divinity. Start now upon this auspicious period of a New Year. One more year has gone by. Life is shorter and time flies away. Be wise. Be resolute. Heedfully awake, alertly vigilant, sincerely aspiring and earnestly striving and praying, live wisely and move towards God, and thus make a true success of this precious life of thine.

May God bless you all. May the spiritual benedictions of all the holy saints and sages be upon you! May you lead a divine life and attain your highest welfare here and now.

With regards, Prem and Pranams,

Yours in Gurudev,

1st January, 1965

—Swami Chidananda

Sivanandashram Letter No. XVII

TOUR IN THE SOUTH. MEETING WITH DADAJI. THE CHANDIGARH CONFERENCE

Immortal Atma Swarupa!
Blessed Seeker after Truth!

Om Namo Narayanaya! Salutations in the name of Gurudev Sivananda. I greet the Lord in you all and pray that the blessings of the Lord of the Universe, Bhagawan Vishwanath, may ever be upon you and fill your life with auspiciousness, joy and prosperity. I write this to you in the fond belief that the first month of this year has been for you one of peace, good health, harmony and Spiritual progress. May this month be a blessed one too. Similarly also be the months coming ahead.

I want to express my thankfulness to the numerous good friends in India, as well as from several countries abroad, who have remembered me with so much love, and sent in their Christmas and New Year's greetings, and expressed their great goodwill towards this servant of Gurudev, as well as, other Ashramites of this abode of Gurudev. Trying though I am to acknowledge all of them individually, I still take this opportunity of saying, "Thank you very, very much indeed" to every one of these gracious souls. May they ever dwell in the remembrance of the Supreme Lord, who is the sublime connecting link between us all here. Those of you who constantly endeavour to remember God and to be aware of His ever-Presence, with such I am always close in Spirit. I say that we are together when we strive to keep ourselves in the presence of the One Reality. True spiritual brotherhood is wrought by the oneness of our common goal and the common centre of our abidance, namely, God. Man's true relationship is with God and God alone. All other relationships are transient, fluctuating and essenceless. He who loves mankind for the sake of the Divine that indwells man, such a one has verily established oneness with humanity. This relationship is based upon the eternal essence of our existence. Could not this also be the basis of the universal weal and world peace?

You will be glad to know about some specially interesting Divine Life activities that took place in the closing month of the recent year. This servant has been absent from the Headquarters Ashram practically whole of December and a good part of last month, i.e. January 1965. Soon after returning from Aligarh at the end of November last, I left on tour on my way to Mehboobabad, near Hyderabad, Andhra Pradesh. The first halt was at Delhi, en route to the South, to fulfil a few engagements at the Capital. On December 6th, there was a wonderful Satsang arranged by our devoted Gurbehn Srimati Vanibai Ram (known here as "Sivananda Vani") at the house of the Honourable Reddy Ji. That evening, H.H. Sri Swami Parvathikar Maharaji held the audience spell-bound and thrilled, by a wonderful musical recital upon the Svara Mandali and rare Rudra Vina. He lifted our hearts into sublime heights by his music, which in places was almost all-inspiring in its solemnity and subtle and ethereal melody. It was a rare spiritual treat offered in worshipfulness at the feet of Lord Badri Narayan by this unique Nada Yogi, Parvathikar Maharaj. During that Satsang, Sir K C. Reddy Ji made a beautiful speech. Next day I had the joy of visiting the Swami Sivananda Rehabilitation Centre which is being conducted by another noble Gurbehn, the very sincere Mrs. Varalaxmi Rao. She has established it for the training of members of

lower-scale income group families in different handicrafts, so that they are enabled to supplement the main wage-earner's income. This is very beautiful enterprise and I wish it success and much future development.

On the morning of the 8th December, this servant arrived at Hyderabad and my heart still heaves with joy, when I remember the wonderful welcome and the love that was showered upon this servant by all those devotees in Hyderabad that day. The devoted Sri Sivananda Kumndini Devi, Sri B. Ramadasji (or the A. I. R.), the very earnest seeker Sri Vijayarangamji, Sri Rajeswara Rao, Sri Gautam and numerous others came and met me in the name of Gurudev's work. Revered Sri Subba Rao Garu, Gitavyas, was graciously present in all affection. We had some public lectures, morning prayer-gathering at "Sivananda Griha", and also visited the Leper Colony run by Rani Kumudini Devi at Kukkutapalli. I still remember the nice visit to the Bolaram Branch, whose members meet near the Hanuman temple.

Then we all went to Mehboobabad for the Eighth Andhra Pradesh Divine Life Conference. It was in every way a very satisfactory and successful conference. Very inspiring programmes of spiritual discourses, thrilling Nama Sankirtan, religious music, Asana demonstrations, etc. provided a spiritual feast for crowded audience. Dr. Menon from Warangal conducted Prabhat pheri with his party and filled the town with divine vibrations of the Lord's Name. Sri Avadhutendra Swami's Kirtan was unforgettable. So was Sri Sadhu Janabai's discourse on Gita. All the arrangements were perfect. Due to Shri Surendra Reddy's earnest selfless efforts, numerous delegates were looked after excellently. But for his wonderful thoughtfulness and consideration, coupled with the great kindness and care of blessed mothers Kumudini and Niranjani, this servant of Gurudev would never have been able to stand the strain of the Conference programme. So bad indeed was his physical condition at that time, but these three were veritable angels. They took care of every little detail of his physical requirements and comforts. God bless Surendra Reddy. This young man is an inspired Karma Yogi. I must also congratulate Sri B. N. Guptaji whose pious Sankalpa was the very root of the Conference. Other Branches cooperated very beautifully and nobly in guiding the three-day programme. I was happy to meet (as I had eagerly expected to meet) good friends like Sir N. S. V. Rao, Dr. Gopal Krishan Murthy, Tettali Ramachandra Rao, etc., from Tanuku. Gita-Vyas Sir Subba Rao Garu was of immense help to this servant in interpreting English talks in Telugu to the assembled people. The Conference was, indeed, an expression of Sri Gurudev's Achintya Sakti. All glory to the living Spirit of Gurudev Sivananda! He continues to inspire us to awakening.

On December 14th, we drew back to Hyderabad, reaching there at 2 P.M. That evening there was a visit to Medichal for a Satsang at that Branch at the pressing request of young Subba Rao. From Medichal we went to Trimulgherry E.M.C. for a Satsang arranged by Sri Gautam of the Centre. It was a great joy to visit that beautiful temple with its big Satsang Mantap and speak to the assembled Army personnel, who listened with rapt attention. That night we left by train for Kurnool, where we arrived next morning. There, the foundation-stone was laid for a Sivananda Ashram close to the river Tungabhadra. Sivananda Sirnivasa Rao had arranged nice programmes which included an address at the local Mahila Mandal. We stayed at the home of the pious and noble Mr. Pasupati, retired Headmaster of the local High School. During this period we were taken for a visit to nearby Alampur across the river, to see the very famous temple of Lord Siva, where

Adi Sankaracharya has established a Sakti-peetha by doing the Sri Chaka Sthapana. Here, Sri Anasooya Mata, our Gurubehn, a Vendantini, entertained the entire party at her ancestral home.

From Kurnool we were taken to Hospet at the earnest insistence of Gurudev's great devotee and disciple Sri G.T. Veeriah. This devotee's Bhakti-bhav is unique and wonderful. He had arranged his son's marriage on the day after our arrival (17-12-64) and invited all his friends. This wonderful man converted his marriage house into a Satsang Bhawan and a veritable temple of Sivananda Gurudev. Gurudev's picture shone resplendent on a beautifully decorated altar. The marriage was performed at this altar, under the gaze of Gurudev as it were. And your Swami Chidananda was made to bless the young couple as the representative of Gurudev. To this wonderful family, Gurudev is living reality. The entire family is simply filled with Guru-prem. Their devotion, their faith, their Bhav is some thing which I cannot adequately describe, and the special point about this marriage was that this alliance was personally blessed by Sri Gurudev himself seven or eight years ago, when both the families had come on pilgrimage to this Ashram, and the betrothal was solemnised at Sri Gurudev's Kutir on the Ganges bank. Gurudev placed both his hands on the head of the boy and the girl who were young children at that time. The photograph taken at that time is still treasured in their home and it was very much on display during the auspicious event. At Hospet, Sri Murlidhar took us to the Tungabhadra Dam Project where the Engineer-in-Charge very kindly took us round and explained all the workings of the power plant. We also visited the famous ruins of Hampi. This Sevak had the privilege of addressing the public of Hospet that evening and giving a talk to school and college students. It seemed that the entire town cooperated in the two-day functions. Hospet was a feast of love. Gurudev's name spread everywhere.

The next halt, Kirkee, Poona, Sri Sirvaramakrishnan and Sri Srivinasanji of Kirke Branch had arranged a very nice programme of Satsangs, public lectures and talks to students. The most blessed event here was the unique opportunity I had of placing my head at the holy feet of our beloved and worshipful Dadaji Sadhu T.L. Vaswani Maharaj. I was filled with happiness. I considered myself most sanctified by this holy God-man's Darshan. I treasure the warm embrace of divine love in which he graciously enfolded this servant of Gurudev during the prayer gathering in the sun-lit garden of his Mira Centre. My thanks go to Sri J. P. Vaswani who arranged for this spiritual meeting and to Sri Gangaram Sajandasji, his beloved colleague. They are rare flowers in the spiritual garden of adorable Dadaji.

We left for Bombay on 20th December. Sri G. V. Parameswaranji of Divine Life Society Branch had arranged a Satsang that night at his home in Khar. I was glad to meet there H. H. Swami Sivananda-Krishnananda Mata and also to listen to the beautiful Bhajans by Premanand of Ananda Ashram, Kanhangad. Thence, the Chandigarh D. L. S. Conference summoned me North once again. This Conference, conceived by H. H. Sri Swami Premanandji Maharaj, executed with the wonderful help and noble efforts of Sri Ravindra Nath Ji, Sri L. R. Magon, Sri Suraj Prakash, Sri Har Datt Sharma and others was a grand success. It was inaugurated by Comrade Ram Kishan, the Chief Minister of Punjab, who gave a thrilling speech upon the need for ethical values of public life. The full report of this Conference appears in the Branch Gazette as well as in the Divine Life Magazine. The highlight of this Conference was the thrilling speeches by H. H. Sri Swami Nirmal Maharaj of Amritsar. He is a wonderful man. En route to the Conference, we had very nice Satsang at Delhi at the residence of Sri K. C. Reddy Ji, now Rajyapal of Madhya Pradesh.

Your servant was able to be back at the Ashram on the 31st December, just in time to participate in the holy worship to celebrate the Anniversary of the Pratishtha ceremony of the Ashram Viswanath Temple. There was a grand Maha Puja at mid-day. We had a special Satsang at 3 P.M. in the afternoon on that day; and that night the usual Satsang went on till 12 mid-night (it was the last Satsang of the departing year 1964!) when we marked the advent of the New Year with chanting of the Divine Name and prayers for the world welfare. Thus we moved into 1965. We wished one another “Happy New Year” and retired to sleep. December was practically a month of travels and the carrying of Gurudev’s message and the Divine Name into distant corners of Bharatvarsha.

Beloved Seekers, I send you greetings of joy and auspiciousness for the occasion of the beautiful and colourful BASANT. February 6th is Basant Panchami. May the Gods smile upon you and rain down blessings to make your life flower forth into gladness, rejoicing and plenty. This month also celebrates the holy and inspiring memory of the great Guru of the heroic Shivaji Maharajah. You will know the name of this august saint SAMARTHA RAMDAS, a God-realised soul who spread the message of Dharma and courageous faith in defence of sublime principles against all odds. He preached the gospel of Ram Nam and Ram Bhakti as the supreme path for your welfare, here as well as hereafter. Ramdas stood for sterling character, devotion to duty, service of mankind and dedication to divine worship. Study his wonderful books Dasabodha and Manache Shlok. May His blessings be upon you all!

Now, just before I conclude, I exhort you all to prepare to observe the most holy and sacred Sivaratri festival that falls on the last of March. Meditate on Lord Siva. He is the embodiment of perfect mastery over external nature (Prakriti or lower self) and perennial abidance in the Divine Reality within. All Siva Bhaktas should commence a Purascharna of the Panchakshari Mantra from the moment that this line is read by them. Make up your mind to complete five lakhs of Japa (Aksharalaksha Japa) by the first of March. Perform a Havan on Sivaratri Day. If not, repeat some extra Malas of Japa in lieu of Havan. Lord Siva will be immensely pleased and will shower His divine grace upon you. May all health, prosperity, joy and blessedness be unto you. Om Namah Sivaya! Jaya Gurudev Sivananda! God bless you.

With regards, Prem and Om,

Ananda Kutir, Rishikesh

1st Feb. 1965

Yours in Sri Gurudev

—Swami Chidananda

Sivanandashram Letter No. XVIII

THE SPIRIT OF MAHASIVARATRI. TOUR OF GUJARAT

Immortal Atma Swaroopa!
Blessed Seeker of TRUTH!

Om Namō Narayanaya.

The Divine Grace of the Lord of the Universe, Jagadeeshwara Mahadev, the Vishwa Natha, shower upon you and fill your life with Light, Joy and supreme Peace of Atman! Maha-Siva-Ratri, one of the holiest of holy days in this land of ours, would have been observed from the Himalayas to Kanyakumari by the time this letter comes to you. Worship of the Great God with intense devotion and holy fervour would have been witnessed all over India and the spirit of worshipfulness and adoration would have purified the Nation's atmosphere with its unique spiritually sanctifying touch.

Devotion should pervade the entire life-process of man here on earth. To live is to adore the Divine each moment of your life. To know and to be aware that God resides in all living beings, nay, in all things animate and inanimate, is verily the source of all righteousness. This knowledge is the root and support of Dharma. No man would injure another when he is intensely aware that God is in him. For he would be directly offending Him! Therefore, see Him in all and act with devotion and reverence towards all. Sarvam Shivamayam, Sarvam, Vishnumayam. Thus let thy heart whisper within with every beat. Let thy blood flow to the rhythm of this sublime truth. Let thy body pulsate to the note of this constant assertion—every thing is permeated with the Divine Essence! Then indeed will every act of yours become a sacred sacrament, a spiritual Yajna, Mahapuja. This is the glorious truth about your life. Arise to the dawn-light of this luminous Vision. See God here and now! And worship Him here and now. In this lies the grandeur and the blessedness of human life.

Gracious, most gracious indeed is the Lord. Avail of His Grace Divine, the ever-present Love that is ceaselessly pouring upon us all. The irony of human life is not the withholding of Grace by a remote Divinity, but actually, man's rejection of the ever-present Love and Grace, running madly after egoistical pursuits and fleshy sensations. He would rather dedicate his entire life to his five senses than open his heart to the descent of Divine Love and Grace that seeks to enfold him in its infinite compassion and uplift him to the supreme blessedness.

Modern men and women should consciously seek to feel and recognise the nearness of God and the fact of His Love. This is an important task in your life. Your life is not just fleshy sensation and silly sentiment. Cultivate the deeper level of thy inner being. Become increasingly conscious of thy close kinship in your essential nature with the Cosmic Being. You are never apart from him. You are linked and spiritually related to Him every moment of your life and eternally. This knowledge is the only real Bread of Life that nourishes your being as no other earthly nutriment shall ever be capable of doing. This knowledge is not only the Bread of Life, but is Life itself. O Man! Be nourished by this life-sustaining Divine Manna! God is nigh. His life sustains you. He is your breath, your life, your strength and your support. In Him alone is your Peace and Joy. Abiding in Him, you lack nothing. Leaving Him, you are as nothing and are verily beggared. The Lord is

your supreme wealth of wealths. May Shiva, the ever-propitious, the ever-auspicious one be gracious unto you.

Last month I had an opportunity to visit, after many years, the devotees of Divine Life in the cities of Rajkot and Ahmedabad in Gujarat state. The Rotarians had arranged a noble Drishti-dana Yajna at Rajkot, and Dr. Adhwaryoo, Gurudev's great devoted messenger in Gujarat, was in charge of the surgical work there. It was an intense four days of Satsangs, lectures, visits and meetings for this servant. Went back one day to blessed Virnagar, holy centre of Divine Life in Gujarat (I call it Anand Kutir in Saurashtra) for meeting all old friends there. Wonderful work they did at Rajkot Eye-camp.

The Ahmedabad visit too was indeed very nice and satisfactory in Seva. Paid homage to the memory of the holy saint, Gita-vyas Sri Swami Vidyanandji Maharaj of Gita-prachar fame when I visited the Gita Mandir for the main public meeting of the city. Sri Surya Kant B. Shah, the able secretary of the Ahmedabad Divine Life Society Branch had well organised the entire programme, including a successful Press Conference and lectures at the Gujarat Vidyapeet as well as the Jyoti Samaj, a premier women's social-service organisation in the city. My visit to the Sabarmati Ashram for evening prayer hour while at Ahmedabad and my visits to the Rashtriya Shala and the Vidya Vihar at Rajkot were memorable indeed. Those places made me feel the vital presence of the spirit of Mahatmaji by their ideal atmosphere.

Advent of the spring season is at hand. All life is renewed now. May there be fresh awakenings unto Divine Life and spiritual aspiration within your heart! God bless you.

With Regards, Prem and Pranams,

Yours in Gurudev

1-3-65

—Swami Chidananda

Sivanandashram Letter No. XIX

THE BIRTHDAY OF LORD RAMA. GLORY TO HIS NAME

Immortal Atma Swaroopa!
Blessed seekers after Truth!

Om Namo Narayanaya.

Om Sri Ram Jaya Ram Jaya Jaya Ram! I wish you all a very, very happy and auspicious NEW YEAR. Upon this eve of the commencement of the first month of Chaitra, at the advent of spring when you are about to celebrate the festival of Yugadhi, I send you joyous greetings for this New Year and my love and good wishes for your health, happiness, prosperity, all-round progress and success. May God grant you all that is auspicious and blessed throughout this New Year.

One of the wonderful facts about our Vedic New Year is that it opens with a most auspicious holy day of festive worship. The month of Chaitra ushers in the Sri Ramanavami, which is the sacred Birthday of Lord Rama, the grand Avatara who personified Dharma in all its aspects and perfection. The advent of this Avatara heralded the resurgence of Dharma and the establishment of the rule of righteousness and the moral order. Even as the divine Sri Krishna is the beloved and darling of India, so, too is Lord Sri Rama the ideal and hero of India. His Avatara Leela is the thrilling indication of the sublime heights to which the human individual can attain and should strive to attain. As a divine Avatars, He constituted an approach to God-realisation, which is the goal of your life. Devout worship of Rama leads to God-consciousness. He is a link and a channel between you and the transcendental Absolute Reality. The Lord of Khosala, the crest-jewel of the Royal race of Raghu, is the incarnated personification of the Supreme Divinity, the Paramatman or the Para-Brahman of the Upanishads. Rama Bhakti is an unailing way to eternal emancipation from the thralldom of birth and death. His Divine Name "RAMA" is the ark which takes us safely across the turbulent ocean of Samsara to the far shore of immortality and beatitude. This Divine Name is verily the inexhaustible mine of all auspiciousness, the destroyer of the impurity of this iron age, the holiest of holy things, the saviour of this world. It is a seed of supreme satisfaction and veritable bestower of all boons. It is a gateway to the kingdom of blessedness. The glory of Ram Nam verily beggars description. Its greatness is unfathomable. Human speech and intellect ever fail to assess its supreme unparalleled worth. Ram Nam is the most precious, priceless jewel in the treasury of our holy land's spiritual culture. I boldly assert that it is this great Ram Nam that is sustaining Bharatavarsha today.

O beloved children of India! Come, come adopt the Ram Nam way of life. Saturate yourself with Ram Nam. Bathe in the divine nectar that ceaselessly showers from Ram Nam. Ram Nam is the quintessence of the Divine Grace. Ram Nam is your greatest benefactor, dearest friend and unailing companion. Chant Ram. Sing Ram. Let the tongue repeat Ram Nam is an unbroken and continuous stream. Root yourself in Ram Nam. Enshrine Ram Nam in your heart and mind. Let Ram Nam resound from every cell and pore of your body. Let Ram Bhakti radiate from your entire being. Ram Ram Ram! Om Sri Jaya Ram Jaya Ram Jaya Ram! Make your life thrill with Ram Nam. Let your heart throb with Ram Nam. Let your breath flow with the rhythm of Ram Nam. Let blood course through your entire being in unison and tune with Ram Nam. Make your life a veritable joyous song of Ram Nam. Supreme blessedness shall accrue unto you. Freedom, fearlessness and joy will fill the entire being. In this age, there is no greater or more effective and unailing method of God-attainment than the practice of the wondrous Divine Name. The Name of God is verily God Himself. Supreme Divinity is present here, for you, as God's Name. Name and God are not two. They are one and the same. Name is God!

What shall any one say about the power, the greatness and the glory of the Divine Name of Rama! Divine name will bring you face to face with God. It will grant you Mukti here and now. It will burn up all impurities. It subdues the turbulent senses. The power of the Divine Name calms the surging passions. It restrains the outgoing tendency of the mind and subdues its restlessness. The scattered mind now becomes indrawn and one-pointed. Ram Name tames the arrogant ego and renders it Sattvic and holy. Purifying the heart, the Divine Name creates devotion and arouses Divine Bhav within your heart. It drives the mind inward and leads to a state of meditation. Repeated persistent Japa of the Divine Name rends the veil of ignorance and brings on the resplendent experience of God-vision.

Have faith. Be simple and pure. Tread the path of truthfulness. Become selfless. Serve all. Develop noble character. Give up anger, hatred and selfishness. Overcome greed by generosity and sympathy. Overcome hatred by love and forgiveness. Overcome all restlessness through sincere belief and firm faith. Become rooted in Ram and Ram Nam. O seeker! Know that this entire world is verily the manifestation of Ram and His divine power and glory. Now sing with saint Tulsidas:

Siya Rama Maya Saba Jaga Jaani
Karahun Pranama Jori Juga Pani

That is, “Knowing that the entire world is permeated by Lord Rama and His power, I salute (everything) with both hands folded together”. Whatever you see, hear, touch, taste and smell, all is indeed the manifestation of Rama alone. Recognise all sounds to be Rama Nama in infinite variation. Ram Nam is the quintessence of the Divine Grace of the Supreme. Beloved and worshipful Gurudev Sivananda Swamiji Maharaj mentioned Namopathy as the unfailing divine-medical treatment for the eradication of the dire disease of Ajnana and Samsara. This is the literal truth. Believe and be blessed.

Blessed Sadhaks, come now, let us meditate upon Sri Ram. Set aside everything. Become silent. Sit on the Asana. Close your eyes. Behold Sri Rama with the inner eyes, standing before thee, radiant and gracious. He pours his love, compassion and Divine Grace upon you now. Visualise Him vividly in the heart-shrine. Bask in the radiance of His spiritual presence. Repeat Ram Nam. Cast away all other thoughts and repeat Ram Nam. Forget the world and body. Think Ram and Ram alone. Repeat Ram Nam in continuous, unbroken Japa and remembrance. Dwell in Ram and repeat:

RAM RAM RAM RAM RAM RAM RAM RAM
RAM RAM RAM RAM RAM RAM RAM RAM (ten times)

I leave you now silently and joyously in the glorious presence of Rama. May you be absorbed in Ram. May Ram Nam, Ram Prem and Ram Bhajan enrich your life. Om Sri Ram Jaya Ram Jaya Jaya Ram! Glory be to Lord Rama! Glory be to Ram Nam! May God bless you.

With regards, Prem and Pranams,

Ananda Kutir.

1.4.1965

Yours in Lord Rama,

—*Swami Chidananda*

FRESH BEGINNING: NEW UNDERTAKINGS. GURUDEV'S BIRTHDAY ANNIVERSARY. SPECIAL MESSAGE TO SADHAKS WHO ATTENDED SADHANASAPTAH AT HEADQUARTERS DURING JULY 1965.

Sivanandashram Letter No. XX

FRESH BEGINNINGS: NEW UNDERTAKINGS. GURUDEV'S BIRTHDAY ANNIVERSARY. SPECIAL MESSAGE TO SADHAKS WHO ATTENDED SADHANASAPTAH AT HEADQUARTERS DURING JULY 1965.

Immortal Atma Swaroop!
Blessed Seeker after Truth,

Om Namo Narayanaya, Loving Namaskars.
Greetings in the name of Gurudev Sivananda.

Every one of you, all over India and the world has been in my mind during the recent period of the auspicious GURU PURNIMA and the sacred PUNYATITHI of holy Master's Mahasamadhi day. We have worshipped on your behalf and also prayer has been offered that Divine Grace of Gurudev may be granted to you all the days of your life. I am aware that you are being greeted through this page by this servant after a lapse of full four months. This letter last appeared in April issue of Wisdom Light. Since I started on tour, the May, June, July and August issues did not contain the Sivanandashram Letter. There was very little free time during travel and public engagements to devote to writing work and when this servant did get some time he found there was not much surplus energy left for this task. This was Gurudev's will, I suppose, and so I was resigned to the situation. Returning to Ashram at last (that was on 7th July). I found myself right in the centre of the pre-Guru-Purnima activities that had commenced humming all over the Ashram. The Virnagar party of Sadhaks under revered Sivananda-Adhvaryooji had already arrived even before my return and prayers, classes, Satsang and similar programmes were in full swing. This year's Sadhana period was unprecedented and even after the Aradhana functions, various activities continued right up till beginning of August. Now, after the devout annual worship of Bhagawan Ganesh (Lord Vighneshwara or Vinayaka) we look forward to an auspicious period of fresh beginnings and new undertakings, attended by unhampered progress and success. For, Lord Ganesha is verily the remover of all obstacles and difficulties and the giver of success. May His Divine Grace be upon one and all of you, dear readers, and may He bless and help you as the Vighna-vinashaka and the Siddhi-dayaka. May the Lord of Shiva's retinue be propitious unto you!

Gurudev's Birthday Anniversary this year must be to you a day of retrospect and spiritual reassessment and self-scrutiny. It must also be a day of rededication and zealous renewal of vows regarding your spiritual practices and inner life. Because we see that full two years have now gone by, since the passing into eternity of our worshipful Gurudev and it is needful to study yourself to see how you have fared on the Path without support of His personal guidance and the push of His actual presence. This passage of time also means to us that we have drawn nearer to our final hour of destined departure from this world of mortality. As days fly past the end too approaches the nearer. Hence you must always be up and doing in the Life Spiritual. Go onward until you attain the Goal. Ceaselessly endeavour into perfection. Each day live fully. Unrelaxing vigilance be your safeguard. May all the sublime spiritual qualities, that Gurudev embodied in his lifetime, be reborn within you

being in all their glory and spiritual power. May the power and spirit and light of Sivananda be born afresh within you upon this sacred anniversary.

I have a special message to such of you who attended the Gurupurnima-Aradhana Sadhana programme here in the month of July. You were all given a Printed Form headed "My Resolves" and containing two parts "A" and "B". The latter contains seven items, plus some sub-heads including one about Jnana Yajna. Please look up your copy of the Form at home and see how far you have been trying to fulfil these undertakings. The Mission is no doubt expanding and spreading. But it is very necessary that individual seekers must also make steady progress in their Sadhana life. This I expect and look for amongst all the members of this Society created by Gurudev. During the past two years gone by many D.L.S. Conferences have been conducted, numerous books of Gurudev have been published, new Branches have been inaugurated, the Divine Life message has been taken into all parts of the country and in countries abroad too and all this is doubtless good. But equally important is that you all grow and develop in Virtue, Renunciation, Sadhana, self-restraint and austerity. That you grow in prayer, in meditation, Vairagya and Wisdom day by day. More important that you excel in Service, Devotion, Meditation and God-realisation. Many of the members have undertaken to carry on Mantra Purascharana. A few fortunate Sadhaks stayed here after the Aaradhana and did Japa in the Ashram itself. Even as she did last year, the revered and worthy Shrimati Rajwati Shivraj of Delhi and her friend Sri Mohan Devi Mehta both completed two Purascharana of their Ishta Mantra during July/August. Besides them Shrimati Kamala Devi Seth, the daughter of Sri "Maharaj" Pannalaji of Amritsar, also did Anushthana of Mantra Japa for three weeks. While congratulating these worthy Sadhaks, I, at the same time, commend their example to you all.

I shall close now and do so with my earnest prayer to the Divine Mother, Whose annual worship is approaching near, to shower Her loving Grace upon you and grant you the fulfilment of all your right desires and Sattvic Sankalpas. May mother guide you along the radiant path that leads to your highest welfare and supreme and divine Felicity! Surrender yourself unto the Divine Mother and attain Immortality, Fearlessness and Freedom! Jai Gurudev!

With Regards, Prem and Om,

Yours in Sri Gurudev,

1st September, 1965

—Swami Chidananda

Sivanandashram Letter No. XXI

SWAMI CHIDANANDA'S 50TH BIRTHDAY MESSAGE

This is actually the MESSAGE of His Holiness Sri Swami Chidanandaji, given on the auspicious occasion of his 50th Birthday which was celebrated in the Ashram on the 24th September, 1965, on a moderately grand scale and dignified manner. The same is reproduced below as the Ashram Letter.

Beloved Atmaswaroopa!
Om Namo Narayanaya! Jai Gurudev Sivananda!

May His blessings be upon you all! May this letter find you all in excellent health, good cheer and peace of Divine contemplation.

Blessed Self! You are now called upon to manifest in life the Truth, you have received and absorbed from Gurudev, when He lived. By the Divine will of God, a time has now come, a time of trial, testing and strengthening. Life now asks you to practise and to prove that your awakened spiritual consciousness within is more than the mere physical and mental part of your being. All that you have up till now heard, read, learnt, believed and reflected and meditated upon must now be lived with calm resolution, strong determination and firm faith. In the challenging context of this modern world your Mother-country finds itself confronted by asuric forces of Adharma and wickedness that threaten to destroy our sacred culture. You are all involved in this struggle being part and parcel of the Mother-country.

In this situation I address you all, as seekers and Sadhaks leading the Divine Life of Yoga and Seva. I call upon you all to keep up high, the great tradition of Vedanta and Bhakti, of Yoga and Tapasya which is the life-breath of your time culture. I want you to be practical Vedantins, dedicated devotees and courageous Karma-yogins. Gurudev expects this of you and Bharatavarsha needs this from you. Live up to the Ideal of the fearless Sadhaka. Be a true Yogi and Bhakta, keen in Seva and unshakably firm in Nishtha. Remember that your life is rooted in a grand culture that is based upon the Immortality of the Self and the passing nature of earthly wants. **EVEN THIS WILL PASS AWAY! I AM IMMORTAL.** Live in the light of this Truth. Practise this truth and be fearless child of the Divine.

I wish to urge you all to remember that you are spiritual aspirants and Sadhaks. Remember that you have been inspired and guided by the sublime ethical and spiritual teachings of Sadgurudev Sivananda. Remember again that Gurudev ever laid emphasis upon Karma Yoga, selfless service. Remember also that he admonished every disciple and student to fulfil his duties without fail. Do your duty in spirit of worshipfulness and dedicate it to God. Thus Gurudev gave importance to the performance of unattached Nishkamy Karma Yoga and carrying out Swadharma.

He never approved of shirking of duties or neglect of Karma Yoga. Service also was supreme Yoga to him even as meditation and worship. When duty calls, as it does at this present moment, convert yourself into a ready and willing servant of anyone or any situation that needs your seva. Heed this reminder of Sri Gurudev's practical instructions to be ready to serve. Serve all.

Serve the general public and the country at large. Serve in all ways you can or are called upon to do. Serve, regarding your actions as worship, considering duty as devotion and seeing the Lord alone. Be firm in faith. Be unshaken in your trust in the Divine. Be bold and fearless in the face of all the vicissitudes and changes. Face with calmness and with cool courage all events and occurrences. Know that the supreme inner director of all movements in this Universe is the Divine-Being, the Paramatma. Rooted in His remembrance, worship Him through duties faithfully done. The DIVINE is present Here and Now. Knowing that the name and forms of this created universe are subject to decay and dissolution you should act your part in the scheme of things as dictated by the situations in which the Lord places you. You are where you are, and what you are, due to the Will of Lord, who is the Supreme inner Ruler of all the created Universe. Based upon this awareness act. With this knowledge and perception do that which you see to be your duty as an individual in human society.

Gurudev Sivanandaji was dazzling Sun of Vedanta. He ever addressed you as “BLESSED IMMORTAL ATMAN!” Never as “My dear So-and-so or Such-and such”. It was always IMMORTAL ATMAN or SELF. Proclaim this great Truth. Hammer this idea into each and all. Rouse a courage, a Fearlessness and a Strength from within the depths of their beings. Make them bold and strong with Soul-force. Tap the source through collective Sadhana at every week-end and create spiritual power from within. Work to spread that calmness and fortitude that springs out of such inner strength. Specially work to educate the womenfolk and the school-going children in the control of emotions and in the basics of dealing with emergencies. I and all here in the Ashram, we do pray that God would set right men’s hearts and minds and soon make their actions Sattvic and benevolent. We wish, hope and pray for this. Until this prayer is granted may you all be guided to trust in the Lord and do your duty with supreme spiritual heroism. To be a **Dheera** is the call of your cultural genius!

A clear word of caution is to be given here. Let not the activity break away from its mooring in the purity of Sattva. Act, but be based on Sattva always. Work with understanding and with love. But never allow Hatred to stir within your being. HATRED is NEVER GOOD. Not under any circumstances, at any time or for any reason whatsoever. It is the direct contradiction of the Divine in every way. By no means can it be allowed to have entry into the truth-seeker’s heart. Do your duty with your body and mind but retain the purity and sensitivity of your spiritual nature. God is love. You are a ray of that Eternal Light! You are Divine! Be rooted in divinity. Act with consciousness of your divine nature. Face all situations unflinchingly. Do duties resolutely. Engage in action wisely. Fulfil Dharma unattachedly. But at all times cherish only LOVE in your heart. Love God, Love the whole Universe. Never swerve from the path of your duty. Verily be rooted in Love. Thus uphold the Ideal of Divine Life here and now! May God bless you!

Co-operate in all works of public safety, service and welfare. Be ready to become volunteers. Offer your willing services to the agencies set up for various aspects of national Seva. Be a true Karma Yogi and a Bhakta who is ever a Dasa of Lord manifesting in and through all beings. I close with nay regards, Prem and Pranams. Jai Gurudev Sivanandaji! Om Tat Sat!

D.L.S.H.Qs.
Sivanandanagar,
24-9-1965

Yours in Gurudev,
Swami Chidananda.

Sivanandashram Letter No. XXII

SOW THE SEEDS OF LOVE, PEACE AND BROTHERHOOD

You will be all worthy of this great Mother, who sustains your life and that of your children and those unborn yet to come. Do your duty to posterity by sowing seeds of Love, peace and brotherhood for the welfare of the generations to follow in the future ahead. Let Love triumph and Peace prevail in this, your country. O my brothers of all creeds, faiths and communities!

Beloved Immortal Atman!
Blessed Seeker of Truth,

Om Namo Narayanaya. Loving Namaskars.

Peace Be Unto All! May individuals, groups, communities, countries, hemispheres and the whole world be blessed with the grace of Peace and Love!

After last month's message at the time of writing this letter an anomalous peace has been restored upon the battle-front by which the recent 20 days' war has come to a close but not so the hostilities. Hence the call to duty, to vigilance and sacrifice to safeguard Freedom, Unity, Virtue and Dharma is reiterated now in all its solemnity and urgency. Be heroic, without hatred, ready to swiftly chastise, yet without anger, strike fiercely in defence yet without cruelty, and be immediately generous where you find true innocence or real remorse. In the just cause of National Dharma be irresistible and strong as an elephant, and quite fearless as the lion. Ever be ready to give battle with the boldness and the power of a million celestial angels of heaven. Victory is to the Devas never to the Danavas. Nevertheless, sincere efforts for peace should be earnestly pursued by those at the helm of affairs. Desire for peace yet perfect readiness to fight in defence of freedom—this is the noble way before the nation. And we ceaselessly PRAY FOR PEACE AND GOODWILL each and every day without fail at this holy Ashram of Gurudev Swami Sivanandji Maharaj.

Dipavali has come and gone with subdued observance due to the grave uncertainty of the present period. Within Bharatavarsha there is more need for the lighting of Lamps other than those that burn with oil and wick. There is need to light up the Lamps of religious brotherhood, intercommunal love and harmony, all-over unity of our people from the Cape to the snow-capped Himalayas. Lamps of mutual understanding, united patriotism and single-hearted love of freedom should light up all hearts and mind throughout every city, town, village, hamlet and nook of our nation. Feel India is India. It is neither a Hindu India nor Muslim India nor Parsi India nor Sikh India nor Christian India nor any Communal India whatsoever. India is Bharata Mata, the beloved mother of all these children, who are nourished by the food of her sacred soil, her life-giving waters, her freedom-air, her love-filled dawn, noon and dusk and her just rule of equality and peaceful co-operation and fellowship. India is the India, whose God is the universal father of humanity and the God of love, who embraces all mankind as His own. Be yet all worthy of this great Mother, who sustains your life and that of your children and those unborn yet to come. Do your duty to posterity,

by sowing the seeds of love, peace and brotherhood for the welfare of the generations to follow you in future ahead. Let love triumph and Peace prevail in this, your country, O my brothers of all creeds, faiths and communities!

This November is a month of remembrance of eternal Ideals. The Supreme Spiritual Values that constitute the very heart and essence of our oriental view of Life find their grandest assertion in the ancient Upanishads. The birth anniversary of one of the greatest towering personalities in the Upanishads is upon November 3rd, namely the YAJNAVALKYA JAYANTI. The august Sage Yajnavalkya is verily the gland sire of the masters of divine wisdom of that wonderful period. He shone supreme in the assemblage of Sages in Janaka's royal court with none to equal him, none to challenge his Wisdom and perfect mastery of the spiritual love. Acquaint yourself anew with his thrilling expositions of the eternal supremacy of the spiritual Ideal before man in that unique and unrivalled dialogue between this great Sage and his wife Maitreyi of immortal fame. All things in this universe are dear to man because of the ATMAN, which alone is the central Truth and imperishable essence of all things. ATMAN or the SPIRIT is THE ONE ULTIMATE AND SUPREEME VALUE. For the Atman alone is real, being the one eternal, immortal, everlasting principle. Wake this Immortal Atman in and through all the movements of thy life, O man!

Sri TULSI PUJA on 6th November holds aloft before the women in India the sublime ideal of marital fidelity and chastity. Sri Tulsi symbolises the Maha-Pativrata. This is the supreme Dharma of the Ideal Indian woman and wife. Loyalty to her lord and perfect chastity and purity in thought, work and deed is the concept of the ideal woman the fulfilment of which makes her worthy of worship and the highest reverence. The true Pativrata Sthree is indeed a veritable goddess upon earth. She verily purifies nay sanctifies the ground that she treads upon! Let the women of India hearken to this reminder evoked by the holy Tulsi Puja day.

Then holy Guru Nanak and the holy Sant Jnaneshwar are honoured by millions this month upon the 9th and 21st respectively. Guru Nanak lived and preached the oneness of mankind and the essential synthesis of apparently divergent creeds and faiths. He propagated the one common spiritual message that formed the universal basis of all religions and teachings of all prophets. Sant Jnaneshwar similarly cut through theological differences and proclaimed the oneness of God, equality of all men and the supremacy of true devotion over dry metaphysics and mere occult power of Yoga. Both these great saints alike declared the superiority of LOVE or BHAKTI as the path to spiritual Perfection and the way to Divine Experience. They stressed on the need of real Surrender to the Divine and purity and humility in all our dealings here. The practice of Virtue and Good Conduct was emphasised as more important and indispensable than theoretical knowledge of scriptures unaccompanied by virtuous living. These two great souls fought superstition, simplified religion, revived Divine Name and established Bhakti, Sadachara and spirit of Service unto mankind by their personal example, lofty and immortal teachings. May the message of Guru Nanak and Sant Jnaneshwar live and work in your heart always. May their divine wisdom-teachings guide on the path of life and lead you to supreme blessedness.

Commence the serious study of Bhagawad Gita in preparation of the forthcoming Gita Jayanti next month. Also, before closing I wish to mention with keen appreciation the Sankalpa of certain D.L.S. branches to organise district level Divine Life Conference this year. This they have resolved in pursuance of my suggestion made in an earlier letter. The secretary of Pattamadai

D.L.S. branch has written to me a very sincere and enthusiastic letter in this connection and I am very happy that he is going ahead with the preparations. I have advised Sri Krishna Iyer to invite revered Swami Sivasat-Chitanandji of Amrita Ashramam to guide him in the proceedings of the conference. I draw your attention to the extracts of the teachings of holy Guru Nanak Dev and of Sant Jnaneshwar Maharaj elsewhere in this issue. May the blessings of these two great Masters be upon you!

My best regards, Prem and Pranams to you! Jai Gurudev Sivananda! Om Tat Sat!

*D.L.S. HQs.,
Sivanandanagar,
1st Nov 1965*

*Yours in Gurudev
—Swami Chidananda*

Sivanandashram Letter No. XXIII

PRAY FOR OTHERS

Embody Lofty Principles when harsh Realities of the external world make feelings to run high. Be brave in Goodness. Be Righteous in Adversity and Humble in Virtue.

BELOVED IMMORTAL ATMAN!
Blessed Seekers of Truth.

Om Namo Narayanaya. Loving Namaskars.

Peace be unto all. May all individuals, groups, communities, countries and the entire Universe be blessed with the Grace of Peace and Love. At this holy Ashram of Gurudev Swami Sivananda we pray every day for peace and goodwill amongst all men and nations. In this fair land may peace, goodwill and understanding prevail from the Himalayas to the distant Cape and from the eastern hills of Assam to the westernmost deserts of Sindh and Baluchistan. May the nation be once again left free to pursue its serene tenor of peaceful constructive activities for progress in its economic, social and cultural life!

The present year is now drawing to a close and all seekers should be taking a glance back in retrospect to examine the year that has gone-by and to evaluate what each one has done during this period and how much has been achieved. A great question that stands before everyone of you is verily, how much time has been well utilised? And how much time has been ill spent or wasted away, for verily upon this question hangs the very problem of life and of living. What is your life, if it is not the time at your disposal? Life is time! Your life is nothing but the time you have got. As you use time even so is your life utilised. Waste of time is destruction of life. Abuse of time is the degradation and ruin of life. Good and proper utilisation of time is the glorious fulfilment of your life. Time well and wisely spent is life grandly lived. It brings joy, beauty and achievement. Has this year been thus utilised? Thus will you examine the last eleven months gone by upon this last month of the year as it now speeds past you to soon end and bring in the new year 1966. Retrospect, reflect and resolve rightly for the year ahead. May God bless you.

With the coming of December, winter has set in and the advent of cold days has brought about the season of cold-misty mornings, late sunrise over the mountain across the holy river Ganges, biting winds, long nights and short days. Everyone has now to bring out sweaters and blankets. And the miracle of God's creation is such that while human beings shiver, the water-fowl has appeared before the Ashram and happily and nonchalantly swim about on the Ganges and dive again and again into the cold sparkling waters to hunt after the fleeing fish. They live on the water all the 24 hours of day and night and I see them and simply marvel at God's wonderful world. The Ganges water is crystal clear. When I occasionally go in the boat to visit our venerable Yograj Gaur Prasad, on the other shore, I clearly see the sands and the boulders of the river bed and the shoal of fish crowding under the boat to receive bits of bread thrown by devotees to feed them. A dip in the Ganges at this time is at once a challenge, an adventure and an act of austere endurance. But it can also be wonderfully invigorating and vitalising and enjoyable when it is bright and sunny upon a clear day, specially at mid day, when the morning winds have stopped.

When I contemplate the increasing cold here, my mind goes to our heroic and brave jawans, encamped in the forbidding icy regions of the Himalayas border lines much above the snow lines in high altitudes, beyond 18000 or 20000 feet. It is terrible indeed, the cold there, much more than any thing that the people in the plains can even imagine. To expose the hands and feet would be just agonising and yet they have to endure this terrible bone-cutting cold and freezing weather and be alert and active to safeguard your freedom and to protect and defend your country and all that you hold dear and holy in it. I request you all to ceaselessly remember these brave sons of India, your brothers in arms, in your daily prayers. May you all pray to the Lord to graciously look after these brave souls who are risking their very lives to safeguard Dharma and to keep sacred Bharatavarsha free and secure. Let us not forget these people. Let us pray for them. They who are out of sight, let them not be out of your heart. Remember them and work hard to do your part of this noble task. Save for them and also dedicate a member of Mahamrityunjaya Mantra Japa to these toiling ones in the snowy fastnesses of the remote North. They are much closer to me here and hence I feel much for them whenever the cold wind of Rishikesh catches me and makes me suddenly shiver.

Yes, you must learn to pray for others. Was this not one of the deepest lessons that Lord Jesus taught through His life and teachings? Ever and anon Jesus prayed to the Almighty for the sake of mankind. His prayers were as much for others as it was for himself. This sublime truth He demonstrated right up to the last moment of His life when He uttered the supreme prayers to the Lord on behalf of those very people who were putting Him to death. He prayed for others, nay He verily lived for others. In times such as these, when harsh realities of the external world make feelings to run high, and you are apt to forget basic principles and ideals in which our lives should be rooted, it becomes vitally important to remember and draw inspiration from such lofty lives, as of Jesus Christ. Nothing that happened to Him in His short yet intense life, was ever allowed to divert Him from His ideal of perfect goodness. He embodied the goodness that He taught unto others. As a nation and a people we too must strive at all times to evolve and to embody those lofty moral principles which we wish to raise aloft and hold before other nations for their guidance. While never fearing or hesitating to do that which is good and right, we should ever be at the same time steadfast in goodness and in righteous conduct.

The Gospel of the Bhagavad Gita whose Jayanti falls on 4th December proclaims such conduct as the ideal for the man of action to follow. The life and personality of Christ is indeed a

PRAY FOR OTHERS

living exposition of the message of the Bhagavad Gita. Jesus personified the ideal of the Gita. To be brave in goodness, to be righteous in adversity and to be humble in virtue—this embodies the great teachings. Commence a very systematic and regular study of the sacred Bhagavad Gita from the day this letter reaches you. Absorb the life uplifting philosophy of the grand Gita Gospel. Try and receive the Gita into your heart. Practise its wise precepts. Live the teachings of immortal wisdom. He who follows the Gita will understand Jesus really. And he who adores Jesus and tries to follow Him is really a votary of the Gita.

Upon the 8th of December take out your copy of the Srimad BHAGAVATAM, the MAHA-PURANA. Turn to the Eleventh Skandha. Read therein the chapters dealing with the teachings of the Avadhoota Dattatreya. Sublime and inspiring at once deeply instructive are his talks with king Yadu in the chapters 7, 8 and 9. They impart wonderful lessons on Life. We have the Dattatreya-Jayanti on the 8th and the Ashram will worship at the little shrine in the forest upon the Dattatreya Hill, beside the Ashram upon this day. May the great soul's benedictions be upon you all!

Before closing this letter I like to send my very best GOODNESS FOR A MOST HAPPY CHRISTMAS and A VERY BRIGHT AND JOYOUS NEW YEAR TO ONE AND ALL OF YOU IN EVERY part of the world.

HAPPY CHRISTMAS TO YOU!
HAPPY NEW YEAR TO YOU!
AND GOD BLESS YOU!

On the 31st December you know that the Vishwanath Mandir was consecrated in 1943. The 22nd Anniversary worship will be conducted with due ceremony and solemnity. I shall remember you all on that day and worship on your behalf and send you the sacred Prasad of that special worship of New Years Eve.

Hare Rama Hare Rama Rama Rama Hare Hare
Hare Krishna Hare Krishna Krishna Krishna Hare Hare.

JAI GURUDEV! Regards, prem, pranams,

*D.L.S. Hqs.
Sivanandanagar
December 1965*

Yours in Gurudev,
—Swami Chidananda

Sivanandashram Letter No. XXIV

COSMIC LOVE—THE VERY BASIS OF DIVINE LIFE

Beloved Immortal Atman,
Blessed Seekers after Truth,

Om Namō Narayana. Loving Pranams,

Homage unto the Divine. May the Grace of the Supreme Being be upon you all; Glory to the Lord; My humble and sincerest GOODWISHES & GREETINGS to you for Joy, Prosperity and Success during this NEW YEAR. May Happiness and Spiritual progress mark all its days and may good thoughts, sweet and kind words and noble selfless deeds of help and service unto others fill the entire year ahead. You are Divine. Therefore let Divinity radiate from you in everything that you think, say and do. Live to express the perfect God-Essence that dwells within you. Let all the movements of your daily life be filled with the light that illumines the innermost shrine of your spiritual “heart” which is the divine centre of your real being.

Beloved Friend: you are the moving temple of God. God is within you as on all-pure and bliss-filled Divine Presence. That God is Love: Unlock the food gates of the Ocean of Divine Love within thee, and let flow that love over all the universe. Love all. Encompass everything here with that Love. Live Love. Think Love. Speak Love. Do deeds of loving kindness and goodness in all the actions of your day-to-day life Even the most trifling of actions do with love for God. Do all things for Him. Fill your mind with loving thoughts towards all created beings and things. Fill your heart with pure feelings of kindness, compassion, affection, friendship and genuine love towards everything upon earth. Regard none as thine enemy. Feel all as thine own. For we are brethren in the divine, all being children of God. Merciful be thine attitude towards all creatures and things here. Speak gentle words alone, of friendship and divine brotherhood in the Lord. Utter soft speech that brings happiness unto others and helps them to bear the trials and burdens of this life. Kind words affectionately uttered bring heaven down to man on earth. Unkind and harsh words contradict the Divine Law of Life and thus take the joy out of life and cause pain. Therefore beloved seeker: fulfil the Law by filling your speech with Love and thus helping to bring light into the lives of all. Engage in actions of loving-kindness which the noble brothers of the sublime Buddhist faith refer to by the beautiful term “Metta”. It is the expression of the highest principle in man. It is impersonal, universal, motiveless love toward everyone and everything. It leaves no place for anything else except such love in your heart. Such love is Divine. It makes you Divine by enabling you to rise up into Divine Experience.

Love is the one and only Law that can bring solace, peace and happiness to mankind in this world. It is the higher principle with which man can overcome the grievous results of his past folly, blindness, wickedness, selfishness and the sufferings created by them. Love will give back to World Humanity the Peace, Safety and Security which it has lost through the transgression of this supreme principal of life, namely, Loving Kindness. Blessed Seekers, strive to restore unto humanity peace, joy and welfare by practising the rule of cosmic love or Vishwa-Prem and living a life of loving goodness and kindness unto all.

Spiritual Life means unfoldment of the hidden Divinity within you. It implies the manifestation of this inner Divine nature which is your real self. Yoga is the process for bringing about this inner awakening, unfoldment and manifestation. All Sadhana is for manifesting this Divinity of your true Swaropa: fact of divine experience. A life that contradicts LOVE in any manner cannot become spiritual or grow on divinity. It cannot progress towards God because He is attainable through Love.

Because HE IS LOVE: God is love. Anything in your life that contradicts LOVE, know it to be undivine. It is not “daivi-sampatti” expounded by Lord Krishna. Selfless Love, Compassion and friendliness are divine, Sattwic and, therefore, help spiritual unfoldment, Hatred, anger, dislike, ill-will, prejudice, envy, jealousy, intolerance, harshness, selfish and resultant unkindness are the negation of Love and hence are great obstacles to spiritual advancement as they are undivine expressions of your lower earthly nature. They must die and the nature, the inner man should be cleansed of this dross before the Light of Truth can flood your inmost beings and grant you Illumination, Divine Experience and Immortality. Love is the great and marvellous power that can effectively root out all evil in man and transform him and make him godly.

Love is the greatest purifying force on earth. It makes your life divine. It is therefore the very basis and support of Divine Life as expounded by Gurudev, worshipful and beloved Sivananda Swamiji. Therefore overcome all blemish through the sanctifying power of pure selfless love of all and attain the goal of God Consciousness, my beloved Atman. God Bless you.

Glorious NEW YEAR unto you. My deepest regards, love and prostrations to you all, souls journeying onward unto Divine Perfection.

D. L. S. H. Q.
Sivanandanagar
January 1966

Yours in Sri Gurudev
—Swami Chidananda

Sivanandashram Letter No. XXV

PROPAGATION OF SPIRITUAL KNOWLEDGE

Beloved Immortal Atman!
Blessed Seekers after Truth,

Om Namo Narayanaya. Salutations in the name of Gurudev Sivananda.

I wish to express my great thankfulness to the numerous devotees and friends in India, as well as from several countries abroad, who have remembered me with so much kindness and love, and sent their affectionate Christmas and New Year's greetings, and expressed their sincere goodwill for this servant of Gurudev as well as other Ashramites. Trying though I am to acknowledge all of them individually I avail myself of this opportunity of collectively conveying my grateful thanks to all of these blessed and gracious souls. May they ever dwell in the remembrance of the Supreme Lord, Who is the sublime connecting link between us all here. Let us

contemplate that we are together when we strive to keep ourselves in the presence of the one Reality, because true spiritual brotherhood is wrought by the oneness of our common goal and the common centre of our abidance namely God. We have to constantly remember that all other relationship except that of God, are transient, fluctuating and essenceless. He who loves mankind for the sake of the Divine that indwells man, has verily established oneness with humanity.

As you all know, this servant has been away from the Headquarters for the whole of January. Half of February also shall be spent in touring and visiting Divine Life branches in Bengal and other states. In spite of my desire to do so, I regret, it is not possible at this moment to give you a detailed account of the uplifting activities of the Divine Life Society that took place in the past month of this protracted tour of mine of Southern and Eastern parts of India. I, therefore, restraint myself here merely by telling you that all the programmes throughout my tour in the state of Maharashtra, Andhra & Orissa were very well organised and this servant had the blessed opportunity of addressing vast congregations, meeting many persons, visiting several holy shrines and places of Pilgrimage. The mission of Gurudev and the message of Divine Life was spread far and wide in an organised and grand manner. The Divine Life Conferences at Vijayawada in Andhra and at Puri in Orissa were crowned with resounding success. I want to express my gratefulness to numerous capable organisers, devotees and selfless workers who strove hard to organise the programmes, making every arrangement for our comfortable stay and journeys and thus became worthy instruments of God and Gurudev in this great endeavour. Although the reports of these programmes etc. will be published in the 'Branch Gazette' and 'Divine Life', I shall try to say something more specific in my next letter, if possible.

In my letter of 15th January, published in the Branch Gazette of the same month, I paid my homage and offered prayers on the sudden and shocking demise of our revered Prime Minister Sri Lal Bahadur Shastriji. In fact when India had not yet recovered from the shock of his loss, it was stunned once again by the passing of most revered and beloved Sadhu T. L. Vaswaniji Maharaj at Poona on the 16th January. With deep regret I received the news. During my visit to Poona in the third week of December, 1964, I had the most blessed occasion and the unique opportunity of placing my head at the holy feet of our beloved and worshipful Dadaji—Sadhu Vaswaniji Maharaj. I vividly recollect how I was filled with happiness at the time and considered myself most sanctified by his holy Darshan and the warm embrace of Divine Love in which he graciously enfolded this servant. Now that has become a thing of the past, he will yet always remain as an evergreen memory and refreshing inspiration. Very recently, on the 4th January, 1966, I visited the St. Mira School at Poona, founded by Revered Dadaji and had the privilege of addressing the students there. Revered Dadaji's life was devoted to the propagation of the spiritual message, and though he was a devoted scholar of the scriptures of all faiths, his writings were simple and forthright. He believed in aiming his message to the heart of his reader rather than his head. He was a great Bhakta and had fittingly named one of his journals and many educational institutions after the celebrated Bhakta Mira. Gentleness personified, his very presence filled the atmosphere with love. Though he is no more among us physically, he is present everywhere in spirit to guide and inspire all who listen to the message of his life and work. May his loving guidance continue to lead us on the path of righteousness and Bhakti.

The Punyatithi of Sri Samartha Guru Ramdas falls on 14th of this month. A saint and a realised soul of a very high order, he was deeply distressed with the historical conditions of the

motherland of that time. He placed his wisdom and statesmanship at the disposal of Shivaji. Shivaji Maharaj was so devoted to him that at the climax of his career and the heyday of his empire he laid his entire kingdom at the feet of his Guru and thereafter acted only in the capacity of his minister. He even replaced his royal standard by a saffron flag. Living in close proximity of a great empire-builder, Samarth Ramdas remained steadfastly rooted in his renunciation and devotion to Lord Ram. Ram Nam were his life. His Punyatithi is a day for us to rededicate ourselves to duty and devotion.

Beloved Aspirants: This month also marks that great festival and fast, Mahasivaratri on the 18th. This at once reminds me of the hungry and tired hunter of the Sivaratri Vrata Katha, who even when he unwittingly performs the Vrata attains Lord Siva's grace. It is a beautiful poignant tale, which all of us know. This allegorical tale teaches us that Jiva (the hunter) with great effort pursues sense objects, but thwarted in this quest of the unreal falls asleep, that is, turns away from them and fasts (shuns sensuality) and wakes up to realise that he is in the midst of the forest—darkness of ignorance. He then climbs the tree of knowledge and keeps vigil against falling a prey again to his senses. He uninterruptedly performs the Puja of Lord Siva and attains unity with Him. This points the way to the life of a Sadhak aiming at God-realisation. Let the lives of you all follow this pattern; may you all reach your goal of God-realisation; let all observe this great Vrata in its true spirit and invoke the grace of Gauri and Shankar.

*Om Namah Sivaya
Om Namah Sivanandaya
God Bless you all.
With regards, Prem and Om,*

1st February, 1966

Yours, in Gurudev

Swami Chidananda

Sivanandashram Letter No. XXVI

BE A HERO IN THE BATTLE OF LIFE

Beloved Immortal Atman!
Blessed Seeker After TRUTH!

Om Namo Narayanaya! Salutations in the holy name of worshipful Master Sivananda. I send you my greetings for the joyous Holi, the festival of Spring, the bright season of flowers, when the breeze comes to you filled with the fragrance of blossoms, and the sky is radiant with a warm brightness, after the chilly dullness of cold winter. May the fresh breeze of the Lord's Divine Grace waft Peace, Joy and Universal Love into your heart and lift up your life into a higher realm of spiritual vision and beauty. May this festival of Holi not only mean joy and brightness to you but may it also bring Purity and Holiness into thy life. Spring connotes the springing up into activity of fresh life impulses after a period of dormancy and inactivity. So too may it be in thy own life.

Blessed Sadhak. Let the new season bring into your life fresh enthusiasm, new aspiration and vigorous quest after Dharma and Divine Realization. I wish you a new awakening and a new vision and new conquests and victories in the inner realm of the spirit. May God bestow upon you great achievement in self-culture, Yoga Sadhana and integral spiritual life.

Glory be to Gurudev Sivananda! Glory be to Divine Life of Yoga Vedanta! This servant had the holy privilege and joy of serving spiritual aspirants and Gurudev's work during this past one month and fifteen days through the entire month of January and up to the middle of February. On the morning of 17th February (Thursday) I arrived back at the Ashram and received the loving blessings and kind welcome of the gracious Guru Bandhus at the Ashram. Then we went directly from the road up to the sacred Samadhi shrine of Gurudev and worshiped here, as it was the day of the special weekly worship, being Thursday.

The next day, the Holy Mahashivaratri day the all night worship and vigil at the temple of the Lord of Universe (Viswanath) commenced at 8 p.m. This servant took bath at 10 p. m. and joined the worship at the temple where he offered Puja to Bhagwan Viswanath with Abhisheka, Archana, etc. on behalf of you and prayed for and invoked the lord's Divine Grace upon you for your health, happiness, welfare and highest spiritual Blessedness and Divine Peace and Bliss. The Ashramites and numerous visiting devotees all chanted Kirtan of Lord's Divine Name, prayed and worshipped at the Temple that night upto the Brahma-Muhurta the next dawn at 4.30 a.m. It was indeed an inspiring holy night, solemn and yet filled with fervour.

On the 20th this servant had the unique blessedness of going on foot to the holy shrine of Nilakanth Mahadev, seven miles from the Ashram, on the other side of Ganga, across the majestic Manikoot Pravat. Dr. Sivananda-Adhvaryoo and family, who had come to Ashram specially for the Mahasivaratri function, expressed a desire to make this short but strenuous Yatra, and so went in a party of ten persons through the forest, up steep mountain footpaths to this ancient temple, situated in the heart of the hills, a mile below the temple of Bhuvaneshwari. It was a chill winter day and night we spent there offering worship to Bhagwan Nilakanth Mahadev under a towering ancient Peepul tree. Returning to the Ashram on 21st evening Adhvaryooji left the next day, and I found myself in the midst of much work, accumulated during my month-and-a-half's absence.

I want to avail this page to express and convey my many thanks to all of you who worked so wholeheartedly in arranging the various programmes during my recent tour through Poona, Hyderabad, Vijayawada, Enkatagiri Town, Kothapalam, Gudivada, Chevendrapalayam, Tanuku, Undrajavaram, Relangi, Kovvur, Chodavaram, Berhampur, Chatrapur, Khallikote, Khurda Road, Puri, Cuttack, Bhuvaneswar, Calcutta and Lucknow. My grateful thanks to the wonderful work done by the organiser of the two conferences at Vijayawada (A.P.) and Jagannath Puri (Orissa) and the devotees headed by Sri Venugopal Reddy Garu at Kothapalam. They have all shown rare devotion to Gurudev and his Spiritual mission of Divine Life and have worked with the noble spirit of dedication and selflessness. It is indeed a blessing to have such Guru-Bandhus and devotees sincerely eager to serve their Holy Master's cause. God shower His Grace upon you all.

During this tour I availed the opportunity to visit and pay my homage to the following holy places:

The sacred Samadhi of the late Holiness MALAYALA SWAMIJI MAHARAJ at Vyasashram, Yerpedu, Srikalahasthisvar Bhagwan of Kalahasthi the renowned Deity Who revealed Himself to the wonderful devotee Kannappah Nayanaar, the sacred Samadhi of Beloved SWAMI RAMDAS (PAPA) of Kanhangad where I also sanctified myself by the holy Darshan of Mother KRISHNA BAI MATAJI, the Darshan of the well-known Vdanti saint of Andhra-Pradesh SWAMI PRANAVANANDAI MAHARAJ of Pranav Ashram at Gudivada, Lord SRI JAGANNATH (in whose blessed presence I remembered you all), Divine Mother KALI of DAKSHINESWAR, the sacred Samadhis of SWAMI VIVEKANANDA, BRAHMANANDA, Sri SRI MA (The HOLY MOTHER) and the shrine of Bhagwan Sri SRI RAMAKRISHNA DEV at Belur Math, where I had Darshan of his Holiness Sri SWAMI VEERESHWARANANDA MAHARAJ, the Ramakrishna Institute of Culture where I had Darshan of Pujya Shri Swami Ranganathananda Maharaj and the beautiful new temple of VAIKUNTHANATH also in Calcutta. Then on my way back to Rishikesh this servant went to meet Paramahansa Swami Satyanandaji at his Bihar School of Yoga at Monghyr (Bihar) and bowed adoration before the Akhand-Jyoti lit in memory of Gurudev in the main assembly hall of the School, then to sacred Varanasi where I met Swami Nijabodha Maharaj, an elder Guru-bhai after more than 15 years and Sri Shridhar Bhatt Maharaj, the Incharge of the Sringeri Sankara Mutt in Kashi. While in holy Kashi this servant worshipped Lord Vishweswar to heart's content one day invoking His Grace upon each and every one of you.

On the day of Holi Poornima is the birthday anniversary of the great Gauranga Mahaprabhu, the supreme devotee of the Lord. Sri Krishna Chaitanya was Bhakti incarnate and gave new life in this Kali-Yuga to practice of the Lord's divine NAME and to SAMKIRTAN YOGA. He called upon man in this Iron Age to live a life of true humility renouncing pride, arrogance, haughtiness and egoism, to bear with utmost fortitude all vicissitudes in life. Shun honour and renown but ever give respect to everyone without distinction and to ceaselessly worship the Lord with whole hearted devotion. With courage and determination conquer this demon Ahankara (egoism) and be humble, be a hero in the battle of life and bear afflictions boldly and with endurance know that Divinity resides within all beings and therefore honour all beings and everywhere, at all times, in all conditions ever remember, love and worship the Supreme Being with unbroken devotion and faith. Become divine and attain the highest bliss, peace, and felicity here and now. Now repeat for a while the MAHA-MANTRA which Gauranga Mahaprabhu propagated into the four corners of the land.

“Hare Rama Hare Rama Rama Hare Hare
Hare Krishna Hare Krishna Krishna Krishna Hare Hare”

Thus auspicious by the life when the New Year commences this month with the advent of Chaitra Sukla Paksha when Phalgun ends presently. God bless you.

With my best regards, Prem, Pranams.

Sivanandashram
1st March 1966.

Yours in Sri Gurudev
—Swami Chidananda

Sivanandashram Letter No. XXVII

PROPOSED PILGRIMAGE FROM HIMALAYA TO MALAYA

Blissful Immortal Atman,
Beloved Seeker After Truth,

Om Namo Narayanaya. Greetings in the name of Swami Sivananda.

This month, through the will of the Lord and worshipful Gurudev's mysterious hand, this servant of his has to visit Malaysia. This journey is to me in the nature of a pilgrimage rather than a spiritual tour because Malaya is sacred to us as a land where Sadgurudev in his poorvashram toiled incessantly as Dr. Kuppuswamy to bring solace and relief to the suffering people about a half century ago. It is the land wherein through fiery Karma Yoga, dynamic selfless service he attained purity of heart, Viveka, Vichara and keen aspiration for God-realisation. It is the country of his great renunciation. From Malaya he came to Himalaya. Singapore Joharbaru, Penang, Seremban are all names familiar to us due to their frequent mention by Gurudev in answer to our question regarding to that wonderful period of his life. Wonderful because it was rich with radiance of his exuberant personality, his Universal Fellowship, his Spontaneous charity, his magnanimity and lofty humanitarianism. It is replete with thrilling incidents of his generosity, love and rare equal vision. The Capital of Malaysia is Kuala Lumpur, and there is a Centre of our Divine Life Society in the city and a Sivanandashram at its outskirts near Batu Caves at the foot of a mountain. In this Ashram, the Society members are installing a life-size marble statue of worshipful Gurudev Sivanandaji unto a special altar in their main Prayer Hall. The auspicious moment for it is on 9th April and I have been invited to preside over this unique function.

I shall be leaving Delhi on Tuesday the 5th April to arrive the same evening at Kuala Lumpur. The next three days will be spent in public engagements. On the 9th the consecration will be solemnised in the forenoon according to traditional ritual and colourful ceremony. In the afternoon will be a great public gathering in which peoples of all faiths will participate and bless the new Prayer Hall. Sri Swami Pranavanandaji (formerly Sri Ponniah) is back to Kuala Lumpur, after a successful tour of South India and Ceylon, awaiting arrival of this servant on 5th evening. They have arranged for a tour through important cities of Malaysia after finishing the Kuala Lumpur programme in the second week. I have written and requested the organisers to try and locate the various spots connected with Gurudev's residence and work while he was in Malaya during the first quarter of this present century. I wonder if there are also persons alive who have met him there during the period, prior to his renunciation and journey to Himalaya to take up Sannyasa life? May be there are and I shall be able to meet them. If I do I shall certainly tell you about them when I write next.

After this pilgrimage to this Theatre of Gurudev's Seva, Karma Yoga and Tyaga, I shall next be proceeding to Hong Kong for a ten-day-programme at the very pressing request of numerous Hong Kong devotees. There is an excellent Yoga Centre running there, originally established by Yogi-Raj Sri Swami Vishnudevanandaji Maharaj, which is now successfully doing excellent Yoga work in Canada and the U.S.A. This Yoga School having numerous enthusiastic students is actually sponsoring my visit to Hong Kong. I shall tell you something about their

activities after seeing them, when I return to India in the month of May. I think I shall be back in the Ashram by the end of the third week of May.

I must tender my apology to some of the foreign Centres of the D.L.S for disappointing them on the present account. They seem to have been given the impression that I am soon to take a tour round the world. So many of them wrote very eagerly and asked for more details. I had to tell them all that actually I never had any plan for a world tour at this time. My trip abroad was mainly to attend the Kuala Lumpur functions in Malaysia and to tour that country and Hong Kong. This I had to agree to upon the loving insistence of the Divine Life Organisers of these two places. However, to obtain endorsement upon the Passport for any future use, certain other Centres also were informed about my travel and they had sent out invitations to me under the impression and hope that I would immediately undertake a visit to their countries too. They will kindly pardon this unintentional false hope given to them.

The Ashram has just now celebrated the holy Sri Ramanavami festival. Special prayer have been offered for all of you and I remembered all members and devotees generally and specially Sri Hiralal Mehta, a noble devotee and solicitor of Bombay and his family, the pious Srimati Saraswati Mehta, Hemlata Mehta, Ajit Mehta and others who are the donors of Bhagwan Sri Ramachandra, Mother Sita, Sri Lakshmana and Hanumanji now showering their grace from the holy Mandir at the Ashram. May Lord Rama grant Sri Hiralalji and his entire pious family health, long life, peace, bliss, prosperity and immortality.

This holy Ashram of Gurudev is now looking forward to the summer season with its vacation visitors and the opening of Badrinath and Kedarnath Yatra with their stream of Pilgrims from all parts of India. This year the Badri Yatra has been rendered so easy due to extension of motor road that Badrinath is now only two days distance from Rishikesh. Times are changing. Everything is moving fast, too. Blessed seekers? May you, too, proceed vigorously on the path and rapidly reach the goal of Kaivalya Moksha. Move forward steadily and attain the Supreme Divine experience.

I draw your attention to the special article in this month's Divine Life Magazine regarding the state of the Divine Life Organisation and its present work since the Maha Samadhi of Sadgurudev in 1963. This year Guru Poornima falls on 2/3 July. I welcome all of you for the holy event. Such of those who are unable to attend the ten-day-function may carry out a similar programme of ten-day-Sadhana from 3rd to 12th at their own home or in their centre Divine Life Society. May God bless you. With regards, Prem Om,

Yours in Gurudev

April, 1966

Swami Chidananda

Sivanandashram Letter No. XXVIII

‘OM’

**THE MALAYASIANS’ PROFOUND DEVOTION TO
GURUDEVA’S MISSION**

Blissful Immortal Atman,
Beloved Seeker After Truth,

Om Namō Narayanaya. Salutations in the name of worshipful Gurudev Sivananda. Though this letter of mine bears the title ‘Sivanandashram Letter’, I am writing it to you all from the far-off Crown Colony of Hong Kong. A large group of ardent devotees of Revered Gurudev, who have made their homes here, and who with His Grace and blessing are the leaders of both the spiritual and temporal life of this beautiful and thriving colony, have by their kind and loving invitation enabled this servant to visit this place. I reached here in the afternoon of the 27th of April and have been here for three days.

According to my programme about which I had written in my letter in the last issue of ‘Wisdom Light’, I came here after a busy, extremely rewarding three weeks in Malaysia. I would like to take this opportunity of telling you briefly about some of the activities in Malaysia. This humble servant was overwhelmed by the gracious display of devotion and affection for Revered Gurudev that was shown by the members of Malaysia Branch of the Divine Life Society and the public of Kuala Lumpur. In the public meeting on the 7th April the humble agent of Gurudev was showered with the affection and devotion that could come to him only through Gurudev’s Grace. The insisting love of the Malaysian devotees, led by His Holiness Sri Swami Pranavanandaji Maharaj, had brought me to Kuala Lumpur for the main purpose of officiating at the opening ceremony of the new Ashram building and unveiling the life-size marble statue of Revered Gurudevji on a special Pedestal at Batu Caves near the city. 9th April was the day on which a grand meeting was held under the Chairmanship of the Hon’ble Dato V. T. Sambanthan, P.M.N., Minister of Works, Posts and Telecommunications in the Malaysian Government. After the opening ceremonies, which were performed by this sevak, Sri Swami Pranavanandaji, the Chief High Priest of Malaysia (Buddhist), the Bishop of Kuala Lumpur, the President of Singapore Ramakrishna Mission, as also Mohammedan and Sikh leaders of the community spoke highly about the mission of Gurudev and the importance of Divine Life. This servant spoke on “The Secret of Right Worship and God-Vision.” It was a soul-stirring and elevating experience. I remembered all of you when offering my prayers to Revered Gurudev’s image and on behalf of Divine Life members all over the world. I prayed for his illuminating light to guide our halting and faltering steps towards spiritual perfection.

The rest of my time in Malaysia has taken up by a series of lecture meetings in Kuala Lumpur and other parts of the country. At all stations, this humble servant was drenched with the spontaneous affection of Gurudev’s devotees. Before coming here it was my ardent desire to see some persons who knew Revered Gurudev during his stay here. The desire has been amply fulfilled and I have been fortunate in meeting persons who had known Swamiji Maharaj, while he was here between 1913 to 1923. For want of space and time, I am obliged to differ dilating on this phase of

my tour to a subsequent letter. I would like to end this one by thanking here all the principal persons who took a leading part in organising this visit to Malaysia. I would like to name them and render my thanks to them individually, but for fear of omitting important names in a hurry, I end this letter by thanking all those, who, by their active and sincere efforts, have helped to make the tour of this humble servant a very instructive and memorable experience for him.

During this month of May would be celebrated the Narasimha Jayanti on the 3rd, the Buddha Jayanti on the 4th and Ganga Dussera on the 29th. These dates mark the occasions on which Lord's Supreme race manifested itself in some way or the other on behalf of the devotee. Elsewhere in this issue, would be features high-lighting the significance of these manifestations. True to our hoary tradition, these narrations bespeak the unfailing nature of Divine Grace and its constant availability to those who seek it. Unwavering devotion of Prahlada, selfless search of Truth of Bhagwan Tathagata and compassionate efforts for the liberation of the ancestors by Bhagiratha are rewarded by this Grace. It is my constant prayer to the Almighty that He similarly Grace the efforts of you all.

May God and Gurudev shower their blessings on you all.

With regards, Prem and Om,
Yours, in Gurudev.
—Swami Chidananda

May, 1966

Sivanandashram Letter No. XXIX

THANKS AND DEEP APPRECIATIONS TO SEEKERS OF MALAYSIA AND HONG KONG

Blissful Immortal Atman!
Beloved Seeker after Truth,

Om Namo Narayanaya. Salutations and Greetings in the holy name of Gurudev Sivananda! May the grace of the Divine be upon one and all of you! I send you my loving good wishes from the sacred abode of Gurudev by the holy Ganges once again after an absence of one month and a half from headquarters.

On Sunday, the 22nd May I arrived back at Sri Gurudev's Ashram a little before sunset in the evening of a very warm day. My heart was filled with joy by the loving welcome extended by the many Guru-bandhus who cherish a gracious regard toward this servant of Gurudev and His institution and its work. Though fatigued by much journeying yet I was not unwilling to climb up with them all to the holy Samadhi Shrine of our worshipful Master and offer my homage there as also at the Sri Vishwanath Mandir. We then went over to the Bhajan Hall where your servant spoke to the assembled Ashramites and visitors and conveyed to them all the love, regards and greetings of their fellow-seekers in Malaysia and Hong Kong and South India, (Karnataka). They were also told about the wonderful devotion of the seekers and spiritual aspirants of Malaya have for Gurudev Swami Sivananda and His noble spiritual work and His Divine Life Message. The inspiration of

speaking to people fully receptive to your message was also related and I spoke to them also about the perseverance of the Hong Kong D.L.S. Yoga Institute group in keeping up the Yoga activities initiated there by His Holiness Swami Vishnudevanandaji Yogiraj nearly nine years ago in 1957. The Chinese students of Swami Vishnu Ji have now become very excellent instructors, many of them and are conducting regular Yoga classes in different parts of the city with great earnestness and tenacity. An admirable feature of their Yoga activities is their unfailing regularity over these past nine years. I have been extremely pleased with their work. They have acquired the spirit of service to a considerable degree thanks to the influence of Swami Vishnudevananda, their teacher.

I am making this letter brief, as the travel has tired me somewhat physically and the summer heat has been fully turned on this week with 111 degree F. in the shade. Caught between the two hillsides on north and south, this tiny valley is seared with burning hot winds during the day and through a good part of the evening and early night. The ice cold Ganges is the sole saving grace in this place at this time of the year. A last bath at 10 p.m., before bedtime relieves the body of the heat of the daytime. Leaving Hong Kong on the evening of Tuesday, 10th May, I entered India via Calcutta and landed at Bombay airport at midnight. Friends of the Bombay Divine Life Centre had graciously denied themselves sleep and turned up at the Airport to receive me. After the usual formal delays inevitable in re-entry, we reached residence a couple of hours after midnight as the flight also was about an hour late on that day. Two days, comparatively quiet ones at Bombay, with only an evening Satsang each day, I left for Bangalore on the 13th May and arrived there in the afternoon. Upon arrival I had the good fortune of having the holy Darshan of a large number of devotees and Sadhaks who had all come to Bangalore for the forthcoming D.L.S. Conference to take place on the morrow (14th May). Sri T.M. Sreenivasan, the Convener was there to meet this Swami upon arrival as also veterans like V.L. Nagarajan, Balu and others.

The three-day Conference was a good success and was inaugurated by His Holiness the Jagadguru Sankaracharya of the Sharada Peetha of Dwaraka in Western India and addressed by eminent speakers like Sri R.R. Divakar, Mir Iqbal Hussein, Swami Poornananda Teertha Maharaj, Sri Y. Ramachand, Smt. Grace Tucker, G.V. Hallikere, G. Venkatasubbiah, M.P.L. Sastri Ji, the Hon. Dr. K.L. Shrimali Ji, H.H. Radhakrishna Swami and others. The Upanishad Chanting by Kumaris Jayashree, Surekha and Shanta was most thrilling indeed. I wish these gifted children will keep on progressing along this line. It seems they are from the Malleswaram Divine Life group. Congratulations.

The conveners of this first All-Karnataka Divine Life Conference deserve our special congratulations and thanks also for bringing out a very nice and valuable Souvenir which was released during the very first day of the Conference. Well done!

While at Bangalore I took the opportunity of visiting and paying my respectful homage to the renowned saint His Holiness SWAMI ANAND ASHRAM MAHARAJ, Chitrapur Mutt, the religious head of the Saraswat community as he happened to be camping at Bangalore at the time. Gurudev held him in much regard. I also had the happiness of meeting my old friend Sri Swami Sureshanandaji of the Ramakrishna Mutt at Basavangudi, who kindly took me to their beautiful Ashram one evening when I was able to bow down in reverence before Sri Sri Ramakrishna Dev at the shrine just at the evening Arati time. Immediately after the Conference a trip was undertaken to Tirukoyilur to visit the well-known Jnanananda Tapovanam, the holy Ashram of the renowned

venerable saint and Siddha-Yogi Pujya Sri SWAMI JNANANANDA GIRIJI HAHARAJ. On our way back on the morning of the 17th we stopped at the holy Sri RAMANASHRAM in Tiruvannamalai to adore in silence the Great Sage of Arunachala whose radiant Presence pervades that Ashram at the foot of sacred Arunachala Hill. It was a hot midday hour, yet Sri Venkataramanji, the President in-charge, very graciously welcomed this servant and was extremely hospitable and courteous. As I wished to see some literature of the Ashram he insisted upon my receiving the books I asked for as a gift saying, "This is Bhagavan's Prasad. You must receive it." I remember this gesture with sincere appreciation.

After return and a farewell Satsang gathering at the holy Ram Mandir of Malleswaram, we left for Bellary for a programme there on the 18th May. Back at Bangalore on the next day, the 19th I had the great joy of visiting the new PANDURANGA TEMPLE being built by Keertana Kesari Dasaratna Sri Bhadrhiri Kesavadasji at Purandharapura (Rajajinagar) and worshipping the beloved Lord Vitthala present therein. The kindness of the Bhakta Mandali there was great indeed! Then, just before leaving for Bombay at midday there was a final Satsanga at the house of the devotee Sri Venkatachalapathy at Nandidurg extension where the D.L.S. members from Tumkur had a pair of silver Guru-Charanas consecrated with prayers and special chanting of the Lord's Name, for being taken and kept for worship at Tumkur. Sri SWAMI DEVANANDAJI, who had been valuably helping me together with Swami Raghunathanandaji during my entire stay at Bangalore for the Conference, took leave of me at the airport to take his train for Venkatagiri Town where he went to represent Sri Gurudev and my self at the All-India D.L. Conference there. Arriving at Bombay the same afternoon this Sevak spent a very quiet evening by the seaside at Juhu at sunset. That day, 19th May happened to be a very significant anniversary for me because it was upon this very day full twenty-three years ago that I had for the first time in my life, the sanctifying Darshan of the lotus-feet of Satguru Bhagavan Sivananda Dev at Ananda Kutir by the holy Ganges bank when the evening twilight was fading away on 19th May 1943. We had a little Kirtan when the hour arrived and returned to Pramod Villa at Khar at about 8.30 p.m. I spent that night at the home of Sri G.V. Parameswaranji of Bombay D.L.S and left the next morning for Delhi en route Ashram which, as mentioned already, was reached on Sunday 22nd May after a day's break at Hardwar for Darshan of Goddess Mansa Devi and Mother Chandi Devi on the mountain top across the Ganga.

From here, Gurudev's holy abode, I wish to say my thanks and deep appreciations to all the good friends and seekers of Malaysia and Hong Kong who have shown me and my helper Devendar Bhargav so much kindness, hospitality and gracious care during our entire tour in their country during the six weeks from 5th April to 10th May. I shall be writing to all these wonderful people of the different centres such as Kuala Lumpur, Raub, Seremban, Ipoh, Penang, Prai, Singapore, Johore Baru, Kluang, Sungai Siput, Kuala Kangsar, Taiping and Hong Kong and Kowloon. Besides H.H. Sri Swami Pranavanandaji, Sri Thuraiappahji Maharaj, Sri Sivananda Boteju and Sri Arunachalam (whose loving kindness and help I have no adequate words to express). I also remember with special affection such persons as Sri Karthigesu of Kampong Attap, K.L., Sri Chen Yoke Chen, Sri Rasaratnam and family, Tan Sri Dato V.T. Sambandan and the gracious Datin who are both great devotees of Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa Deva and Sri Ma Sarada Devi, Mr. and Mrs. T. Mahesan of the Chinmaya Mission, Mrs. Ariyanayagam of Raub, Krishna Pillay of Raub, the revered Dr. C.H. Yeang of Penang, Sri Ramanujam of Singapore, Dr. Vasudevan of Kluang, Sri M.S. Kandiah of Ipoh, Sardar Sri Kripal Singh Gill of D.L., Sri Lall of K.L., Sri N. Thambidurai of Seremban (who arranged for our Port Dickson Retreat), Sri S. Narayanan and Sri S.

Sivagnanam of Seremban, Mrs. R. Senan of Penang, Sri Linga Nathan of Radio Malaysia who kindly came and interviewed me at Batu Caves Sivanandashram. I remember also the very gracious hospitality and kindness of His Holiness Sri Swami Siddhatmanandaji Maharaj of the Ramakrishna Mission Ashram at Singapore who invited me for the blessed birthday anniversary of Bhagavan Ramakrishna Dev and Swami Vivekananda celebrated at their Ashram on 23rd April when I also had the holy pleasure of meeting H.H. Sri Swami Chidatmanandaji Maharaj of the Mayavati Advaita Ashram in the Himalayas. The latter Swamiji was on a visit to Singapore at that time.

At Hong Kong great has been the kindness and Seva of Sri Khanchand H. Moorjaniji, Sri Virumalji, Sri Uttam Chand, Sri J. K. ("Raja" of Gurudev), Mrs. Thelma Heitmeyer v.c. of the Yoga Institute, D.L.S., Mr. Li Che-Kong, Yogiraj Au-Yeung Hao-Man, Mr. Lo Wing-Lok, Mr. Wong Kang-Sai, Mr. Wong Ping Lai and others. Mr. Heitmeyer though busy was yet graciously helpful many a time. My meeting with the most venerable Sri Dinshaw Paowalla alias RAMDAS and mother Banu Ruttonjee was memorable and I shall ever cherish it in my memory. The authorities of the Hindu Association and Temple where I stayed merit my grateful thanks. May God bless them all! My regards to you, dear Reader.

God Grace you too! I take leave of you until the first week of next month, July, when we shall be observing the most sacred Sri GURU PURNIMA DAY. Prepare for it with more Japa of your Guru Mantra and a Mandala of Sadhana from now up till the Third Anniversary of the Holy Mahasamadhi day of Gurudev. May His benedictions ever be upon you!

Yours in Gurudev,

1st June, 1966

—Swami Chidananda

Sivanandashram Letter No. XXX

MONTEVIDEO—STRONG HOLD OF GURUDEVA'S MISSION

Blissful Immortal Atman!
Beloved Seeker after Truth!

Om Namō Narayanaya. Salutations and greetings in the holy name of Gurudev Sivananda. May the grace of the Divine be upon you. As I write this letter I hear the rushing waters of the Ganges and see the clouds upon the mountain top and the entire mountains' side green with fresh forest foliage, for the monsoon rains are upon us now. The intense heat of the last few weeks has now given place to heavy downpour of rains and the Ganges is in flood. The earth and the forest that had been parched and dried up have now become soaked and green everywhere. The Badri-Kedar Yatra has been in full swing and a record number of pilgrims have travelled this year for the holy Darshan in these sacred shrines. It is a great joy to note that our country's beloved Prime Minister Srimati Indira Gandhiji has also availed herself of an opportunity of visiting the Holy Badrikashrama Punyakshetra and obtained the blessed Darshan of Bhagawan Narayana. India is a land of faith and devotion. Religion is our very life. It is but fit and proper that the leaders of people

should themselves set the right example of piety, righteousness, love of God and service of mankind.

Today the world is facing hard times. An uncertain future seems to loom ahead of the nation. India is the part of this world situation and thus we too are facing numerous problems. Want, scarcity, near-famine condition, economic plugs present a complex situation for both people as well as their administrator to deal with. Each and every individual must participate in resolving it and everyone must help in easing the pressure by voluntary self-denials and self-imposed austerity cheerfully adopted with spiritual courage. All these things will pass away by and by. Firm trust in God, complete reliance in His Divine Name and unremitting fulfilment of Dharma will bring you safe through all crises and victories in all situations. God is the Supreme Director of this Universe. He is the Invisible Inner Controller of all things. He listens even to the footfall of an ant. He repairs the damage of even the wing of a little fly. Have faith. He is the Solver, the real Solver of all problems. He Himself is the real solution too, to all your troubles. Know Him to be thus and the burden will be lifted from your shoulders.

Strive with calmness and courage to overcome all adversities. Repose thy faith in God. To make effort is man's duty. Results are safe in Divine hands. Wisdom and Justice prevail in Divine dispensation. Earnestly act with optimism and good cheer. Rely on God and do the needful. Where there is distress, bring relief, where there is despair, strive to infuse hope. Where there is want, give generously. Where there is famine, feed the hungry. Where there is disease, bring aid to heal and restore health. Let every man be such a helper and bringer of relief in the name of God. Thus may the whole nation become firmly based upon self-help and spontaneous selfless service. This is the need of the hour.

This month commences with an extremely solemn and auspicious day, namely the day of Vyasapuja, also known as Guru Purnima, This is a day specially observed during each year as a day of grateful adoration of the great Masters of Wisdom, all the Brahma-Vidya Gurus of most ancient times as well as of today. This is an effective and powerful reminder to you all that your greatest wealth and treasure in life is the Wisdom teaching of these illumined spiritual Masters. For, it is the nectar of their Divine teachings alone which can destroy death and suffering and bestow upon you immortality. This alone can make you eternally free. This Jnana is therefore your most precious heritage. The unbroken lines of spiritual teachers or Gurus have handed down these teachings through each succeeding generation and thus kept alive radiant fire of living Wisdom that burns away the dross of worldliness and makes man Divine. To them, we owe the deepest debt of gratitude. The sacred Gurupurnima day is thus a glorious day set apart for Guru-worship so as to enable us to express our gratitude, reverence, love and adorations to the great Masters of humanity, through solemn worship and homage. Guru Puja is offered on this full-moon day of the month of Ashadha throughout the length and breadth of our blessed mother country. From the Himalayas to Cape Comorin this land will be filled with fervour of Gurubhakti, the fragrance of humble discipleship and thrilled with the vibrations of worship, glorification and dedication. You will be inspired by the lives and the lofty teachings of the great Gurus of all times. Shri Vedavyasa Bhagawan is adored everywhere as the great father of our country's culture. He is one of the brilliant lights upon the spiritual firmament of Bharatavarsha. Let us also adore upon this day Lord Jesus, Zoroaster, Moses, Mahavira, Buddha, Krishna, Mohammed, Nanak and the great Acharyas.

May the choicest blessings of all the great saints of ancient times as well as present modern times be upon you all. Be guided by their Divine teachings, lead a pure life and attain blessedness.

As you all know this year the Guru Purnima falls on the 2nd July and the holy Anniversary of Gurudev's Mahasamadhi on the 12th July. This ten-day period is a time of Sadhana and total spiritual renewal. Observe it as such. Simplicity, austerity, earnestness and prayerfulness should mark this period. Observe Mouna or silence as long as possible during these ten days. Practise self-control. Engage in spiritual practise as much as time permits you. Here at Headquarters, Sivanandashram, simplicity will mark the entire function and due to food-scarcity conditions in the country and famine-like situation in certain areas, we have cancelled the idea of any large scale public feeding on the Aradhana day. There will be no Bhandara here but instead the Ashram is donating a sum of Rs. 1008/- in the sacred memory of Gurudev to the Prime Minister's Relief Fund. I suggest that each one of you may similarly contribute your own mite directly whatever such relief fund there is in your own state or send it to Delhi. Next to Jnana Dana, Anna Dana is verily the greatest of Yajnas in this Iron Age. Individually and collectively help the Government by all possible means in overcoming the problem of food-scarcity. Do not waste food. Be frugal. Miss a meal. Eat moderately. Learn to use non-cereal food. Fast on Ekadasi. Share what you have with others in need. May God bless you. Thus will you please Sri Gurudev.

By the time it reaches you the Aradhana functions would have commenced. The entire Ashram will be absorbed deeply in Sadhana programme. I must conclude now. However, before closing I wish to share with you a beautiful letter filled with sincere Bhava and the spirit of devotion, enthusiasm and dedication to Gurudev's spiritual teachings and His Divine Life Mission. This letter is from "Centro Sivananda de Estudios Yoga Vedanta" Del Uruguay which means, the Sivananda Centre of Yoga Vedanta Studies of Uruguay. This is our Divine Life Branch at Montevideo, capital of Uruguay in South America. They are an exceptional group of very earnest Spiritual seekers with genuine aspirations and devotion to the ideal of God-realization. They are one of our best groups abroad and are working in a very systematic way with well organised regular activities. The letter has been singed by 17 of the Sadhakas of the Centre (There was no more space for further signatures!)

Montevideo, May 21, 1966.

H.H. Sri Swami Chidanandaji Maharaj,
President of the Divine Life Society,
RISHIKESH.

Revered and beloved Swamiji,

Today it is exactly five years ago that for the first time the Uruguayan ground was blessed with the touch of your holy feet.

With gratitude and devotion in the heart, we remember that on this day you started the spreading of Sri Gurudev's teachings here, planting the seed of the Uruguayan branch of the Divine Life Society, which is growing steadily; thanks to God's and the Masters' Grace, as well as to the gracious guidance of beloved Swami Shivapremanandaji.

On this occasion we reaffirm our ideal to contribute with our effort so that the glorious blessings which this Centre received may flower as a stronghold of Sri Gurudev's mission in this area.

With the best wishes for your good health and personal welfare, we are always, with Prem and Om, Yours, and here follow the many signatures. Among others I recognize the familiar signature of Roberta Dix, Lotti Dix, M. Luisa Costa, C. W. Hartschuh, H. Hartschuh, de Bouton, Ledia Pesquera etc.

Most certainly this growing plant of Uruguayan Divine Life will grow further into a towering tree spreading ITS Branches not only all over Uruguay but throughout many countries of South America where Gurudev's teachings are so much pressingly needed at this time. This servant is most gratified indeed to read the beautiful 3rd paragraph of their letter wherein they reaffirm their objective of strengthening their noble work. This indeed is a spirit which we require from each and every individual member and each and every organised branch of the Divine Life Society. What more can I say unto you all than what I have just now said, as we are gathering together to pay our reverential homage to our spiritual Master, on the holy occasion of the 3rd Anniversary of Gurudev's departure from this world of physical manifestation. As the sacred day draws near even as our beloved friends of the Uruguay Centre, May all of you also similarly reaffirm your ideals to contribute your efforts so that the glorious blessings of Gurudev's teachings and Divine Life Mission may become firmly and strongly established in the place where you, dear Reader, His devotee and representative are living. The outer expression of true love is service. Those who cherish such love unto Gurudev's feet cannot but actively serve Him through His Divine Life Institution. When you love you naturally serve whom you love. May you all rededicate yourself afresh to such love and service upon the sacred Guru Aradhana day. May Gurudev's choicest blessings shower upon you and grant you joy, peace, and immortality.

With regards, Prem and Om,

July, 1966

*Yours in Gurudev,
—Swami Chidananda*

Sivanandashram Letter No. XXXI

KALKI—AVATAR OF HOPE, FORETOLD

Blissful Immortal Atman!
Beloved Seekers after Truth,

Om Namō Narayanaya. Om Namō Bhagavate Sivanandaya!

Accept my salutations and good wishes in the holy name of Gurudev Sivananda. May the Lord's grace be upon you. I write with great joy because I have had the unique privilege of offering my devout worship on behalf of your good self and each and every individual member of the Divine Life Society, to our beloved Gurudev upon the solemn occasion of the 3rd anniversary of His

Mahasamadhi. This worship was done on the 12th of July, the sacred Punyatithi and this Aradhana Puja took about four and half hours time. It commenced at about 9 a.m. and concluded at 1.30 pm. During the sacred Abhisheka I entered the holy shrine with all of you in my mind and making a Sankalpa for Gurudev's choicest blessings, performed the worship. May joy, peace and plenty fill your life.

You know, July has been momentous month, the high lights of this eventful period has been the most holy GURU PURNIMA day, the eight-day-period of SPIRITUAL SADHANA, the Annual General Body meeting of the Divine Life Society (on 11th July, 1966), the release of the previous year's Sadhana Week Special Souvenir and to crown all of this, the auspicious and most inspiring PUNYATHITHI ARADHANA. You will see the graphic report of these sacred observances in the Ashram News in Divine Life Journal. I may state that this year's Spiritual Sadhana period has been the most satisfying and gainful one. The earnestness, the co-operation and the eager participation on the part of the numerous Sadhaks was most gratifying and I must congratulate each and every one of them for the spiritual quality and Bhav which they manifested. May they progress upon the same pattern!

One important decision that has been taken is to make available to all the members (I am referring to you, dear friends) of the Divine Life Society a substantially enlarged and improved Divine Life Magazine every month and to simultaneously raise the annual Membership Fee. One suggestion for the new figure was Rs. 6 per year. But this was reconsidered by the General Body and the enhanced Annual Fee of Rs. 5 was readily agreed upon by the meeting. This will come into effect next year from 1st January, 67. All of you will very kindly bear this in mind when you are renewing your Membership towards the close of this present year and remember to send two and a half rupees extra with the usual two and half rupees. Because henceforth five rupees will be the Annual Fee. However, the admission Fee for new members will be the same as it has been previously. I wish to draw your attention to the increased benefits you are going to derive as a member from the next year. Now please follow me.

At present you are only receiving Wisdom Light alone every month. From next year receive the monthly Divine Life Magazine also as well as Health and Long Life and the Branch Gazette too, all in one. All these you will get due to the fact of your membership alone, without having to subscribe separately for these other journals. As it is, if any one subscribes for all four journals, his aggregate payment will have to be approximately Rs. 12. But a member will get these included in his Annual Fee of Rs. 5 only. How we shall be able to do this you will just now see. It has been proposed to include the contents of these four journals in a single magazine, namely the Divine Life monthly which will consequently be considerably enlarged, thus giving place to the combined matter now appearing separately in the other three journals, i.e., Health and Long Life, Wisdom Light and Branch Gazette. The 'Divine Life' will be the sole Official Journal of the Divine Life Society. All members of the society will receive it; all the D.L.S. branches too. Though the other three journals will be stopped, yet in fact, you will continue to get all of them in and through the Divine Life Magazine. You may please look out for detailed announcement in this regard published elsewhere in this journal. The matter is being finalised at the headquarters. The enlarged monthly D.L. journal that you will get from January, 1967 onwards will be double the size of the Wisdom Light in dimension (namely 'Divine Life' size) and will contain approximately 50 pages. In terms

of your present Wisdom Light journal that you are just now reading at this moment that new journal would contain nearly 100 pages.

This year you might have seen from last month's letter, I had decided to restrict the feeling on the 12th July and confined it to the attending Sadhakas, Bhaktas and Guru Bandhus instead of a general Bhandara. Why this was done was made perfectly clear in page 200. I shall make a slight diversion here and tell you the criticism sent in by one revered reader. The worthy reader writes:

“The Sivanandashram Letter No. 30 (in the July issue of the “Wisdom Light”) gives rise to a mixed feeling of comfort and sorrow. Comfort at the idea that solemnity and simplicity will be the mark of the Aradhana Celebrations and sorrow at the foot that this great spiritual Institution has chosen to woo the Government by a donation to the Prime Minister's Relief Fund in preference to the mass-scale feeding of the poor, on the most solemn occasion of the Aradhana day..... May Gurudev guide us to better times and rational functioning in consonance with the lofty ideals of the D L. Mission. Pranams.”

I wish to thank the reader for presenting so frankly his point of view. But at the same time I must confess that I had not even the remotest idea of wooing the government or agency in what I did. This notion never entered my head and came as a surprise to me when the above mentioned letter was received here. The only idea that was present in my mind as well as the minds of my revered brother, Swamis here was the thought of poor people on the brink of starvation in areas under famine conditions. This is a fact. And actually this proposal when put before all the assembled devotees here was hailed by every one as a very proper and timely measure and the spirit in which it was done to be laudable. I have even received another letter conveying “Grateful thanks for this thoughtful gesture.” I thought I might share with you these views and opinions and just give you an idea how a self-same matter is viewed differently by different people. I might just as well draw the attention of all readers including the kind writer of the aforesaid letter to the significant fact that the alternative purpose for which a sum of money was diverted in lieu of Bhandara here was practically and identical purpose as, the Bhandara, namely feeding of poor people. Let me end this matter now. This year the Badrinath Yatra has been unprecedented with many hundreds of thousand of devout pilgrims crowding to visit the holy Himalayan Shrines of Badrinath and Kedarnath. There has been a continuous stream of pilgrims pouring into Rishikesh since April. Road has been taken right up to Badrinath township and so the bus transport brings the pilgrims very near to the temple of Lord. While this is extremely convenient to all people and saves a lot of time (today you can leave Rishikesh for Badrinath and be back at Rishikesh on the fifth day after having Darshan) yet this has taken away a good deal of the spiritual elation and inspiration that the Yatri used to get when he trekked 20 miles from Joshimutt to Badrinath. But change is the nature of things. One comes to accept it ultimately. There is a lull in the Yatra just at present due to the onset of rains last month. Torrential rains in the hills flood the Ganges and the waters rose so much last week that Shri Gurudev's Kutir which is sacred and a holy monument to countless disciples, had to be totally vacated of all things. The waves splashed water on to the verandah. However, this was a mild thing compared to the flood of September, 1963 when precisely 60 days after His passing, the holy Ganges entered the Kutir and flooded it with her waters to a height of nearly four feet.

You are having this month two Annual holidays, the Kalki Jayanti on the 21st and Sri Tulsidas Jayanti on the 22nd. Kalki Jayanti is actually the anticipation of a future advent. It makes

the date foretold in the scripture, of the birth of the tenth and final incarnation of Lord Narayana. Kalki is the irresistible Divine power manifested to annihilate the forces of darkness that have gathered volume in the Iron age. It is an Avatar of hope for all humanity weighed down and crushed under the tyranny of evil and godless wickedness. Dharma prepares man to merit the protection of this power Divine.

The sublime theme of the Sri Rama-avatara brings out in significant symbology this aforementioned process of the initial triumph of dark-Wickedness over chaste-Virtue and the ultimate vanquishing of the former by the Divine Power for the vindication of goodness and its release from the cruel thralldom under demoniacal evil. The great saint poet Sri Tulsidas has brought this truth home to millions through his Immortal, Exquisite poetic rendering the Ramacharitamansa. May the whole world work for the advent of victorious Divinity that may end the rule of Adharma and restore the kingdom of righteousness upon this world of God.

When this letter reaches you there would be approximately 30 days for the auspicious Birthday Anniversary of Sri Gurudev. This year the sacred Krishna Janmashtami falls on the 7th Sep; which means 8th September is Navami Tithi. A significant coincident indeed. For the Navami Tithi is the day of Gurudev's Mahasamadhi in the month of Shravan. So, this year the exit as well as the advent dates are both Navami. It is, as though to indicate to us that He is always present. If he left us on Navami, he has come amongst us on Navami too. True indeed is this, for though he left us in the body yet the same moment he was born in spirit within our hearts as the Immortal ideal to live for and to strive for and realise in our very life. Such a conjunction this significant occurred once twenty years ago in 1946 when 7th of September was the sacred and joyous Sri Krishna Janmashtami day. I would like to suggest to all devotees of Lord Krishna who worship Him as their Ishta Devata that they may commence a special 30 days Anushthana from 7th August to 7th Sep. of the sacred Dwadashkshari Mantra "OM NAMO BHAGAVATE VASUDEVAYA". Repeat it every day at least a minimum of 12 Malas, which means 108x12 1296 times. You may repeat more Malas like 24 or 36 daily. This would constitute a befitting, solemn preparation for observing that great annual day sacred worship. And how very significant indeed does beloved Gurudev's Birthday seem in the context of the forth-coming two holy Anniversaries of Kalki Jayanti and Tulsidas Jayanti! For Gurudev's advent and his noble life of sublime spiritual work did verily constitute this process of a determined attempt to oppose the forces of Godlessness, Adharma and wanton wickedness of the present day world and establishing the Divine Life in human society. Truly we may say that Gurudev Sivananda has been one of the foremost amongst messengers of the Divine in the 20th century, who proclaimed the Gospel of goodness and brought in a better balance between good and evil in this age that seems to be turning away from the Light. As long as the memory of such great ones is cherished actively by modern mankind there is still great hope of emerging from darkness into the light of goodness and Godliness in the not too distant future. May the hand of God help us and the Light of God guide us in working towards such a day. OM NAMO BHAGAVATB VASUDEVAYA. OM NAMO BHAGAVATE SIVANANDAYA. Beloved seekers, may God bless you and all.

With regards, Prem and Om,

August, 1966

*Yours in Sri Gurudev
—Swami Chidananda*

Sivanandashram Letter No. XXXII

SRIMAD BHAGWAD GITA AND GOSPEL OF DIVINE LIFE ARE IDENTICAL

Immortal Atma Swarupa!
Blessed Seekers of Truth!

Om Namō Narayana! Loving Pranams.

Glory to Lord Krishna and to Sri Gurudev Sivananda, the visible expressions of the Absolute Divine Reality. Salutations to you in their holy names.

Om Namō Bhagavate Vasudevaya, Om Sri Sivanandaya Namah. Upon you all, travellers upon the shining highway of Divine Life, pilgrims to the radiant Shrine of Eternal Bliss, may their Divine Love and benedictions ever shower in abundance. Be ever vigilant and ever be pressing forward towards the Grand Goal of your life. Be active in Vichara (right enquiry) and alert in Viveka (discrimination). O traveller, do not tarry on the way. O bold Sadhaka, stick to the Great Ideal at all cost and struggle bravely towards it. Every day, every minute, earnestly strive to live the perfect pure life. Divine you are. So Divinely live while life lasts.

Every thing is here evanescent. This life of yours is a two-days fair, the meeting of souls in a market place. Soon there will be end of it. What are you doing about it? All things shall perish and pass away. This is a non-eternal play of sound and colour, of names and forms. O man, seek the Eternal. Therein alone is true happiness, true peace and Bliss Divine. Time flies away. You were an infant, then grew up into youth, attained your prime and moved towards middle age. When chill winter of old age descends upon you what will you gather and take upon the journey? How much falsehood, unkindness, egoism and anger how much rudeness and dishonesty and how much impurity and selfishness has accumulated upon your head. Will these serve to make your life sweet or take you towards that sublime attainment for which God has given you this precious body and mind? Beloved friend, human life is too precious to be spent away in heedlessness and to be wasted in unwise sense pleasures that only bring suffering and misery in the end. Forgetting God and turning away from Him, do you ever think that you will succeed in attaining happiness here. A great mistake, a great folly. There is no greater blunder. This is miserable blindness. Neglect of spiritual Sadhana is the most dangerous calamity that can befall humanity. All things may be postponed but to attain happiness without adoring God, this is absolutely impossible.

This human life is too precious to be lost in delusion and ignorance. Wake up, O wake up. This world is passing through times of great uncertainty. The caprice of nature visits man with innumerable sudden and unexpected catastrophes. Floods and famines volcanoes and earthquakes, cyclones and hurricanes, wars and pestilences and accidents galore are taking their terrible tolls before your very eyes even as you watch and see your near and dear ones and cherished objects go the way of destructions. From all sides come reports of pain and death. Day by day, year after year, countless lives thus come to an end abruptly. What have you learnt? Do you alone feel secure in the midst of this inevitable process? Have you got in your shirt pocket the sealed guarantee that you alone live to be a hundred summers? Do not deceive yourself. Be wise. Live nobly. Practice virtue.

Be thou a Yogi, one who tries to attain God. Even such is the clear call of Lord Krishna, “Tasmaat Yogi Bhavaarjuna” that He gave to us through the Gita. Do Sadhana. Lead a Divine Life. Infinite blessedness will be yours right here and now.

This year the sacred Sri Krishna Jayanti (Janmashtami) closely precedes Sri Sivananda Jayanti. The auspicious Birth Anniversary of Lord Krishna falls on the 7th Sep. and the joyous Birthday of Gurudev is on 8th Sep. Thus we celebrate twin Jayanties this month. With sincerity, earnestness, keen interest and enthusiasm practice the Gospel of the Gita and the Gospel of Divine Life. They are identical. These both mean one and the same thing. Sri Gurudev Sivanandaji proclaimed anew the message of the Gita in the modern world. Divine Life is a practical exposition of the way of the Gita. What Lord Krishna did in Dwapara-Yuga, even that Sri Gurudev did in this century. The one delivered the message in Kurukshetra and the other did it in Rishikesh. Only Lord Krishna addressed it to one individual, whereas Gurudev addressed all mankind. During Lord Krishna’s lifetime only three individuals got to know of His wonderful Divine Message but through Gurudev the Divine Wisdom and spiritual message came to be the possession of countless thousands of people during His own life time. Verily, this is a marvel and a miracle that demonstrated the benign compassion of the Lord to awaken struggling humanity and draw souls towards Himself with a view to confer upon them Divine Blessedness. Thus the Lord works through His saints, sages and Godmen. They are His messengers. To follow them is to soon cross beyond all sorrow and suffering and reach the realm of eternal sunshine, perennial joy and supreme peace.

With the approach of these Jayanties my thoughts dwells again and again upon the Divine words and wisdom-teachings of Bhagavan Sri Krishna and Sadgurudev. I ponder the central message contained in their teachings “Having attained to this impermanent and joyless world, do thou worship Me”. “Those who seek to approach Me alone cross over the formidable ocean of Maya which is indeed difficult to over come”. “My Supreme Abode is that having reached which there is no return (into this mortal world)”. And Gurudev’s words declare emphatically that God-realisation is the goal of life. You should attain this through selfless service, devotion, meditation and wisdom. Virtue, worship and Vichara are the base to illumination. To unfold your Divine consciousness in and through the normal life in the world is Gurudev’s special message for this age. It is by the spiritualism of your normal daily activity through an open attitude of worshipfulness and dedication of all actions to the Lord that you achieve Yoga in the midst of apparent Vyavahara. Detach your mind from the perishable objects of this world and attach it to the lotus feet of the Lord. Purify, concentrate, meditate, realise. So says Sivananda. Let the inspiration of these Divine teachings take fresh birth within your aspiring heart upon this holy Krishna Janmashtami and Sivananda Jayanti. This month marks the 80th Birthday (79th Anniversary) of our holy Sadguru. May His spirit of renunciation, service, devotion, aspiration and dedication fill you and make your life and speed up your progress towards Light, Joy and Blessedness.

We will be pleased to know that Andhra Pradesh Divine Life Society has already announced their provincial Conference this year. The forthcoming Conference is being convened by Sri T. Venugopala Reddy Garu (President of the Hyderabad Maradipalli D. L. Branch) with the help of Sri Vijayanagam Garu and others. Sri Venugopal Maharaj is doing this in his capacity as the Organiser of the newly opened D. L. Branch of Kothapalam which is his home place. This is ten miles from Gudur station on the Grand Trunk line. Dates of the Conference are closing days of

December. A Souvenir is going to be issued on the occasion of the conference. All D. L. Branches as well as members and devotees of Sri Gurudev throughout Andhra Pradesh are requested to joyously give their fullest co-operation to the Conference. Orissa state has decided to repeat its Conference this year. This will be its second provincial Conference and is likely to take place in every way to S. C. Debo, Prof. Durlab Chakaravathy and others who will organise it. This year our enthusiastic and progressive group of Rajkot D.L.S. Centre in Gujarat have decided to convene the all Gujarat Divine Life Conference in the month of November under inspiring and memorable occasion. They have taken a promise from me to attend this blessed Conference. You will perhaps remember that Sri Sivanaada Adhvaryooji has Convened the All-India Divine Life Conference for the year 1967 at Patan in North Gujarat. News from Delhi D.L. Society brings the welcome information that the construction work of the Sivananda Satsang Bhavan has at last been taken up by Sri Swami Sivananda Cultural Association which coordinated the activities of all the Delhi Divine Life Centres. We wish speedy progress to this construction work and early completion of it. I look forward to the day when I shall have the joy of taking part in the inaugural Satsang held under the roof of the completed Satsang Hall. May the willing co-ordination, ready generosity and enthusiastic exertion of one and all of the members of the S.S.C. Association bring about this desired consummation. Thus Gurudev's work gradually grow and moves onwards for the benefit of many and for the glory of Sanatana Dharma as well as Universal Spirituality. All Religious are one. All mankind one. All faiths lead to the common goal of humanity which is one. May you all live to proclaim this oneness through love and through service. God bless you. OM NAMO BHAGAVATE VASUDEVAAYA, OM NAMO BHAGAVATE SIVANANDYA. With regards, Prem and Om,

Yours in Sri Gurudev,

September, 1966

Swami Chidananda

Sivanandashram Letter No. XXXIII

Golden Jubilee Message

FORGET NOT THE GOAL LEAD THE DIVINE LIFE

BELOVED IMMORTAL ATMAN!

Glory be to the Divine. Salutations and prostrations at the sacred feet of Sadgurudev Sivanandaji Maharaj, the holy dust of whose feet is verily fit to be worshipped by all those who have found the spiritual guidance, sustenance and blessedness by worshipping them. The feet of the Sadguru serve as a sure boat to take the faithful across the ocean of Samsara to the other shore of freedom, bliss and peace. Worship and adorations to those feet that constitute the supreme source of highest happiness. Let me dwell in contemplation daily upon the lotus feet of the Guru, the greatest wealth and the most precious treasure in all the Universe.

On this occasion when a number of my spiritual brethren have decided to observe and celebrate Birthday Anniversary I take the opportunity to remind you all that you are verily birthless and deathless. Thou art immortal Atman, O beloved friend! Beginningless and endless changeless and eternal, thou art Existence-Knowledge-Bliss Absolute in the essential nature! The Self is unborn, eternal, permanent and ageless and dwells radiantly as the imperishable reality within this perishable body. Thus declares the blessed Lord in the great Universal scripture, the Bhagwad Gita. This grand truth of thy real nature should be remembered this day. Where comes birthday for the birthless one? Birth is of this body and if its birthday is celebrated verily, then how can it be my birthday? Am I the physical body? I am not this body. I am not this mind. Immortal Self am I. Thus teacheth Gurudev Sivananda.

I am Chidananda. Verily I am Consciousness Bliss. Chidananda-roopham! Even so art thou, blessed reader, Thou art Chidananda! Thou art Satchidananda! Thou art Eternal, Pure, Perfect, Knowledge-Bliss absolute. Remember, reflect contemplate, meditate, realise! This is thy important duty. Aspire, affirm, assert attain. Thus is indeed the best and the grandest celebration.

They have requested for a message on this "Birthday". Well, the message has just been given above. However, I shall add this more. Divine experience is attainable here only through Divine Life. Without Divine Life no Divine experience is possible. Divine Life is the foundation and the basis of all spiritual attainment and God-realisation. Divine Life means a life of truth, purity, chastity, and kindness. It implies simplicity, humble nature, selflessness and motiveless service unto all with Universal Love. Divine Life is friendliness towards all being, devout worship of Lord, constant remembrance of the Divine reality.

It means a life of Dharma and Sadachara, namely goodness, holiness and Godliness by which you attain God-realisation and supreme spiritual freedom or Kaivalya Moksha. Just as a tree cannot stand without ground to stand on and fish cannot swim without water to swim in and man cannot walk without way to walk on even so spiritual life is impossible without a substratum upon which to live it. This indispensable substratum or basis of all spiritual Sadhana, Yogabhyasa and Divine unfoldment is precisely ethical or moral life. This basis is character, good conduct, noble behaviour and virtuous life. Practise this and develop this first. God is very near to those who do it. It is not the number of Pradakshinas round the temple that you do or the number of Malas that you turn or even the coconuts that you break, that are ultimately pleasing the Lord but it is your pure thoughts, sublime sentiments and noble good deeds that bring you closer to Him. In him lies all happiness.

Therefore, my beloved friend if you wish to attain supreme happiness and Divine bliss then lead a virtuous life and worship God regularly. Do not apply reason and logic. Do not question and argue. To be good and do good is your greatest duty. To worship God is the noblest function. This is a realm where Logic has no entry and reason is ineffective. Faith is the thing needful. Regard thyself as a servant of all. Give up pride, vanity, arrogance and egoism. Be not haughty and intolerant. Be simple. Be sweet. Be natural. Give up anger, hatred, empty pomposity and superiority. Speak truth. Forgive and forget. Be honest. Develop sense of duty. Live to bring happiness unto others. Renounce selfishness. Know that God indwells all beings. This is the teaching of all scriptures and of all saints and sages and wise people.

Be up and doing on this path. There is no time to lose. Do not waste your days and weeks. Time is precious. Years will roll away in a flash. Remember death. Earnestly try for perfection. Remember the pains of Samsara. Do not be deceived and duped by the worthless objects of this world. Remember God in Whom lie highest peace and supreme bliss. Remember the saints daily. They have shown you the way to cross beyond sorrow and pain and triumph over death and attain immortality. Constantly remember the Eternal Divine Reality. Grow in virtue. Cultivate noble good qualities. Do all your work worshipfully. Offer up every action to God. Spiritualise your entire life. So says Sivananda Gurudev. Thus reminds Chidananda. Hear this message. Take a glorious new birth in the Spirit.

Lead the Divine Life. Fill yourself with radiant Divine Consciousness. Rejoice as an illuminated being. May Grace be in abundance showered upon thee. May your days be filled with joy, joy and more Joy. Rejoice for thy name is Bliss, O Ananda! Virtue, goodness and love lead to joy, peace, and illumination. Jai Gurudev Sivananda! Glory to the Divine Life in Atman!! May peace be unto all. May all beings in this Universe be filled with happiness!!! Om.

At the feet of Gurudev,

Sept. 24, 1966

—Swami Chidananda

Sivanandashram Letter No. XXXIV

TAMASO MA JYOTIR GAMAYA

Immortal Atma Swarupa!
Blessed seekers after Truth!

Om Namō Narayana! Loving Namaskars, Greetings and goodwill to you in the name of holy Master Swami Sivananda. My prayers to the Divine Mother, whose auspicious Annual Worship (Navaratra Devi Pooja) we have concluded a week back, to shower upon you Her choicest blessings and to grant you joy, peace and Immortality. May all your days be filled with auspiciousness and may success attend all your undertakings.

Through this letter I wish you a bright and happy DIWALI, and send to you, and all, my greetings for this season of illumination. To all members and friends of Gujarat, Saurashtra, I send my best and good wishes for a very happy New Year. May this New Year be full of auspiciousness, blessedness, prosperity, success and happiness. Together with outer lamps lit by human hands, let there also shine forth the bright Lamp of Divine Life, lit by the hand of God, within the mansion of your heart. Let the supreme joy of virtue, goodness and service sweeten your days and grant you Divine happiness.

With the approach of Diwali, my thoughts are drawn to our ancient prayer “Tamaso ma Jyotir Gamaya” which expresses the central concept of our culture and constitutes the very essence

of our sublime idealism, namely a reaching out towards Light. Verily, how great indeed is the need to reinstate this concept into its lawful place in our country and its life today!

The Divine essence is symbolized by light. Its negation or rejection is darkness. Dharma or the rule of righteousness is an emanation of the Divine expressed upon the human plane. Dharma is the God-Light in man's life. When this light is denied expression, then the darkness of falsehood, selfishness, greed and hatred come to prevail. Pride, violence and hatred hold sway over affairs of men. The beauty of goodness gives place to the ugliness of vicious wickedness. From this darkness man must seek relief and realise into the Light of pure living, for sorrow and suffering, misery and degradation grow in such spiritual darkness. The darkness of Amavasya at Diwali time is insignificant before the great darkness of Godless Hedonism that is gathering around the present generation of mankind, enveloping life in its dire folds. The Light of Dharma alone can banish it. This Light has to be invoked from within you. Dharma is the radiance emanating from the soul of man, who is essentially Divine.

Every citizen of Bharata-Desa is potentially the custodian of Dharma, and as such responsible for its active evolution and dynamic manifestation. Will you fail in this duty? Or will you awake from this slumber and Light up the lamp of Dharma in your life, right now this Diwali day?

As I write these lines I am suddenly aware that the very name of this journal carries particularly appropriate significance for this occasion! This the 'Wisdom Light' that enters into the midst of darkness to banish it with its luminous message of spiritual life, Dharma and ethical idealism. The resplendent light of Gurudev's noble spiritual teachings has taken the darkness out of the life of many a soul all over the world during these past two score years. The flaming torch of Yoga, and Vedanta, of Niti and Sadachara, he has handed down to you, that you too may be a bringer of light wherever you go, by your Divine Life of Seva, Bhakti, Dhyana and Jnana. Beloved seeker, light up the bright Lamp of selflessness and service, of devotion and worship, of discipline and meditation and luminous God-awareness. May this Light of Divine Life bring relief to humanity suffering the bitterness and pain of its own thoughtlessness and Godlessness. May God speed you across this vale of this gloom and speed you on towards that Immortal Light. This is Supreme Bliss and Infinite Peace. A number of significant days of annual national observance occur within this current month, and you should give some thought to each one of them without fail. I therefore touch very briefly upon them here for your information and benefit. Advent of great men and of great days serve to bring about in us a renewed awareness of our duties and the ideals upon which our concept of duty in its manifold aspects is based.

Besides Diwali, the festival of Lamps, you have the auspicious Lakshmi PUJA (12thNov), the Govardhan and Go-puja (13th), The Skand Shashthi Puja (13th to 18th), the Yajnavalkya Jayanti (22nd), and Hari-Prabodhini Ekadashi (23rd) and Utthana Dvadshi (24th) as also Tulsi Puja (24th) and last, but not least Sri Guru Nanak Jayanti (27th). These great sacred days of deep significance sanctify this month and render it a period of reflection and meditation. Time and space permit of only brief mention of their central message to us today. And here I state them for you.

Lakshmi Puja; "Money is the root of all evil" thus say the prophets and the sacred scriptures. LAKSHMI is the GODDESS of Wealth. Why then worship this Goddess of the "root of all evil"?

Money is evil because man is wicked. Money turns good when man becomes good himself. The quality assumed by money mechanics is acquired from the nature of the use thereof. Man ennobles or corrupts money equally as money is capable of corrupting man if evil is inherent in him. Money is power potential par excellent. Use or abuse of this power decides whether it elevates or degrades society. Election time demonstrates its vile abuse. Flood and famine relief activities show its noble higher use. To present to us the right attitude towards money its sacred status is vividly brought before our gaze by revealing to us the deity presiding over this power, namely Lakshmi Devi. Annual Lakshmi Puja is the solemn occasion to relive this Bhav and to pledge yourself to handle money with reverence and humility, knowing that it is to be treated as a manifestation of Divine power given to you to elevate and ennoble yourself through its right use. It is to be used as a means of protecting Dharma and an aid of attaining Moksha. This is the lofty role of “Artha” If this is forgotten then it verily becomes “Anartha”. Viewed thus money should evoke not greed but an attitude of hallowed worshipfulness in the heart of the one who handles it with high purpose. It is verily Vishnu-Shakti.

GO-POOJA: Even today 80% of Bharatavarsha is rural in India and the nation is mainly agricultural. In spite of advent of modernism and technology, cattle still constitute the main wealth of the farmer and his family. Second to a piece of land ‘Go-dhana’ is the Indian’s Moola-dhana. To safeguard the welfare of the country’s cattle and to improve their condition is therefore a vital national service of utmost importance and very great significance. The Go-Puja day, far from being just a day of religious worship amongst pious people, should be elevated to its rightful status as a national festival of Pan-Indian significance, even as the Van-Mahotsava. Go-mata is not just a mere sentiment. It is a socio-economical fact further sanctified by a spiritual aspect. Ponder this angle of approach to this seemingly simple and even superstitious worship.

SKANDA-SHASHTHI: Skanda also known by the names Karthikeya and Subrahmanya is mentioned in the scripture as the brother of Lord Ganesha. He is the embodiment of Divine power triumphantly subduing and overcoming demonical forces. The world today is seen to be in the grip of such forces on a wide-spread scale. Human actions have assumed a dire nature in numerous countries of the world. India being no exception. Hatred, hostility, belligerence, falsehood, treachery, cunningness, subversion, destruction, violence these are indulged in with relish and avidity.

Wickedness with deliberate intent is fast becoming a normal characteristic of countless men today. To invoke Divine power is evidently only the last resort in seeking to deal with this state of affairs. This traditional six-day annual worship of Lord Skanda constitutes such an appeal to and propitiation of the darkness destroying Divine power.

YAJNAVALKYA JAYANTI: Bharatvarsha is one of the unique nations in whose culture the fundamental value is the spiritual reality and the ethical ideal that leads to the realisation of the former. The widespread ills and distress of our nation is directly the result of our having rejected this Supreme eternal value and substituted it by vain shibboleths and slogans of an empty age. Yajnavalkya, the towering man of Divine wisdom who strides across the ancient Upanishadic scene asserts with his thunderbolt authority the unassailable supremacy of these eternal values. Come, read the immortal dialogue between Yajnavalkya and Maitreyi, wherein this great sage imparts his

wondrous teachings to his aspiring wife, who seeks to know the highest value on earth. This day should inspire you to seek more of this wisdom personified in Maharshi Yajnavalkya.

PRABODHINI EKADASI, UTTHANA DWADASI AND TULSI POOJA

When the Chaturmasya period ends, its conclusion is announced by Prabodhini Ekadasi, which embodies at once a spiritual truth, as well as a message. When the Divine within man slumbers then his life becomes a tale of endless sorrow and suffering. To awaken the Divine within is to put an end to all sorrow and suffering. Prabodhini Ekadasi indicates such awakening. Ekadasi is the day of fast, penance and prayer. This conveys the very significant spiritual law that the awakening of the higher self can only be brought about when the lower self is denied and mortified through the wide austerity. Denying sensual food to the gross appetite in man is the condition prerequisite to inner spiritual awakening which alone leads to the true attainment. Once awakened this higher consciousness must be given dynamic manifestation in your life. This is the message of Utthana Dwadashi. In every Indian home this great awakening and this setting into dynamic motion of the awakened spiritual force has to be brought about in our nation from a spiritual regression and if our culture is to be converted into a living a force that would make Bharatavarsha move forward into a glorious tomorrow. This essential movement towards a lofty destiny has to be brought about by the Matri-Shakti of India's women. In it their lies the key to a resurgent India and their power is the sublime, all-inspiring Shakti of Pativrata-dharma. Tulsi is a Mahapativrata in your sacred tradition. The nation invokes this ideal and we affirm with faith in the Pativrata-Dharma by this worship of Mahapativrata Tulasi.

GURU NANAK JAYANTI

Virtue is the very essence of spiritual power. God is the source of all virtue. To be linked with him is to radiate virtue. The Divine Name and His constant remembrance is the means of thus remaining linked with Divine. Such unbroken communion with God is the very essence of life and the secret of all success and fulfilment in life. Thus taught the great Guru Nanakdev, whose Jayanti will be observed upon the full moon day at the end of this month. Glory to Guru Nanak and his immortal teachings. The true welfare of India lies in honouring such saints and following their teachings.

The Summer departs and we see the shorter day and morning winds rendered chill by the snow-falls upon the heights of the holy Badrinath, Kedarnath and Gangotri. Sacred Mother Ganges who nearly entered Gurudev's holy Kutir on her banks has now receded, and the Kutir is once again as it was during His life-time. The Sadhaks and Sannyasins of Sivanandashram have to come wrapped up in their shawl or chaddar for the early dawn prayer and meditation meeting at 4.30 am. The evenings too are gradually becoming quite cool, bringing a pre-indication of the approaching cold season. While for the Ashrama this is a prelude to comparatively quieter period with lesser bustle of Yatris and visitors until next April, yet for this servant this is the other way. Because this coming Winter starts a period of strenuous touring in different parts of India where Divine Life Conferences are organised. You will be glad to know that Rajkot Divine Life enthusiasts have decided to make their proposed Conference the All-India Divine Life Conference for 1967, instead of the Gujarat State Divine Life Conference as originally announced. They have my hearty congratulations and my best good wishes for fullest success. All those interested are requested to

contact Sri Pranlal B. Mehra, Divine Life Society, Foldage Industries premises, Rajkot, Saurashtra; or Dr. Sivananda Adhwaryoo, Virnagar (Via Atkot), Dt. Rajkot, Saurashtra. Then, the Orissa Divine Life Central Committee has now announced the dates of their two conferences for the next year, D.L.S., Conference, at Puri to be on 21st and 22nd Jan. and D.L.S. Conference at Kutak 24th and 25th Jan. 67. Those who wish to attend may contact Shri. S.C. Debo, Ramachandra Bhavan, Khallikote, Distt. Ganjam (Orissa). The tenth Andhra Pradesh Conference stands confirmed for Dec. 31st, 1st and 2nd Jan. 67 at Nellorepalle, Kothapalam, about 10 miles from Gudur railway station Madras-Bezwada line. You may contact Sri T. Venugopala Reddy, D.L.S. Opp. St. Jones Sardar Patel Road, Maradipalli, Secunderabad A.P. By the way I must not forget to tell you that the All-India D.L.C. is to take place in the first week of Feb. 67 the dates of which are 5th, 6th, 7th and 8th. The conference will conclude of 8th Feb. Before departing for the South A.P. & Orissa programmes I shall be, when this issue reaches your hand, with Yogi Purush Sri Karuna Maharaj and Yoga teacher Swami Sivananda, and shall also be required to tour the Punjab D.L.S. Centre in the beginning of Dec. The A P. tour will be for about three weeks and the Orissa tour ten day. It is thus that Sri Gurudev observes a higher kind of Diwali by awakening the bright light of virtue, goodness, spiritual living and love of God in the darkness of Kaliyuga. May His Light shine forever and illumine the path of life to lead humanity to the great goal of God-realisation and human perfection. May God bless you all. A bright and happy Diwali to you all.

With regards Prem and Om,

1st November, 1966

*At the feet of Gurudev,
—Swami Chidananda*

Sivanandashram Letter No. XXXV

THE GITA AND THE NEW TESTAMENT

Immortal Atma Swarupa.
Blessed seeker after Truth!

Loving Namaskars. Greetings and goodwishes in the holy names of Lord Jesus and of Lord Krishna Whom we remember with deepest adorations and worshipful love during this closing month of this present year. Two memorable dates associated with these two world teachers occur closely together this year. The inspiring Anniversary of blessed Lord Krishna's Divine discourse (Bhagavad Gita) given to the blessed birth of Jesus Christ happen this year on 23rd Dec. and 24th Dec. The main point of my letter to you here is to pray to you all to open your hearts to the Divine Messages of Krishna and Christ and thus help to restore Love, Peace and Joy in today's world. Beloved friends, Jesus seeks today entry into your hearts. Even so thus Lord Krishna, the call of Whose seeks to reach your hearts and awaken in it a longing within you for the life Divine, a life pure with Truth, Love, Selflessness and Brotherhood. Harken to Their call O citizens of the world. Receive the Gita and the New Testament at one and the same. They differ not in the essences. For they come from but one source only. The Eternal Divine speaks to Man through the words of Jesus Christ and Sri Krishna. Blessed are those in this modern world of greed, falsehood, who will follow the simple yet sublime teachings of these Divine Teachers of humanity. The hope of the world, the

welfare of man, the guarantee of survival and the key to happiness lie in following the Wisdom teachings and the way of life bestowed to you through the Gita and the New Testament. Therein is presented the solutions to the problems that confront mankind in this conflict-filled world of this atomic century. Proclaim and broadcast this Krishna-Christ message of Love, Compassion and Service. Propagate far and wide and to every corner of the earth, these true and pure teachings of Jesus and Janardan, unfettered by narrow doctrinaire and dogma, bigotry or fanaticism that plague vested religion. Practice it at home. Personify it in yourself. Live it in your daily life. Help to establish goodwill amongst mankind, peace on earth by the resolute rejection of the selfishness, anger and greed which are gateways to perdition. Through friendliness, kindness, gentleness and genuine humility (Maitri, Karuna, Mardava and Nirahankara) help to make the Kingdom of Heaven prevail upon earth. Let this be your main aim, ambition and self-chosen task in the coming New Year that now approaches. May the twin Lights of the world illuminate your heart with Divine Wisdom and Love.

After midnight vigil of Christmas Eve, this servant of Gurudev will have to leave for Andhra Pradesh to attend its Tenth Annual D.L. Conference. This time, I am travelling by train specially to make a halt at Bhopal, en route at the request of Sri Girdhar B. Chandwaney of the Divine Life Society of Bhopal. Therefore, the very first programme of Satsang discourses, etc., will be at the Bhopal D.L.S. this year's tour. The dates are Dec. 26th and 27th. Our party will arrive on 26th morning and depart on 28th morning for Gudur and thence to Kottapalam which we reach on 29th Dec. Devotees in and about Bhopal area may contact Sri Girdhar B. Chandwaney, Secretary, Divine Life Society Branch, near Safia Abi Masjid, Noor Mahal Road, Bhopal (M.P.). Now, I have to make a special request. The Ashram needs a qualified Medical Practitioner for the hospital here at the D.L.S. Headquarters. The services of a doctor are required specially for the General Hospital but also for the Eye Hospital as revered Mataji Swami Hridayananda finds the pressure of working single handed telling upon her health and likes to have some relief through the help of a suitable doctor who would also be able to look after the part of the work now shouldered by her alone. As I had promised to take an early step in this matter I include this information in this letter. If any of you can help us to meet this need for a qualified doctor for our General Hospital mainly but with knowledge of eye-work also, I shall be grateful. I would prefer a comparatively young and active person but with a spirit of service if not actively spiritually-minded.

Reasonable pay and living arrangement would be provided. A bachelor or a widower is preferred for the post. If you have any suggestion please write to us and address the letter to Sri Swami Krishnanandaji Maharaj, General Secretary, D.L.S., P.O. Sivanandanagar, Ditt. Tehri Garhwal, U.P. Write on the envelope 'personal'.

To all our friends in other countries I wish a MOST HAPPY CHRISTMAS and a wonderful NEW YEAR. May god bless you all. May the beauty of Christ-Love and radiance of Krishna-Light enrich and illuminate your life. May your days be filled with auspiciousness and blessedness. May you abide in Joy, Bliss and Immortality. Om Jesus! Jai Sri Krishna!

With regards, Prem and Om,

1st December, 1966.

*Yours in Sri Gurudev
—Swami Chidananda*

Sivanandashram Letter No. XXXVI

MY MESSAGE OF TRUTH FOR THE NEW YEAR

Immortal Atma-Swarupa,
Blessed seeker After Truth!

Om Namō Narayanaya. Loving Namaskars.

A bright joyous auspicious New Year to you. I salute you all in the holy name of Gurudev and wish you prosperity, happiness and all blessedness in His Name during this new year and during many more years in the future. God bless you.

The duty and function of all things in this universe are governed by the law of Rita and Satya. This implies Truth or in other words being true to one's essential real nature by adhering to it and expressing it. One who does it is fulfilling his duty and thus sustaining Dharma. This is what upholds the universe. Such a line of conduct maintains stability in human society, conduces to normalcy of events and occurrences and leads to commonwealth and welfare. Truth is the basis of human welfare. Everything good and beneficial rests upon truth. Gross negation of truth ends in chaos. Hence the significant declaration: God is Truth. To be true to one's own essential nature is the highest Dharma. This is the Godly path. This is Divine Life. This leads to happiness, security and supreme welfare.

The duty and function of fire is to give heat, light and to burn. The duty and function of air is to blow and waft odour. The duty and function of water is to flow and cause sweetness. The duty and function of earth is to be steady and to impart firmness to anything that takes its support. The duty and function of ether is to pervade and offer a field for the manifestation of sound. Akasa is a medium of Sabda. The duty and function of each element is thus the faithful expression of its inherent quality and nature. This is irreversible. If they were not to be true to themselves and go contrary to this, the result will be utter confusion and cessation of the orderly progress of things. Similar too is the case with man.

The duty and function of man is to be thoughtful and reasonable and to manifest his inner essential nature which is Divine and therefore of the nature of goodness peace, auspiciousness and beauty. If he makes his life and conduct a process of such self-expression, his very being becomes a blessing to society as a whole. But if his life and conduct contradict this living Truth within him, then his very being falsifies his essential nature and becomes a source of evil and pain in this very world. His life becomes a living lie. The law of truth is now contradicted. The result is pain and destruction. Truth saves. Falsehood poisons the very root of human progress and world-weal. The great sin of this age is crucifixion of Truth. The world malady of today is a cult of falsehood. Man has forgotten to be true. Man is taught falsehood, practises falsehood and prides himself in falsehood. Thus he forfeits the grace of God. For God is Truth.

You must live to express your higher nature. This will be possible only with the different aspects of your being fulfilling their respective functions dutifully. The body is to work obediently to carry out the obligatory duties. It is not to function as manifold avenues for imbibing sensual

pleasures. The mind should function for reflective thought and not for producing unbridled desire. The heart is to act as a source of sublime sentiments and noble emotions mitigating and sublimating the primitive instinctive urges of your gross being. The heart is not meant to be seat of hatred and passion. The function of the intellect is to regulate through reason the upsurge of emotion in your heart. Intellect should not be the source of pride, superiority and bigotry. If these faculties function upon truth, then you have an active, thoughtful, compassionate and stable individual. Divinity manifests itself from within in such a life. His conduct shines with the light of Truth. In such a life you are true to the higher Self, you are true to your culture, and you are true to your Motherland. You are then a true Bharatiya. A Nation that is true to its central culture survives, flourishes. Great is the importance of truth in our national life as much as it is in your individual life. In this New Year may we enter into an ever-growing realisation of this important fact.

Thus is my message of Truth for this New Year. Beloved readers; take up this message for your life: May this message be the Mula-Mantra of your personal life. May truth be the Maha-Mantra of your social life. May Satya be your Aradhana Devata. May Truth be the deity that presides over your professional activities. He who injures Truth verily destroys himself. He who upholds truth in all the spheres of his life secures peace, happiness, honour and Divine Grace. He is the real helper of humanity and servant of the world. He by his life and conduct makes mankind retrace its course from darkness to light, from strife to peace and from hatred to goodwill and love. O Ye Citizens of Bharatvarsha, raise the banner of Truth as your emblem and aim. Silence all slogans. Chant Truth as the National Mantra. Let the silence of purity hush your heart and keep out the den of false slogans and empty words. Truth is the way by which mankind must regain mutual trust, harmony and freedom from fear. Truth will save India and the world for an honourable future. Live Truth. Let Truth see the light of the day.

May this New Year mark for us all a glorious entry into Truth. God be with you. By the time you read this, this servant will be in South India on a spiritual tour. The same message, the call to Truth will be given at all places to be visited during this Andhra Pradesh, Orissa, Gujarat tour. Sri Satgurudev Swami Sivanandaji was the embodiment of Satya. Thus will this servant strive to bring the holy Master's spiritual word to the people who seek light. May Truth sustain us in our march towards the eternal reality that is Brahman, the Ekam Sat! Om Tat Sat! Om Shanti!

Jai Gurudev Sivananda!

With regards, Prem and Om,

1st January, 1967

—Swami Chidananda

Sivanandashram Letter No. XXXVII

IN THE BLESSED COMPANY OF HOLY SAINTS

Immortal Atma-Swarupa,
Blessed Seeker After Truth!

Om Namō Narayanaya! Loving Namaskars.

Salutations and greeting to you in the holy name of Sri Gurudev Sivananda. May God bless you!

This letter is being written to you from Utkala- Pradesha (Orissa), the territory sanctified by blessed Lord Jagannatha, who presides over this part of Bharatavarsha from the sacred city of Puri. May the Divine Grace of Sri Jagannath Bhagawan ever be upon you all. This time I shall take you along with me quickly over a tour of A.P. and Orissa, where as you know this servant of Gurudev has travelled to attend two Divine Life Conferences, namely, the 10th Andhra Pradesh and the 2nd All-Orissa Divine Life Conference. Our party and myself left for Delhi on the morning of the 25th December, 1966 reaching there in the evening. We could not leave as usual by train the previous night because the 24th was the important annual day of holy Christmas observance and so I had to participate in the Ashram until midnight in this celebration of joy and adoration. It was a wonderful occasion. Upon reaching Delhi the next day I had the happy good fortune of meeting and paying my homage to His Holiness the Jagadguru Sankaracharya Swamiji Maharaj of Sringeri Peetha, the renowned Southern monastic seat established by the great Adi-Sankaracharya. His Holiness is most gracious, highly enlightened and benevolent monk combining within himself high erudition, renunciation and holiness with an unassuming simplicity, affability and charming manners, at once dignified as well as friendly. He was pleased to receive me with kindness, made enquiries about Gurudev's Ashram and its activity and received with keen interest and frank appreciation a packet of Gurudev's spiritual books that I offered to him. Outside, under a special pandal, a large gathering had assembled for a lecture meeting and eagerly awaiting His Holiness' appearance. So, after talking to me for sometime, he rose up to go to the meeting inviting me to come along and participate. The holy Swamiji desired that I should also address the gathering briefly and as I had to catch the evening Grand Trunk Express he asked me to speak first listening appreciatingly and with affectionate approval to the words of this servant at Gurudev's feet.

I took leave of H.H. Sri Jagadguru immediately and proceeded to go to revered mother Sitabai's place where supper had been arranged for the entire party. After an excellent supper, light and nutritious, we drove to the New Delhi station. I missed Sri S. Sundaram of Amexco this time as he was laid up with 'flu'. He very kindly looks after most of my travel arrangements these days ever since God brought us together in 1959 when I was preparing to visit the United States and Canada on Gurudev's Mission.

At the Station a good number of friends, all Gurudev's Delhi devotees, had turned up to see us off. The entire Dr. Munjal household was there as also Mr Sud, Mr. Massand, brother C. K. Harchandani, with his unfailing supply of Horlicks, mother Laxmiji, and a number of others. There

was Kirtan, Japa, Om Chanting etc., until the train moved off. We reached the historic city of Bhopal next morning.

26th and 27th, there were programmes of Satsang and lectures at Bhopal arranged by that city's Divine Life Society Branch. Revered Mata Gurupremanandji with her devotees had come from her Ashram at Indore and participated in all the Satsangas. Sri G.B. Chandwani arranged programmes nicely and reverend K.C. Reddyji Maharaj very graciously extended his hospitality to me with my party and looked after us with great kindness and love. He and his good wife are an ideal couple. Early morning on the 28th we journeyed to Kothapalam, the venue of the 10th Andhra Pradesh D.L. Conference.

Reaching there on the 29th, myself with two other Sadhus, one the reverend Avadhutendra Swami, a great Sankirtana Bhakta of Andhra Pradesh and the other the 80-year old Hatha Yogi Pujya Swami Atmanandaji, were all taken in procession in a vehicle decked with beautiful floral decoration in artistic design. There was great enthusiasm and chanting of God's Name by the people. After a days rest on the 30th the Conference was inaugurated on Saturday on 31st before a vast assembly of several thousand people assembled in a very huge pandal specially erected for this Conference gathering. The three days of programme was veritable spiritual feast, thrilling, inspiring and elevating. This Conference, the efforts of Sri T. Venugopala Reddyji and his entire family was a unique event memorable for the fact that it was held in a small village more than 15 miles distance from the nearest railway station and yet the sessions were packed with vast crowds participating for hours on end. A beautiful Souvenir has been published by the Conference and a wonderful feature was the printing of ten thousand copies of a hundred-paged book of Gurudev's teachings for free distribution for every one who attended the Conference. This was through the generous munificence of mother Anusuya Deviji of Maripada who donated a sum of Rs. 3000/- towards this Jnana Yajna.

The Yoga Museum and photographic exhibition in this Conference were very successful, interesting features. All praise to the dedicated and devoted efforts of Sri Venugopala Reddy, brother Srinivasa Reddy, their father Narasimha Reddy and their associates and volunteers. On the 3rd January, we had the pleasure of visiting the ideal educational Centre and Harijan's Seva Institution of the well-known philanthropist and social worker Sri Gopalakrishna Reddy at Vakadu. We also went up and offered our worship to Lord Bhimeswar Mahadev at the hill-top temple near Vidyanagar, the college campus created by the same Gopalakrishna Reddy Gaur.

The next day on 4th January, we journeyed to the famous holy Shrine of Tirupati and worshipped Lord Venkateshwara in his abode amidst the seven hills. The temple authorities had very kindly provided facilities for Darshan and worship in this wonderful shrine. On the day we arrived we did some spirited Sankirtan in the Kalyan Mandapam within the temple. The next day they had arranged for a talk to the students at the Venkateshwara University. It was a very well attended lecture that was listened to with rapt attention. A number of Gurudev's books were presented to the College Library. On Friday 6th January, we journeyed down to Viyasashram, the well known hermitage of the famous Sage, the late Sri Malayal Swamiji Maharaj at Yerpedu, where I was extremely happy to meet once again Sri Swami Vimalnandji, the present head of the Ashram, the beloved disciple and successor of late Holiness. The Sadhus as well as all the students of the two

Vidyalayas very much enjoyed the movie films showing scene of our previous visit to the Ashram in the same month last year.

I must say here that throughout this present tour in every place beginning from Bhopal at the very start, the movie film showing had been a huge success. It is some thing thrilling and wonderful for the people in these distant Southern parts to be able to have the colourful and breathtakingly beautiful views of the majestic Ganges, holy Rishikesh, the Himalayan mountains and the Sivanandashram. What is more, thousands who had not had the good fortune of Darshan of Sri Gurudev Swami Sivanandaji get the rare blessedness of gazing at his majestic form and getting a glimpse of his Ashram's life as he went about attending to various tasks and special celebrations. Everywhere people were fascinated and asked for more.

Next we drove to Gudur for an evening lecture and from there reached Manbolu for two days halt with a very well attended Satsang for the general public. On Sunday the 8th, we went over to Nelore for a public lecture there and a Satsang the next morning at the well known Annadana Samaja. Thence, we journeyed to the famous hill-top shrine of Lord Mallikarjuna Mahadev at Srisailam. Our party conducted two Satsangas here, one at the Suryasimhasana Matha and the other at the main temple before Lord Shiva's sanctum. Here as elsewhere I was required to give my talk in the Telugu language. I was glad that grammarians or school examiners were not present, otherwise they might have been shocked at my language. But, nevertheless, my vocabulary seems to be quite sufficient for effectively conveying Gurudev's message of Divine Life and Yoga Vedanta to the Telugu speaking people of Andhra Pradesh.

11th evening found us at Guntur after a drive of about 145 miles from Srisailam. We had to break for lunch enroute at Vinukoada where arrangements had been made at the local Dak Bungalow. This place is believed to be the spot associated with that episode in the Ramayana when Lord Rama first heard the news about Sita's forced abduction by Ravana through the dying Jatayu. Hence, the significant name Vinukonda in Telugu (Vinu meaning to hear, and Konda meaning a hill), that is, the hill where Sri Rama first heard about Sita's fate. The traditional Sanskrit name for this place is Sruta-Giri. Quite a crowded Satsang developed here very soon after our arrival at the Dak Bungalow at midday. Now for Guntur.

One of the high-lights of my over night's stay at this place is our visit to the famous Sri Rama Nama Kshetra in this city. This is indeed a very unique institution, nay, hallowed place of pilgrimage glorifying the Divine Name of Rama. Sri Gurudev Sivanandaji had a special place in his soft heart for this very holy institution which he admired greatly. Sri Sita Rama Nama Sankirtana Sangham was the parent institution, out of which this unique Sri Rama Nama kshetra developed as a devout memorial to the Rama Bhakta Sri Ragam Pichchiah Das by his two loving sons Sri Ragam Anjaneyulu and Sri Ragam Venkateshwaralu. Countless crores of Sri Rama Nama are being written and also chanted by devotees all over the country through the living inspiration of this unique Kshetra dedicated to the Divine Name. The present Director of this place expressed his great gratitude to Gurudev Sivanandaji for his continued encouragement to their sacred work through all the bygone years. The Guntur public meeting was well attended and message earnestly received.

Leaving Guntur on the 12th, we arrived at the Rajahmundry in chill cloudy and drizzling weather after passing the long Godavari Anicut (Dam). It was a tedious drive. When we finally

arrived it was raining steadily. My health had a set back here due to constant travels. Until here all our travel was by car ever since our arrival at Kothapalam on 29th December. At Rajahmundry our host was the revered Sri Swami Karunyanandji Maharaj, founder of the Gautami Jivakarunya Sangham. It was wonderful to meet him because he happens to be an old associate of Gurudev during the latter's early Rishikesh days. This Swamiji was with Gurudev from 1927 to 1933 when he left Rishikesh and came and founded this humanitarian institution in his home province. The Swamiji related to me many interesting events and experiences with Gurudev at Swargashram and Muni-ki-Reti. I wish I could tell more of that here but I am obliged to reserve it for some other occasion, due to lack of space.

Sri Swami Karunyanandji is personification of selflessness in the spirit of service. We also visited the well know Ashram of Her Holiness Sadhu Mataji, one of the earliest disciple of H. H. Malayala Swamiji. She was one of the foremost Sannyasins of Andhra Pradesh. From Rajahmundry we drove on to Shanti Ashram near the Totapalli Hills for the Darshan of H.H. Sri Swami Omkarji Maharaj. Arriving after dark at night, we were received by the children of the orphanage who sang 'Hare Rama Hare Rama Rama Hare Hare,' the Mahamantra in the tune of Gurudev. Swami Omkar received us very graciously and to be with him was an experience of Divine Peace and holy inspiration. He read out to us from his "Cosmic Flashes" and 'In the Hours of Silence'! We heard his peace prayer repeated by his devoted disciple Sri Jnaneshwari Devi and it was most stirring experience. 14th was the day of perfect peace at Shanti Ashram which is the veritable abode of Shanti indeed. Revered Swami Omkarji graciously presented me and others with a number of his books. We went over the extensive estate covering two hundred acres of his Ashram and were very glad to see different departments like hotel, the school, the printing press, the shrine of prayer, Kailas Giri, the sites for Vedantins, lady Sadhaks etc. We also saw the new Rama Tirtha Institute of Peace taking shape in one part of the estate. During that evening gathering I met the venerable Swami Ramananda Tirtha, who is taking up the work of this new Institute of Peace.

The Ashram was preparing for the Golden Jubilee Celebrations of Shanti Ashram as well as Sri Swamiji's 72nd Birthday and the happy inauguration of the proposed Rama Tirtha Institute of Peace at the hands of Sri Jayaprakash Narayan on 21st January. The children of the orphanage gave us a preview enactment of the nice little drama they had got up, called the Golden Garland (Svarnamala), specially for the occasion of the Golden Jubilee. We all enjoyed. Sri Swamiji gave his beautiful message and so too did revered Swami Ramananda Tirtha. Early next morning, we departed reluctantly from Shanti Ashram after bidding farewell to Swamiji and others carrying his loving invitation to visit him again. We next drove to the sea side city of Visakhapatnam or Waltair about 90 miles from Shanti Ashram. Here too we were lodged at Shanti Ashram at sea side where Swami Omkar lived for many years and performed penance. I was put up in a cottage previously occupied by the late sister Sushila Devi of loving memory, who was the presiding angel of the Shanti Ashram in her earlier days and who had nobly dedicated herself to the Mission of Peace.

One public meeting was the sole engagement in this city and Swami Karunyanandaji Maharaj who had provided his motor car from Rajahmundry onwards saw us off at the Railway Station the next morning on our way to Berhampur. I wish to mention two thing here. One was that from 4th January onwards Sri T. Venugopala Reddy of Kothapalam had put his car at our disposal for all our travels upto the 12th January when we left Guntur for Rajahmundry. This was very gracious of him and the second matter was the wonderful help given to us throughout these tours by

our beloved S. Vijayarangam Guru of Hyderabad, who had made the most thorough arrangements down to the minutest detail for this entire tour right up to our departure from Andhra Pradesh for Orissa on the 16th January. But for him this well conducted and systematic tour covering practically almost the whole of Andhra Pradesh would have been impossible. God bless him.

Visakhapatnam was actually our last camp in A. P. But at the 11th hour we were made to visit two more places on our way out of Andhra Pradesh into Orissa for inaugurating two branches of the Divine Life Society, at Palasa and Sompeta. Therefore. I had to detrain at these two places in A.P. and inaugurated the D.L. Branches and thus arrived late at night at Berhampur where one batch of our party had reached in advance, directly from Waltair.

After three day's halt at Berhampur and some Satsang programmes including the inauguration of the Annual Cultural week at the local Khallikote College, I drove over to Cuttack, with my Orissa host Sri S.C. Debo, Retd. Principal of the Govt. Art College, visiting the Chatrapur and Rambha D.L. Branches on the way to attend the 2nd All-Orissa D.L. Conference.

With regards, Prem and Om,

February, 1967

Swami Chidananda

Sivanandashram Letter No. XXXVIII

VAST FIELD OF DIVINE LIFE ACTIVITIES

Immortal Atma-Swarupa!
Blessed Seeker After Truth!

Om Namo Narayanaya! Loving Namaskars.

May the Divine Grace of the Lord of the Universe, the all Auspicious Great God, Mahadeva Siva, the blue-throated, wielder of the trident, be upon you all upon this eve of the holy Mahasivaratri. Let us for a while repeat together the most sacred Divine Name of Five-letters that is pleasing to the Lord.

Om Namah Sivaya Om Namah Sivaya (five times)

Glory be to the Lord of gods, the destroyer of the poison of spiritual Ignorance (Ajnana), the all-compassionate and the bestower of Supreme Liberation to those who take refuge at his feet. You are blessed indeed to have uttered His Divine Name with faith, reverence and love.

The Cuttack session of the Second All Orissa D. L. Conference commenced with a procession of Gurudev's holy Padukas accompanied with Sankirtan Party. After flag-hoisting at the avenue the session commenced with the Lord's Name, followed by the opening of the exhibition of spiritual literature, photographs and Ayurvedic products. Then a beautiful portrait of Gurudev was

unveiled. Next Mr. D. Sahu, the Advocate-General, delivered his thought-provoking address welcoming us all. The chief guest was Swami Ramakrishnanandaji of Bhuvaneshwar who gave his Upadesh now. Next Sri Radhanath Rath, editor of "The Samaj", spoke beautifully in Orria. The Proceedings came to a close after my talk and concluding Kirtan.

The second session also was very well attended and marked by enthusiastic Sankirtan, Bhajan, prayer, exposition of Yogas, a discourse on Indian culture, a period of silent meditation and concluded with an excellent film show, wherein the assembled devotees had the Darshan of Gurudev, Ganga, Himalayas, etc. It was well organised and the sincere devotees of the Cuttack Branch had made all necessary arrangements with care and love. A very nice bilingual Souvenir has been published and some useful spiritual tracts were distributed free to the public. The two day's programme at Puri was drawn upon the same pattern as that at Cuttack. There was also a brief programme at Bhuvaneshwar on the 23rd January on our way from Cuttack to Puri.

Before leaving Puri however, I went to the famous Math established by Sri Sankaracharya to have Darshan of the present Jagadguru Swamiji Maharaj of the Peeth, who was then on the 65th day of his long fast, on the cow-slaughter issue. As we went up to His Holiness' room numerous devotees were going in line up the staircase leading to his room. The Swamiji Maharaj was lying on a cot covered with a warm rug. After paying my respects I enquired about his health and prayed that the Lord may fulfil his cherished desire and that he may soon be enabled to return to normal diet. He spoke to me for a little while stressing upon the point that in our Sanatana Dharma there is no separation between the spiritual and material and that Sannyasins should not hesitate to take part in seemingly secular matters when these have a direct connection with the religion and its time-honoured traditions. We silently listened to his brief discourse and noticing that he was very weak, we withdrew from his presence after offering our salutations. The ancient Math premises need strengthening and renovation very badly and I feel it a duty, especially of the adherents of this particular Peetha to come forward with generous contributions and take up this task of effecting all the needful repairs and improvements to this eastern seat established by Adi-Guru Sri Sankara Bhagawatpada.

One feature of the Puri session of the Orissa D. L. Conference that I particularly liked very much was the item of Sankirtan before the Divine presence of Lord Jagannath inside the sacred precincts of the great temple. This was the opening item on both the afternoons. We felt supremely blessed to have this opportunity of chanting the Lord's Name in that sacred place. The Orissa Conference was well arranged through the efforts of Sri H.K. Kar, working President of the Cuttack Branch, the able secretary Sri Chintamani Pati, Sri Kanhucharan Mahapatra of Puri and Prof. D.C. Choudhry. Sri Chitta Ranjan Mohanty and Sri Satyajnanam offered their most valuable co-operation and seva in contributing to the success of the arrangements. Of course it goes without saying that the revered Sri S. C. Debo looked after us throughout our entire stay and tour within the Orissa State territory, right from the night of the 16th January, when we reached Berhampur until the midnight of 25th January, when he took leave of us on the platform of Berhampur Railway Station and saw us off on our way to Gujarat and Saurashtra. Sri S. C. Debo's help in the able management and supervision of all programmes throughout our tours is inestimable. Our grateful thanks are due to all the Office-bearers and members of the D.L.S. Branches of Berhampur, Cuttack, Bhuvaneshwar and Puri including friends Sri Dharma Rao, Ramana Murty and Sri Gandhiji.

Leaving Puri on 25th night and after some programmes at Tanuku, Relangi, Undarjavaram (Sri Sankara Sivananda Kshetram) and Hyderabad I reached Rajkot on the morning of 31st Jan., '67, and drove to Virnagar, the Headquarters of the Gujarat-Saurashtra Divine Life activities. Here I was very happy to participate in the inauguration by the Swiss Consul. General Mr. Othmar Rist, of the new Surgical Block of the Saurashtra Central Hospital, where Dr. Sivananda-Adhwaryoo is the Chief Medical Officer. It was a very colourful function conducted with great enthusiasm and sincerity. Numerous prominent people from Rajkot were present at the function on 1st February. Mr Perrie Oppligar, the Representative in India of the Organisation Swiss Aid Abroad also came for this occasion.

Now for the 20th All India Divine Life Conference at Rajkot. This Rajkot Conference had been a triumph of good organisation, wonderful co-operation, coordination and intelligent management. The ten sessions on the 5th, 6th, 7th and 8th of February together with the three early morning prayer meetings at 6 a.m. were all well attended by the public of Rajkot. Delegates from more than ten D. L. S. Branches within Gujarat Saurashtra and from Maharashtra (Bombay Branch), the Chief Organiser of Andhra Pradesh D. L. S., from Rasipuram D. L. S Branch (Salem-Madras State) and about 15 Sadhus and Sadhaks from Rishikesh Headquarters participated in the Parishad. All the Office-holders and members of the Rajkot Divine Life Society had worked earnestly under the tireless active help and guidance of Dr. Sivananda-Adhwaryoo. The venue was the well known Rashtra-Shala where the late revered Mahatma Gandhiji stayed while he was at Rajkot during the freedom-struggle days. A very huge Shamiana had been erected with an imposing double-gate leading to it. The flag hoisting on the morning of 5th was an impressive ceremony. The speaker's dais was a huge stage that could easily accommodate fifty persons and was tastefully decorated by the local artists in conjunction with Sri Saundar Rajan of Ashram and Sri Mansukhlal of Patan. The Shamiana could easily accommodate five thousand persons and was filled to capacity daily.

H. H. Jagadguru Sankaracharya of Dwarka inaugurated the Conference on the 5th morning and gave his blessings after speaking upon the principles of Divine Life and their importance to the people of the present time. Revered Sri Popatbhai Malaviya, a veteran citizen of Rajkot city sent his address through his worthy son Sri Vasant Bhai, who read it. Learned speakers gave their wise deliberation upon important subjects, like Spiritualisation of Human Society, Education and its Problems, Vedanta in Actual Practice, essence of Religion, Saints of Bharatavarsha, Gospel of Bhagawad Gita, Education, Teacher and the Students, etc. Chief among the speakers were H. H. Sri Swami Atmasthanandaji Maharaj of the Sri. R. K. Mission; the venerable Harjivanlal Mehta of Bhavnagar, the veteran and leading Theosophist of Western India; Acharya Sri Nalin Bhatt of Bhartya Vidya Bhavan, Bombay; Pujya Pandit Deena Nath Dinesh of "Manava Dharma", Delhi; Yogiraj Sri Manuvarayaji Maharaj of Ahmedabad; reverend Sri Swami Bhadra of Prarthana Samaj, Surat and Sri Paramanand Gandhi as representative of Sri Panduranga Sastri Sadhvi Sri Sadguna Shree Ji, a Jain Sannyasini also spoke twice. The second day's afternoon session was exclusively a seminar on Education and Students, attended by numerous High School students besides the general public. The first prize in Essay Competition was won by Sri Bakul, a student of the High School at Palanpur. The night session of the 6th February was made over to Padmasri Sri Dula Kag Baba, the renowned folk-poet who thrilled the vast audience with his wonderful compositions and recitations. The huge gathering sat spellbound for two hours listening to his poetical discourse on the Ramayana. On the final day we had the unique good fortune to have at the Conference

worshipful Shri Baba Ranchoddassji, who came at midday and graced the function. He addressed the people spiritedly urging them to break the chains of selfishness and take to the life of selflessness, self-sacrifice and dedication to the service of the distressed and relief of the suffering everywhere.

A beautiful cut-out of Sri Gurudev in sitting pose was at the background of the dais. It was a *life-like painting*. The entire Shamiana was hung with ethical and spiritual mottoes. The organisers of the Parishad had arranged to have one pamphlet having Gurudev's teachings to be freely distributed to the public during each session on all the days of the Conference. A different leaflet was given at each one of the ten sessions of the Conference. In addition to this, free literature in the form of two books and a booklet, namely, 'So Says Sivananda', 'Education, Teacher & Student' and 'Sadhana Tattva' were freely given to everyone attending the Conference.

The local press at Rajkot gave fullest possible co-operation to the organisers of the Conference while the local educational institutions too responded favourably and appreciatively their efforts in rousing the students towards the higher idealism in life and greater devotion to Dharma. As a result of the Conference (which became the talk of the town) the weekly Saturday Satsanga of the Rajkot Divine Life Society Branch is having a packed Hall with numerous new comers participating. We await the issue of the valuable Conference Souvenir. My warmest congratulations to all associated with the D. L. S. Branch of Rajkot. They are determined to follow up the Conference with enhanced activity and earnestly hope to make its impact lasting and permanent.

My heart-felt sincere thanks to the D.L.S. organisers and devotees in the different places visited for their loving, and noble help in enabling me to bring the spiritual message and the teachings of Gurudev Sivanandaji Maharaj to the people of Andhra Pradesh, Orissa and Gujarat. It is through their devout efforts alone that I am able to serve all and thus fulfil my seva to the sacred memory of Satgurudev. In each State there must be some one or two persons from among the Branch organisers themselves who will be able to tour round that State, once in a while, sharing Gurudev's teachings with all people in different places. My capacity to do this task personally is necessarily limited. This limitation must be made up by my lay-brothers in the field of Divine work. Such is my thought at this moment. In the spreading of Gurudev's teachings alone there is hope for restoring India to the path of Dharma in daily life. Everywhere I have travelled I have been hearing the doleful complaint of break-down of Dharma and the prevalence of immorality. Gurudev's teachings of the *purification* of personal life and spiritualisation of home environment is the one effective foundation of basing a changed order of our Nation's social life. I pray to the Lord that He may help us all to live a pure life, to practise the Divine Life precepts and to spread the Divine Life teachings throughout the nation at this crucial hour. Now let me conclude with this ancient prayer of the Rig Veda: "May our purpose be common, common our assembly and common the mind; let thoughts be united too. I give for you a common objective. Worship with unison, worship with a common offering and dedication."

By the time this letter reaches you the Sacred day of Maha Sivaratri might have already come and gone. Here I share my thoughtful views in this connection. While this letter is posted from Rajkot I am close by the shrine of Somanath which is just 15 miles away and which is one of the 12 Jyotir Lingas, Maha-Sacred will be observed with due solemnity here as in thousands of other

shrines of Lord Siva throughout the country. Fasting and vigil are the two main disciplines of this all-night-worship that culminates in the dawn of new morn. How wonderfully and how very aptly does this signify the very essence of spiritual life and bring out its true inner content! Spiritual life is movement through the darkness of primal spiritual ignorance towards the light of Divine experience. The earnest keeps close to God and in continuous worship he moves through the long drawn dark night of his soul towards the dawning of Divine Wisdom. In this period of constant endeavour to commune with God, he has to exercise great dispassion and self-restraint and keep ever awake while the world sleeps. Unremitting vigilance is the price for liberation. Fasting actually signifies the denial of sense-appetite and refusing to feed the desires and cravings of the lower self in man. Renouncing all sense-indulgences, controlling senses and subduing desires the seeker exercises vigilance keeping himself ever in a state of spiritual wakefulness and aspiring for the dawn of God-realisation. He is ever awake to his grand goal of life, the ethical and spiritual ideals, and the higher principles that guide the soul from the unreal to the Real and from death to Immortality. He achieves the goal through unshakable faith and continuous worship, despite the surrounding loom of phenomenal life. Lord Siva Himself embodies this ideal of abstinence, awareness and adoration. He is the great God ever immersed in absorbing adoration of the supreme SELF-REALITY in a state of unbroken inner awareness and totally dead to the objective-sense-universe through a perfect subdual of desires. All cravings are burnt up and the ashes adorn the divine body of this Lord of Yogis. Such is the God we adore upon the Maha Sivaratri day. Both the worship and the worshipped one thus bring out very essence of spiritual quest in and through their outer form.

O beloved seeker, control your senses. Conquer your mind. Sublimate your desires. Reject the lower food of gross sense-experience. Become a Maha Upavasi, starve the Vasanas. Be alert and awake through constant Vichara and Viveka. Be up and doing continuous unbroken worship of the Divine. Never mind if darkness now prevails. Like dazzling lightning manifests brilliantly through the densest dark clouds, like the bright sun ending the darkness of night, the light of the Divine wisdom will flash forth in your life and illumine it forever.

Stick to your vows. Be established in worship. Surmount all obstacles. You will triumph. May success attend thy efforts and crown thy quest with supreme fulfilment. May you attain the other shore of this ocean of Samsara and reach supreme blessedness.

To lead the spiritual life is your sole purpose here on earth; all else is but meaningless delusion. Pursuit of goals other than God-experience is a hopeless failure to understand the very purpose of existence and a deplorable waste of most precious life. Time flies. Come now. Waste no more time. Seriously take up to spiritual life and progress upon the inner path that leads to God-realisation. Live every moment for realising God. Waste not time in vain matters. This world is vanity fair of brief duration. All things perish and pass away. He who is wise is vigilant and careful. He attains the goal and makes life fruitful. May God bless you.

With regards, Prem & Om,

Yours in Gurudev.

March, 1967

—Swami Chidananda.

Sivanandashram Letter No. XXXIX

THE RAMAYANA—THE LIGHT-HOUSE OF INDIA

Immortal Atma-Swarupa!
Blessed Seeker After Truth!

Om Namo Narayanaya! Loving Namaskars,

Salutations to you in the holy name of Sri Gurudev Sivananda. May God bless you. This month sees the advent of the New Year according to the Indian Almanac both by the solar calculations as well as the lunar calculations. The Lunar New Years day falls on the 10th April and Solar New Year's day on the 14th. Therefore, before proceeding further I wish to send you first my joyous greeting for this Yugadi or Samvatsara-Arambha and express my very best good-wishes to you for a bright and happy New Year. May you have an auspicious beginning, and good health, joy, prosperity, progress and success in all right undertakings. May this New Year bring you many new opportunities for selfless service, doing good unto others, acts of mercy and love, intensified spiritual Sadhana and service of the country. May you be enabled to walk the path of Dharma and do the right at every step. May this year be full of achievements and blessedness, both material and secular as well as spiritual and Divine.

Now I have a special request to make to you and that is that you should read the Ramayana with meaning completely once before the sacred Ramanavami day. I make it with a special purpose because I believe that through this study you are going to be immensely benefited, and also we have in the Ramayana the real and the right solution for the widespread troubles and sufferings which have invaded our national life in recent years. The guided ideals of national life are provided for us in the two Divine personalities, whose annual worship falls during the current month, I mean Lord Sri Rama and Bhagavan Anjaneya, more familiarly called Sri Hanumanji. Lord Sri Rama is called the Maryada Purushotama or the foremost among the ideal, righteous man as he was Divinity embodied as the paragon of virtue and righteousness. He stands for us as the dazzling and unparalleled example of absolute rectitude in personal conduct and public life. Rarely we do come across such a stirring and inspiring personality to lift us up to a lofty plane of life and conduct. To contemplate a noble personality, to ponder His life, to reflect upon His noble deeds and His words of wisdom and to strive to follow in His footsteps sincerely to the best of one's ability is the sure and certain way of freeing our nation from the clutches of the fell monster of moral corruption and cultural degradation. Lord Rama is the Light of India and His life is true Way to lead Bharatavarsha from darkness to Light.

The misuse and abuse of force and power is the dire disease that is afflicting mankind today. The heroic personality of Lord Hanuman which verily dominates in the Ramayana almost second to Lord Rama Himself is the other great ideal that commands our attention. Sri Hanuman combines in Himself infinite strength and power, with perfect surrender to the will of the Divine. Hanuman is an unconquerable warrior of tremendous prowess, who put himself at the feet of the Lord as an obedient servant, at His disposal. He is always the great Dasa of Rama. His ego was offered up at the feet of the Lord and his strength was utilised in the service of the Lord. This is the finest and noblest use of one's forces. This leads to the highest good. Where power is abused through

selfishness, egoism and materialistic motive, it brings sorrow, suffering, turmoil and confusion. Human activities when divorced from the Divine principle swerve one away from righteousness and bring grief. To keep close to God is the secret of right living, and guarantee of lasting and real welfare.

Study the Ramayana, one of the main treasures in our cultural heritage. Study it either in the original or in the vernacular or English. There are two very excellent English versions. One is Rajaji's Ramayana, published by Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Bombay, and the other is the English translation of Tulsidas Ramayana by F. H. Growse. Both are packed with wonderful wisdom. They will bring a new light into your life and show you the path to joy, peace and highest blessedness. May the Grace of the Lord Sri Rama grant you devotion, discrimination, dispassion and divine illumination. The sacred day of Sri Ramanavami (18th April) marks also the memorable birthday of Sri Samartha Ramadas Maharaj, the great Maharashtrian saint and spiritual Guru of emperor Shivaji. Sri Samarth Ramdas attained God-realisation through the Practice of the Divine Name. Though a Jnani, a Yogi and a Sidhaa Purusha of the highest order, Ramadas proclaimed to all the glory, the greatness and the unfailing efficacy of the Ramayana. He thus set his seal upon the unique trend in modern spirituality wherein the Divine Name occupies the central place in the path of Sadhana. In this Kali Yuga in the midst of diverse modes of Sadhana, the Yoga of Name Japa stands supreme occupying an unrivalled, distinct place of its own. The **Divine Name of the Lord** is the main support of seekers after God, today. It is an indispensable Sadhana.

Cling to the Divine Name, O beloved seeker, and overcome all obstacles and come out victorious. The Name is Nectar. The Name will confer upon you the Divine bliss and transcendental peace. Repeat the Name. Sing it in Kirtans. Write it in Mantra notebook. Constantly remember the Lord with the help of His Name. Meditate on the Self. Become filled with the Divine Name.

In the present times of unrest, distress, famine conditions and mutual dissension engage yourself in earnestly working to counter these conditions. Help to provide food in the scarcity area. Set up groups to gather and send such help to places in need. Selflessly serve all. Work to relieve distress. Promote harmony and unity amongst people wherever you go. Be a peace-maker and a unifier, in the name of God. Do not think it is the business of the Government only to do this noble task. Do not expect others to do when you can also do it. Let noble Karma Yoga elevate your life to a higher level on the spiritual life.

The almost warm weather here at Rishikesh has once again given place to a spell of chill weather with high winds and rain. There is perhaps snow storm in the upper regions of the Himalayas. Our prayers should indeed be offered for the welfare, comfort and the safety of the shivering soldier-brothers in those regions keeping watch on the border, in the bitter icy-cold weather of the Northern heights. May God bless you all!

With regards, Prem and Om.

April, 1967

*Yours in Gurudev
—Swami Chidananda*

Sivanandashram Letter No. XL

DIVORCE NOT RELIGION FROM YOUR DAILY LIFE

Beloved Immortal Atman!
Blessed Seeker after Truth!

Om Namō Narayanaya! Loving salutations and greetings in the holy name of Gurudev Sivananda. May the spirit of his Divine Life Message he rekindled in your heart with new freshness and vigour at this moment, when the season of Spring is in its peak point and will soon lead on to the Summer. All life is quickened, newly activated in the vernal season and I pray that a perennial spring season may reign within your heart and may keep ever-fresh flowers of moral loftiness and spirituality there in.

With the advance of spring and the eve of Summer a challenge faces you in great urgency today. Rains have failed in number of areas in our country. People are facing desperate situations of thirst and starvation. Those of you who are fortunate and safe must stir yourself and see what you can do to help your brothers and sisters of the drought-stricken areas. Give up the mentality of thinking that this is the problem of Government and as long as you have paid your taxes dutifully your responsibility ends. This is not quite so simple. As a civic entity your duty might have ended with the paying of the taxes. But as a moral and spiritual entity your duty now stands squarely before you. It calls you. Yours is a moral responsibility and a religious duty before the gaze of God Himself. Religion means active compassion. Devotion means service. Love means sacrifice. Spirituality means feeling the sufferings of others and entering into their experience and struggling to relieve them by all possible means accessible to you. Spirituality without compassion and active service to those in distress is a spurious spirituality which will take you nowhere. Rush to the aid of those in distress. Think of ways and means of how best you and your friends, associates and relatives can join together and give urgent and immediate help to those in travail now. God is to be worshipped equally in this manner too. Let your Bhakti and love for God manifest itself in service to the living God that is before you suffering in the garb of starving men and children and cattle.

The vision of Adi Sankaracharya and sublime compassion of the great Lord Buddha claim your serious attention at this hour. If you call yourselves Indians, if you recognise your heritage in the lives and examples and lofty teachings of these two unique persons, if they are still enshrined in your heart and if you remember them both upon the eve of their sacred Birth Anniversary, then behold, see the one as man manifest in all living beings, in the starving, in the diseased, in the poverty stricken, in the suffering and the sorrowing people in endangered areas, where drought, famine and epidemics afflict countless of your brothers and sisters. See "Shiva in Jiva" as the great Vivekananda Swamiji put it and worshipfully offer your compassion as your Maha-Aradhana to this Divinity Manifest as man. Set aside for a while your comfortable religion of early morning bath and your temple Pradakshina and Gayatri and Gita Parayana and take up the worship of the living God at this time of need. Let your religion be the religion of service. This is the moment, when your religion is on trial and you are being tested upon the touchstone of the actual realities of life. Know now what your religion means when it comes face to face with life and its pains. You cannot escape this issue that confronts you. You cannot and should not hide your head under the sand. Demonstrate in the laboratory and testing ground of dynamic life what your religion has done to

you and what it has made out of you. If your religion has not made you selfless, sympathetic, serviceful and sacrificing then bundle it up and throw it into the sea. It is not religion. It is delusion. Start a new and begin to become truly religious. Behold the presence of God in all and worship Him through ceaseless service in dedicated spirit. Trample down your selfishness. There is no greater disease than selfishness O Seeker! Cleanse thyself of this disease and become beloved of God. Religion must be living and it must enter into your daily life. And it must regulate your relations with the rest of your fellowmen. Otherwise it is at best lop-sided and little understood, and it defeats its own purpose and will avail you nothing.

Let the Atma-drishti, the Atma-Bhava of Adi Shankara lighten up your approach to life. “Sarvam Khalvidam Brahma”, “Sarvam Brahma-Mayam”, declare the voice of the spiritual Idealism that is your life-breath. This vision must be translated into action if your cultural Idealism, your spiritual concepts and religion must become a living force for progress and achievement for you. Awake then and LIVE YOUR RELIGION and SPIRITUALITY. Divorce not your religion from your daily life. Do not divide God and man apart. Religion and life, God and man, they constitute a mystical unity and whole. Recognise and apply this. Practise this awareness. You cannot love God and neglect man. You cannot worship God and ignore suffering humanity. Love and worship God. Befriend and serve thy fellow beings. This is religion. This is what Buddha and Sankara would have you do. It is not only necessary to Be Good but it is even more necessary to DO GOOD whenever and wherever life demands it of you. It does so now!

The religion that does not manifest in dynamic daily practice, that does not enter into the very fabric of your character and nature (Svabhava and Achara) and does not infill every little thought and act of yours, that religion will die. It will not live because it is not a living, throbbing reality to you. It becomes as a burden of dead bones. Religion is life.

Make it a purely subjective process and keep it away from your active daily life in the midst of your fellow-men,—by this isolation of your inner from the challenges of your outer living, by this divorce from reality, it loses all vitality and will stagnate. There will be no growth, no progress or development and no attainment. It becomes static and sterile. It becomes as a fossil—pretty but pretty useless. You will just be religious person with no religion in you. Religion means nearness to God. Religion means awareness of God’s Presence not only as a theological fact but also as an indwelling Reality in all forms of life around you. Religious life is more than bath and Puja and Parayana, more than visiting temples, performing ceremonies and going on pilgrimage or even mere Japa and Sadhana only. Religious life implies, must imply for you a life of responsiveness to this inescapable fact of God’s Presence in everything everywhere around you. It implies your active recognition of this fact that “God is here. He is right here in these men and things I am dealing with, I am living amidst and working together in partnership with”. It means this recognition and the natural result of it, namely the coming into your life of a heightened sensitivity to the essential divine quality of all things and beings, a reverence towards this Universal manifestation (Virat or Vishvaroop) of the Supreme Spirit and a feeling that all human life and activity is a process of spiritual communion with the Supreme Being immanent in His creation. Thus you enter into relationship with your God through your life and work. You draw nearer to Him day by day. You approach your goal with each fresh dawn and each new sunset. This is the technique of constant spiritual progress and continuous spiritual unfoldment. It is the secret of true Religion. It is Religion-man’s nearness to God and God’s Presence in man.

This spirit is vitally necessary for you. For then alone it will be a living force in you to combat the downward pull of the lower nature in you. This power alone can oppose and overcome the assailing unspiritual factors in life with which you will have to continuously contend. Again and again you will have to invoke this higher Shakti in your earnest Sadhana to annihilate the baser Rajasic and Tamasic elements of the lower nature that persist and tend to prevail in your life. Again and again you should determinedly destroy and overcome this opposition within you and establish the rule of pure Sattva and the “Daivi-sampatti” in your nature. This is the process unfolded in the life of the divine Parashurama Avatara that we recall this month by observing the anniversary of Parashurama Jayanti. In this process the unregenerate gross undivine aspect will contrive to entrench itself behind unassailable conditions of persistence by numerous devices, as the demonical Hiranyakashipu did of yore. It is then that even in Yoga and in Sadhana Life dynamic Rajas has to be added on to your essential basis of pure Sattva—refer the emergence of the Man-Lion, the great Narasimha Avatara that ultimately put down Hiranyakashipu.

Power of will, spiritual determination and a pervasive opposition to the undivine in all its aspects and all its details becomes the form of this overcoming. Hence the need for your spirit of religion to interpenetrate into every phase and activity of your day-to-day life. Then it becomes the upholder and support of your moral and ethical nature which is the very foundation of the supreme spiritual Illumination. Religion and moral-ethical life are interdependent and mutually indispensable, the one to the other. Remember, Reflect, Meditate and LIVE this truth, this law. Then you will realise the Divine Reality that is behind this law. May God bless you! May you understand the essence and the secret of Religion, Sadhana and Realization and attain the Highest Blessedness and Bliss in this very life! My prayerful Good wishes ever abide with you Beloved Seeker of God!

With regards and love,

1st May 1967.

*Yours in Sri Gurudev
—Swami Chidananda*

Sivanandashram Letter No. XLI

SATSANG IS GOD’S GIFT

Beloved Immortal Atman!
Blessed Seeker after Truth!

Om Namo Narayanaya. Salutations and greetings in the name of Sri Gurudev. May the blessings of God be with you always. As I write these lines from Gurudev’s holy Ashram, the early morning sunshine falls upon me and reminds me that hot summer days have now arrived. The Sun has commenced to turn on its intense summer days and it is difficult even to imagine that just two months before in March, this place was in the grip of an almost winter-like cold wave. In the present heat one finds it difficult even to remember that recent chill-spell.

This entire area is now in the grip of the annual Yatra spirit. With summer has started a steady stream of pilgrims flowing towards the high Himalayan shrines—holy Badrinath, Kedarnath etc. Doors of the sacred temples have opened last month and the devout pilgrim is blessed and sanctified by the Darshan of the Lord. At Rishikesh too, as well as across the Ganges, everywhere there are Satsangas in progress. Thousands of devotees and seekers are highly benefited, inspired and elevated by these Satsangas and spiritual Sravana. Verily this is a Divine region. The Satsanga of his Holiness Swami Bhajananandaji at Paramarthaniketan, the Satsanga of revered Sri Hanumanprasad Poddarji Maharaj and H.H. Swami Sharananandji Maharaj at Geeta Bhavan, the Satsanga of Pujya Shri Mastram Babaji upon the big rock in the Ganges nearabout Lakshmanjhula side are all Divine boons granted by God for the people of this present age. Anyone who comes to Rishikesh during summer must certainly reap the benefit of these Satsangas. Persons of Vedantic inclination can attend the Satsanga of His Holiness Swami Chaitanyagiriji Maharaj at Kailash Ashram and also have Darshan of His venerable Holiness Sri Swami Vishnudevanandji Maharaj.

Satsanga is the very salt of life. The power of Satsanga is indescribable. In Satsanga alone you begin to see clearly, think clearly and know things clearly. Satsanga gradually dispels the Avichara and Aviveka. It gives you insight into the real nature of the fleeting phenomenon of this world. It creates in you the sense of reality of God. It brings about dawn of discrimination. The beginning of wisdom is only to be got in Satsangas. Satsanga takes you into an inner quietness, where restlessness subsides and peace prevails. Satsanga gives you new understanding and opens your eyes to your former follies and errors. It throws light upon the path leading to wisdom and perfection. Satsanga is a boat to take you across the ocean of Samsaric existence to the far shore of Immortality and Eternal Blessedness. Satsanga is God's gift to believing mankind. This Uttarakhand is verily the blessed home of Satsanga since time immemorial. The holy Himalayas and the sacred Ganges have created here a divine atmosphere that is unique and unparalleled in the entire world.

I like to say a word to you about a very important thing with reference to the present prevailing state of affairs in this country as well as throughout the whole world today. The typical features to be observed in the present-day condition seem to be a growing tendency towards mutual hostility, violence amongst sections of people, a tendency to form parties in conflict with other similar parties, emphasising difference instead of unity and oneness, sacrifice of truth and the practice of falsehood in the interest of immediate profit and personal gain. And above all a general restlessness in all fields of man's life. It is important at such a time to have a firm centre in which to abide, to have firm stable moorings founded on fundamental principles and ideals in life. This alone will give stability to your mind and personality without which you will be swept away upon the tides of restlessness that keep coming up again and again.

Hold on to noble principles.

Hold on to fundamental Virtues.

Stick to a code of conduct.

Adhere to a moral pattern of thought, speech and action.

Base yourself upon Dharma or Righteousness.

Have an Ideal before you and try to conform to that ideal in all your life and deeds.

This is the way to remain firm and stable in an agitated age and to acquire a strength that will enable you to resist the impact of adverse and unspiritual forces around you. Hold on to the Divine Principles within you and never move away from it under any circumstances. This will provide you with unassailable protection and strong defence against all combined forces of disorder and disruption in social and ethical life. Trials, trouble and temptations will no longer devastate you and disperse your personality. Your life will be as a house built on rock. Therefore O Seeker be bold! Hold on to noble Principles. Know that Virtue, Character, Moral Code, Dharma and an Ideal these indeed constitute your real strength, your true wealth and life. They give substance to the emptiness of modern existence with its superfluous sensationalism and pleasure pursuing mentality. Principled living is the *bulwark* against chaos. Virtue is defence against temptation and degeneracy. Character is power. Dharma is firmness. Your Ideal is a shining light in darkness around you. *God speed* you onward upon this Shining Path O Child of Eternal Light! Move on towards the Goal of divine perfection. Ever press onwards through all the vicissitudes of life and its ever-changing scenes. You have a great purpose to fulfil, a grand grand goal to reach. Tarry not on the way nor allow trifles to divert you from this glorious quest and its glorious destination.

Rise upon the wings of Virtue and Worship! Gradually ascend into the pure air of spiritual living. Soar into the high heavens of God-Experience. My prayers are ever with you! I wish you Peace, Joy and Illumination. With regards, love and good wishes.

1st June, 1967

—*Swami Chidananda*

Sivanandashram Letter No. XLII

SERVICE TO SUFFERING HUMANITY IS THE TRUE WORSHIP OF GOD

Beloved Immortal Atman!
Blessed seeker after Truth!

Om Namo Narayanaya. Loving Namaskars.

Loving salutations and greetings in the holy name of Gurudev Sivananda. May the special grace of Gurudev be granted unto you upon this month, when the most holy day of Vyasa Puja or Gurupurnima occurs. Ashadha Purnima is to us all a most sacred and supremely blessed day sanctified by the ancient tradition and filled with inspiration, elevation and spiritual renewal. A new dawn awaits all Sadhakas and spiritual aspirants upon this great day. There is a subtle inner spiritual wave set up within your heart at this highly auspicious anniversary, which, if you perceive and take hold of, will take you ahead to greater heights of spiritual progress and inner unfoldment. Prepare from this day onward to meet that holy day with receptive spirit and right attitude of faith, reverence and spiritual exception. You will be immensely benefited now. Have special prayers to the Guru every day in the early morning time. Repeat the Guru-stotras with deep Bhava. Do Japa of your Guru Mantra with renewed zeal. Worship the Guru with fervour and Bhakti. Meditate on the Guru for a little while each night before retiring to bed. And observe the Guru-Purnima day befittingly

with devout spirit and spiritual Bhava. May Guru-Kripa descend upon you and make your life blessed and Divine.

I shall share with you now last month's special event. After my letter to you in the previous issue, Gurudev sent me south to Tumkur in Mysore State for guiding the Second All-Karnataka Divine Life Conference which was held there on the 10th, 11th and 12th June, under the auspices of the Tumkur Divine Life Society Branch. This was a very inspiring and thrilling event of three days, when the people of the town gathered in good numbers to receive the spiritual message of Sri Gurudev and to get light and inspiration from many holy men and scholars. His Holiness the Jagadaguru Sankaracharya Maharaj, of the Shrada Peeth, Dwaraka, graciously inaugurated the Conference, convened at the Tumkur Town Hall. The people had the great good fortune of getting his Upadesh and blessings. Sri Gokak, the learned Vice-Chancellor of the Mysore University, gave a most enlightening discourse one of the days. Their Holiness Sri Swami Prabodhanandaji of the Ramakrishna Ashram of Bangalore and the Swamiji of Saddhaganga Mutt, blessed the assembly through their illuminating spiritual talks. This Conference has created a unique spiritual wave in the town and stirred the hearts of many persons into spiritual aspiration and thirst for knowledge. Sri C.K. Jai Simha Rao, Sri K. Siddhagangiah and Sri P. Narasimhulu deserve our special congratulations for the event.

On the 13th June Gurudev's Seva was done at Bangalore just as on the 8th June when this Sevaka arrived from Delhi. The evening Satsang on the 8th at the Malleswaram Rama Mandir was specially memorable because the assembled devotees all responded wonderfully to call for help of the famine sufferers at Bihar and gave their offerings in the divine Presence of Lord Rama Himself. On this occasion Sri Nikam of Mysore Creations himself donated Rupees One Thousand for this urgent cause of Famine Relief.

The collected amounts were immediately sent to the Bihar Manav Rahat Mandal that is running a Free Kitchen at Rahka near Garhwa in the district of Palamau in Bihar. The Ranka Free Food Kitchen is feeding about 8000 persons daily. The Satsang on the 12th June was in the home of Sri and Smt. C. D. Reddy at Wilson Garden, Bangalore, both of whom are devout followers of His Holiness Sri Swami Chinmayanandaji Maharaj, the renowned spiritual teacher of the present times well known everywhere for his inspiring Gita Yajnas and Upanishad Yajnas. In the evening this servant addressed a gathering at the Indian Institute of World Culture to a very earnest and appreciative audience.

The next engagement was at Rasipuram, near Salem in Madras State, organised by the Divine Life Society at Rasipuram. Sri S. Chandrasekharan had organised several programmes of Satsanga, discourse etc., with the help of his spiritual friends under the guidance of H. H. Sri Swami Sivananda Sreenivasanandaji. Sri M. S. A. Jayaraman was my kind host during the brief stay and served me with great devotion, due to his high adoration of Sri Sadgurudev. The Salem Town D. L. S. Branch also organised one nice Satsang at the *Shantashramam* on the 16th June before my departure for Tiruvannamalai.

This time Gurudev conferred upon me a unique blessing of undertaking a pilgrimage to the sacred Samadhisthan of Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi at Ramanashram, near the holy temple town of Tiruvannamalai. The solemn ceremony of Kumbhabhishekam to the new Mandapam

raised over Sri Bhagawan's Samadhi, took place on the 18th of June and the Sevak was present there at the loving invitation of Sri T. N. Venkataraman, the present head of the Ramanashramam. It was really a grand and an inspiring event and during the three days I was there, the blessed presence of Sri Bhagawan Ramana was felt as a tangible inner experience at once purifying, sanctifying and spiritually elevating. I recalled the visit of Sri Gurudev to this holy Ashramam during his youthful and vigorous Parivrajaka days. I had the unique good fortune of meeting people like revered Sri Muruganar, Sri Arthur Osborne, Sri Nagamma and Sri Venkataratnam and such others, all of whom had the supreme blessedness of close contact with Sri Bhagavan during his life-time. Also, I had the privilege of getting the Darshan, of bowing before holy Sri Janakibai Mata, the God-intoxicated devotee of Sri Ramana Bhagavan. I was happy to be there and to meet them all and also revered Dr. T. M. P. Mahadevan and to listen to his beautiful speech in Tamil. The entire Kumbhabhishekam ceremony conducted by a select group of a large number of learned Vedapathis and Shastries with meticulous care according to strict Vedic ritual was most befittingly conducted and it was a great success. My warmest congratulations to the Trustees of the Ashram for raising this worthy memorial over the Divine resting place of Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi. His Presence and Power indeed radiate from this vibrant Shrine.

Prostrating ourselves before Sri Bhagavan Ramana, we took our leave on 19th morning and returned to Sri Gurudev's holy Ashram on Ganga making a brief halt enroute at Hyderabad where I had the joy of meeting a number of noble Sadhakas and seekers of God and at New Delhi where I spent a day at "Shivanandam", the blessed home of Smt. Sivananda Vanibai to hold a special Satsanga in the evening of the 20th June. Since returning to Gurudev's abode on Thursday the 22nd, I have been filled with thoughts of distressing famine situation in Bihar.

Please let me know what you have done after seeing my letter sent to you in the May Issue of this journal. Have you taken any step to offer your Seva to the suffering brothers and sisters there? Did you send your substantial contribution to the relief work being carried on there by revered Acharya Sri Vinobha Bhave, Sri Jayaprakash Narayanji or by the Manav Rahat Mandal (under the holy guidance of Sant Ranchod Dasji) that is running Famine Relief Camps at Ranka Chinia and Bhandria in the district of Palamau in Bihar. Did you organise any kind of relief work through the help of your friends, relatives and associates? Or have allowed my appeal to go in vain? Will you do it urgently just now? Can you not actually feel the suffering and the agony of the helpless people at this moment? They are a part of us. Their suffering should not go unheeded by even one single true son or daughter of Bharatavarsha. Here is an example of a sincere soul feeling genuinely for his fellow country-men. Sri Bishen Sarup Sharma of Chandigarh sent Rs. 44/- and wrote in his letter: "After going through your letter No. 40 appearing in 'Divine Life' for May, 67, I was greatly moved and impressed and decided then and there in consultation with my wife to contribute Rs. 44/- towards "Living God", who have been hard hit by scarcity of food in Bihar. "This sum of money was in fact specially kept apart by Sri B. Sharmaji to perform a Ramayana Akhandapath to which he had made a Sankalpa (intention) sometime back. Sri Sharmaji writes, "It was to be done in third week of May, 1967 and sum of Rs. 44/- was exclusively kept for this purpose. This religious ceremony would have given me some mental satisfaction and glory. But after going through your letter I earnestly feel that this little donation of Rs. 44/- towards the people of drought-hit area would really go a long way to benefit the cause of Real Religion so strongly pleaded by your Holiness". This is noble. This is great. This is grand. This is the spirit we want and I may tell you that this donor is a man of very modest means not drawing a big salary and has a family of six

persons to support. Similar too has been the gesture of Sri A. R. Nikam of Mysore Creation who spontaneously offered Rs. 1000/-.

I specially call upon the devotees of Gurudev residing in Bihar to stir themselves up and immediately go to the aid of the distressed. Noble souls like Sri Vedanta Jha (Jamshedpur), Sri Shiva Madhavi Devi (Arrah), Rani Chandravati Singh (Gaya), Sri Jittan Singh (Dhanbad), Sri Gopinath (Sitarampur), Srimati Adyavati Sahai (Bhagalpur), Sri M. K. Sinha (Patna), Vinoy Vihariji, and such others must now rise to this occasion and freely give of themselves in works of charity, compassion, selfless Seva and help in various ways. I request them to organise Seva, or offer help towards work being done by Sri Vinobhaji as well as Manav Rahat Mandal. Pujya Vinobhaji and Sri Jayaparkash Narayanji are engaging themselves in Darbhanga area in North Bihar and the address of the other organisation is Manav Rahat Mandal, P. O. Ranka (Via Garhwa), Distt. Palamau (Bihar); A latest report from this spot-worker tells me that the actual famine conditions are more or less under fair control now. The present urgent need seems to be rather of opening up of deep wells for supply of water and also provision of medical aid. With coming of rains may be the fodder-situation for cattle might ease somewhat. But water-problem still continues to be acute, as also medical aid for disease that now prevails as a result of the starvation and under nutrition. Contacting these agencies is the best way of making it clear what is the type of help you may best offer in this situation. May God inspire you to enter into this noble work with your heart and soul. I Pray without fail every day that through His grace and to the earnest effort of all the people of this land that trials of these suffering-brothers may soon be over. May health, prosperity, wealth and welfare prevail in this land and all over the world. God bless you all.

With regards, Prem and Om,

1st July, 1967

—Swami Chidananda

Sivanandashram Letter No. XLIII

BHARATVARSHA IS HOME OF PREMABHAKTI

Beloved Immortal Atman!
Blessed Seeker after Truth!

Om Namo Narayanaya! Om Namo Bhagavate Sivanandaya!

In the holy name of Sri Gurudev I send you all my Greeting and Good Wishes. On behalf of Sri Gurudev, whose Mahasamadhi Anniversary has just been celebrated two days ago, on Sunday the 30th July, I wish you the best of health, long life, prosperity, success and happiness. May Gurudev Sivanandaji graciously grant you the highest spiritual blessedness and supreme Divine Bliss.

Upon this fourth Anniversary of his Mahasamadhi I am reminded with intensity of the four cardinal tenets of Gurudev's Gospel of Divine Life, namely service, devotion, meditation and

realisation. These four comprise the very life and essence of his simple yet sublime spiritual teachings. They sum up his central message to mankind. This Divine Life message he has left for us all, propagate and spread and broadcast all over the land. His Divine Life teachings, he has left to you and me, to live, practise and personify in our daily life. The world should behold the practical expression of Divine Life in the disciples and followers of Sri Gurudev Swami Sivananda. Service is the root of Divine Life. Devotion and worship form the growing tree of spiritual life. Meditation is the flower that blossoms in this life of devotion and worship. Realisation is the fruit of such spiritual life. I call upon you to reflect upon this fourfold principles that constitute the four pillars of Gurudev's great spiritual mission. I commend them to you afresh, in the wake of this recent fourth Anniversary of Gurudev's holy Mahasamadhi.

Base your life upon selflessness and service of others. Grow in devotion and daily worship of God. Train the mind in concentration and meditation through gradual, regular spiritual Sadhana. Obtain the Divine fruit of God-realisation and Immortality. Shine with Divine radiance. Proclaim the Divine message of Gurudev through the length and breadth of the land. Proclaim it wherever you are and wherever you go. Make this Seva part and parcel of your life's activity. Renounce greed, selfishness, anger and jealousy. Become established in Truth, Purity, Love and Selflessness. Value Sadachara above all things. Lead a life of self-control. Live a spiritual life of faith, devotion and aspiration. Seek the Immortal. Move towards the eternal Reality. Realise the transcendental Truth and be in bliss. Rejoice as a liberated soul, freed from the bond of birth and death. This is the servant's earnest exhortation to you upon this occasion, O follower in the footsteps of Gurudev!

Beloved Atman, observe this month as the month of intense prayer, worship and practice of Divine Name. Pray for the welfare of all mankind. Pray for Peace in the whole world. Pray for the relief from suffering and sorrow of all those who are in distress due to war, disease, floods, famine and natural calamity. Pray for the cessation of international tension, violence, hatred, distress and hostility. Pray for the grace of the Lord to grant to man better understanding, spiritual awakening, feeling of brotherhood and oneness, mutual tolerance and spirit of co-operation and service. Pray daily. May the force of united prayer draw man out of darkness of hatred and hostility, and take humanity into a new age of harmony, goodwill, peace and spiritual concord.

Indian religious tradition believes in the occasional descent of Divinity to relieve mankind from travail. Ten such descents of Lord Vishnu are narrated in ancient Puranic texts. On the 11th of this month is the Jayanti of the last of the tenth Avatara, Bhagavan Kalki. He is Lord Vishnu Incarnate, as an invincible spiritual warrior, moving in the world relentlessly destroying every vestige of wickedness, sin and evil and restoring to the earth a state of righteousness, goodness and freedom from sin. Setting aside the universal aspect of this process may you invoke this power within the confines of your own individual personality. Make this month a starting point for the commencement within you of such a process of the total annihilation of all that is undivine and unspiritual of all that is unworthy and impure and a triumphal return to a state of perfect goodness, purity, holiness and spirituality. Eradicate from your nature with resoluteness, determination and dynamic effort, the least vestige of grossness and evil, and grow into a state of lofty virtue, moral beauty and perfection. Set about this task with energy and sound faith in yourself. God speed you to fullest success in this noble task onward unto perfection.

This ideal life of Lord Rama and the Divine Lila of Lord Krishna are very much in my thoughts at this moments when I am writing this letter. Sage Valmiki's Epic biography of the Divine Life of Lord Rama was made available to vast masses of common people through the Immortal poetic work "Sri Ramacharita Manas" by Sant Tulasidas. This great devotee and saintly poet of Bharatavarsha lives in the hearts of all through this great service he has rendered to the masses. As I mentioned last year his exquisite Hindi poetical work is available in its English version for you to study. The book is replete with thrilling incidents and inspiring spiritual admonitions. The entire work is a marvel of rare beauty of expression and excellence of composition. To be absorbed in his study is a sort of Savikalpa Samadhi as it were. Its study is soul-sanctifying. It is work that has in it the Divine Power of transforming your life. This is because it is filled with spirit of deep devotion, limitless faith and the power of Rama Nama. The whole of India will be celebrating Sri Tulasidas Jayanti on the 12th of this month. Commence a systematic study of Ramayana of Tulasidas upon that auspicious Anniversary day. A spiritual treasure contained in the nectarine lake of Ramacharitamansas will be obtained by those who bathe in it by a daily study of this most beautiful scripture. Two gems from it I place before you here. Sant Tulasidas says: "It may be possible to quench your thirst by drinking water of a desert-mirage, it may even be possible to know everything about the horn (non-existent) of a hare, it may even be possible that darkness rises up and destroys the sun (all is that these impossible things may be possible), but impossible it is that by turning away from God one may ever hope to find happiness". Then again: "I behold the whole Universe is permeated by the Lord (Siyaram) and has with my two hands folded, I salute everything in this Universe."

The great Purnavtara, the Divine Lord Krishna, too, fills my mind today for we shall all be soon celebrating His blessed Jayanti or Birth-anniversary at the end of this month (27th August). This is a day of great rejoicing. People throughout India, especially, in Mathura and Brindavan, will be filled with ecstasy, and overflowing with bliss upon the occasion of this wondrous day. So, too, in raptures of devotion will the Bhaktas be at Udipi and Guruvayur in the South, at Jagannathpuri, at Dwarka, Dakoor and Nathdwara in the West. Lord Krishna is easily the very heart and the life-centre of the doctrine of Bhakti in this blessed land of Bharatavarsha. Bharatavarsha is the home of Prema-Bhakti. Bhakti is the one invaluable essence in your life. Life without Bhakti is verily a dreary waste. Waste not precious human birth turning away from God. God is the only one unfailing source of Bliss, Peace and Immortality. Attain Immortality and Blessedness by devoting your life by diligent worship of the Lord and ceaseless quest to attain spiritual union with Him.

Beloved Self perform an eight-day Anushtana of the Divine Mantra of Bhagavan Sri Krishna Om Namo Bhagavate Vasudevaya commencing from 20th August and concluding on the 27th August night. Do a minimum of three Malas of Japa every day. Those who find it possible may do 12 Malas a day, otherwise three malas without fail, preferably in the night. The advent of the Divine occurs in your life when you turn your gaze at the Lord and Lord alone. Thus the world recedes from your vision and fades away from your sight even as the darkness of night-fall makes the world and its objects to fade away and vanish from sight leaving you alone. So, too, let it be night for you what to the worldly-minded people attached to sense-objects is the bright day-light of world-awareness. Let your senses be subdued and quiet, as are the senses of a sleeping person at night. Attain this sense-subdual through the spiritual discipline of Yama and Niyama and self-restraint. Make your mind indrawn even as the sleeper's mind has totally withdrawn itself from perception of and contact with the sense-experiences of this objective world. Attain this inwardness

through the practice of Pratyahara, Uparati and genuine Vairagya. Even as a sleeper at midnight is deep asleep and dead to the world, so, too, be thou dead to this phenomenal existence and deeply absorbed in the Divine Reality. Ceaselessly work for this attainment through a state of Yoga. Sleep the Yoga-sleep of perfect inward awareness. Experience the Divine. May He manifest Himself within your heart with a dazzling brilliance of a million suns. Significant, therefore, is the advent of Lord Krishna in the darkest hour of the midnight for by it we are shown the conditions that are required to be fulfilled if the Lord's advent in our life is to be made possible.

Beloved seeker, through discrimination and non-attachment gradually turn the senses and the mind away from this phenomenal world, through Yama and Niyama, austerity and discipline and subdue the senses. Through Vichara and Vairagya, through Pratyahara and Virakti make the mind inward and God-ward. Through the practice of deep meditation and continuous remembrance become absorbed in the Lord and attain the full awareness of the Divine presence with the depths of your innermost consciousness. Then Krishna is born. Divinity will fill you. Bliss will pervade your life. Everything will be touched with the beauty of His Divine Presence. Auspiciousness and joy will brighten your days. You will rejoice and rejoice for the Lord has now come into you and He abides in you and you in Him. May Lord Krishna bless you.

Another Anniversary of an outstanding significance is what they term the Upakarma day. It is the day for renewal of the sacred thread by all the twiceborn Hindus throughout Bharatavarsha. In this annual renewal of the sacred thread lies the spirit of eternal renewal of the great principles that uphold the Sanatana-Dharma. The sacred threads stand for the lofty principles of Truth, Purity and Austerity. Satyam, Brahmacharya and Tapas constitute the foundation of the life of Dharma and moral Integrity. Thread constitutes the essence of character and good conduct. Without these three fundamental virtues a human being cannot uphold his true nature. A man is a man in name only, unless his life is based upon good character, and his conduct is based upon Dharma. It is this eternal vitality of Dharma and Sadachara that have upheld our culture through the bygone years. Our allegiance and adherence to and faith and steadfastness in these pious moral principles of Truth, Chastity and Self-control are affirmed again and again upon this significant day of Upakarma. Our adoption of these three great principles as the code of life is signified and symbolised through the act of our wearing afresh this sacred thread upon Upakarma day. May these three principles of Satyam, Brahmacharya and Tapas ever hold the rightful place in the life of children of Maha Bharata.

Lastly let me conclude by paying my homage to the memory of the one of the greatest Yogins, the world has ever produced, namely, great Sri Jnaneshwar Maharaj of Maharashtra. He was an Akhanda Brahmachari, a Master Yogi, a great devotee of Lord Krishna and a propounder of the Gospel of the Bhagavad Gita. His Immortal work Jnaneshwary Gita is a priceless mine of spiritual information and instructions. After a marvellous career Sri Jnanadev Maharaj took Jiva Samadhi at Alandi at the young age of twenty years. Thousands of people will be gathering at his living Samadhi of miraculous grace and blessings at Alandi, 14 miles from Poona, upon this holy Jnaneshwar-Jayanti-day on 28th August. It is the invisible presence of these great illumined souls and their subtle spiritual power that uphold India and its Dharma and spiritual culture at the present time. Glory be to the Master Yogi! Glory be to the Lord's Divine Avatara! Glory be to their Immortal and inspiring examples that show us the path of perfection! May we walk in the light of their radiant light and teaching and attain the Divine Goal of life and become supremely blessed.

I am very happy to send you my good wishes.

With kind regards, Prem and Pranams,

Yours at Gurudev's Feet,

1st August, 1967

—Swami Chidananda

Sivanandashram Letter No. XLIV

SIVANANDA—SHINING EMBODIMENT OF DIVINE

Beloved Immortal Atman!
Blessed Seeker after Truth!

Om Namo Bhagavate Vasudevaya! Loving salutations and good wishes to you. I am happy to greet you all upon the eve of Sadguru Swami Sivanandaji's auspicious Birthday Anniversary (80th), that devotees all over the world will be celebrating on the 8th of this month. This time the day is made doubly auspicious, due to the holy Sri Ganesh Chaturthi festival also falling on the same date. As you know, the sacred Ganesh Chaturthi worship is an annual day, specially regarded and highly suitable for making any auspicious beginning, Spiritual life and spiritual endeavour are a process of continuous renewals and new beginnings every day, as it were. It is a process of dynamic progress. You are reborn afresh in the spirit at each moment, when you make a new determination, when you take a fresh step forward, upon this path of Divine Life. It is even as we human beings look upon a new dawn and a new radiant sunrise day after day. Such is the spiritual life.

May the 8th of September, therefore, be to you a glorious new stage in your spiritual journey in every way. I pray that Sri Ganesha, the Lord of success and fulfilment, may shower his choicest blessings upon you and grant you all success in your sincere efforts to attain God-realisation and Divine perfection in this very life.

Success in any field of human life, success in self-management and character building, success in moral culture, success in spiritual Sadhana is all the result of patient and persevering effort. It is the continuous effort without impatience that enables one to reach the end of the journey. Failure to persevere is usually due to distractions by other petty goals and attractions. One should be wise enough not to be lured away by the attraction of unworthy immediate ends while upon the path. The ultimate end should ever be kept before you, in your vision, as the blazing beacon light that calls you onward and ever onward. That should be the greatest attraction more than all other attractions in this Universe. You must move towards it as a piece of iron towards a powerful magnet. Divine Life is a life where God occupies the most central position. It is a life where God is the one Supreme value and dominates all else. It is a life delighting in God. Divine Life is life where there is no room for sorrow or dejection or depression, where there is no room for grumbling or complaining, for, you feel that the all Blissful Divine One is your Treasure of treasures, that He belongs to you and you before to him. Then what can you lack or want, and what more can you

desire or wish for? When you have Him, you feel full and complete. You desire for naught else. This is the spirit of Divine Life. You feel that you dwell in Him and He dwells in you. When this is the fact, the glorious fact, the beautiful and blissful fact, where is the room for sorrow or dissatisfaction. Divine Life, therefore, is a life of fullness and joy.

It is a life of never-ending sweetness and ever-present inspiration. There is no life more sublime, more lofty and supremely satisfying than such Divine Life. We had in Gurudev a visible and shining embodiment of this Divine Life in His own grand person. Does he not radiate still the self-same light before your inner vision. Walk in that light. That is the Divine path. That is the Birthday celebration. You are bound to succeed. Nothing can deter one who perseveres, who has patience, who does not lose heart and who cheerfully keeps moving onward, with faith and love.

I must now express my keen appreciation and admiration for all those Sadhakas and Devotees, who participated in the Gurupurnima, Aradhana and Sadhana week functions. We had a very good attendance and conduct of all the Sadhakas, who had come from different centres of Divine Life Society, from many parts of the country was ideal and exemplary in every way. They strictly adhered to the daily programmes and went through all the disciplines of the three Sadhana sessions of each day, with keen aspiration, earnestness and enthusiasm. They are really most blessed.

I am immensely happy to tell you all that the Ahmedabad Branch of the Divine Life Society conducted very nicely a similar Sadhana-week programme, as well as the Gurupurnima and Aradhana Utsave under the enthusiastic guidance of Acharya Manuvariyaji Maharaj, brother Suryakant B. Shah and Sri Chaturbhujdas Chimanlal Sheth, an ardent devotee of Gurudev and his noble spiritual work. My warmest congratulations to them and all Ahmedabad Devotees. The Bellary Branch of Divine Life Society gave me a pleasant surprise by organising a similar ten-day programme through the earnest efforts of Sri Y. Rama Raoji of that Branch. In different parts of the city, programmes were held on different days and Sri Rama Raoji has created a spiritual stir in the city due to the unique programmes. I warmly congratulate him and his friends and colleagues of Divine Life, who co-operated in making this undertaking a success. Sri Joogalal Sheth of the Sri Radhakrishna Mandir helped greatly in these celebrations. May God bless them all.

Here at Gurudev's holy Ashram, the gathered devotees made this entire period one of blessedness and spiritual inspiration. My most grateful thanks are offered for all of them who contributed in a generous manner towards these functions and enabled us to meet all requirements of the assembled devotees without any difficulty. I must particularly thank Sri Javebhai Bhikhabhai Patel of Petlad, who bore a good part of the feeding expenses at the kitchen. I thank also Sri Sakaram Rao of Bombay, for his devoted gift of Sandalwood pieces for the purpose of daily Chandan at Gurudev's Samadhi Shrine as well as Sri Viswanath Mandir. Also, for his loving presentations of Dhories and towels for the use of Ashram inmates. This useful offering he brings with him invariably every year during this holy period. I also thank brother Sharadananda Yogi at Gangotri (Himalayas), who sent various kinds of devotional Puja items for that day's Maha-Puja at Gurudev's Samadhi, including a huge garland of the rare Brahma Kamalas, that grow in the Himalayan heights, Sri Chamanlal Sharmaji of Delhi for his offering of clothing for the Samadhi Shrine, Sri B. Srikantiah of Bangalore for Sandalwood oil, Agarbathis and Sandalwood Powder,

and Sri A. C. K. Ramaswami Chettiar of Bangalore for packets of Agarbathis so lovingly sent. God bless them all. My joyful thanks.

Upon the organisational side of the functions and their smooth conducting day after day, our revered and beloved Doctor Saheb Sri Sivananda Adhwaryoo did yeoman service and relieved Sri Swami Krishnanandaji Maharaj and other concerned by taking upon himself entirely this onerous responsibility at Swami Krishnanandaji's special request to him in this connection. This is a yearly Seva during this period that Sri Adhwaryoo Maharaj does, for which we cannot sufficiently express our gratitude. By Shouldering the entire burden of the conduct of the strenuous Sadhana programmes, he provides a very great relief to the hard-pressed Ashram authorities, during this time of greatly increased pressure of duties. In this task he was helped very greatly by our "Chinna Swami Garu" (Chota Mahatmaji) Sri Swami Devanandaji Maharaj. My many many thanks to both of them.

And to the many honoured visitors who willingly turned themselves into volunteers and shared many tasks by working with enthusiasm in different Seva including serving meals at Pangat etc., my warmest love and sincere thanks.

The actual celebrations of both the holy Guru-Purnima day (21st July) and the holy Maha-Punyatithi Aradhana day (30th July) were indescribably inspiring, elevating and grand. All were caught up in the waves of devotion, worshipfulness and prayerfulness, and felt uplifted into a feeling of spiritual presence of Gurudev. Upon both these sacred days you were in my thoughts and I personally offered worship to Gurudev, I did on behalf of you and all. I performed the worship in the name of all the members of the Society, of all the Divine Life Society Branches and of all the disciples and devotees of Sri Gurudev all over the world. I also offered Abhisheka, Archana and Arti in the name of our brother Swamis abroad, like Swami Sahajanandaji, Swami Shivpremanandaji, Swami Venkatesanandaji, Swami Vishnudevanandaji, Yogiraj Satchidanandaji, Sivananda Radha of Canada and others. The Aradhana Anniversary night Satsanga continued into the small hours of the early morning of the next day concluding at about 3.30 a.m. On the Punyatithi day, we had the great joy of a visit by our old Gurubhai His Holiness Jeevanmukta Maharaj Sri Swami Visveshwarananda Saraswati, who came from his Jivanmukta Ashram, near Jhandiala Guru, in district Amritsar. The holy Swamiji Maharaj graced our night Satsanga, as also the special afternoon meeting of that day, when he gave a very interesting and inspiring discourse, recalling several experiences of his with Gurudev during the day of his close association in his Seva. You will see a detailed report of the celebrations in the News and Notes Section.

May you all worshipfully celebrate the 8th of September as a Divine Day of rebirth, renewal and a fresh spiritual beginning with new determination to lead an ideal life and to the attainment of Divine perfection. May God bless you with peace, bliss and immortality.

With my deepest regards, best good wishes, love and prayers for your highest welfare and supreme blessedness.

1st September, 1967.

*Yours in Sri Gurudev
—Swami Chidananda*

Sivanandashram Letter No. XLV

LET US INVOKE MOTHER'S DIVINE BENEDICTION

Beloved Immortal Atman!
Blessed Seeker after Truth!

Om Namō Narayanaya! Om Sri Durgayai Namah!

May the Divine Mother bless you with health, happiness, all auspiciousness and supreme blessedness! May Her Divine Grace shower upon you always and bestow upon you long life, prosperity, success in all undertakings and unhampered progress in the path of Dharma and Virtue and Divine Realisation. May Her Shakti enable you to overcome the dark and adverse forces in life, bring about joy and plenty and crown your life with Spiritual Illumination, Bliss Divine and Supreme Peace. May you live a life triumphant, conquering all obstacles and come out victorious.

You are on the eve of a great period of national worship, a worship of the Divine Mother. The ten days of Durga Puja will soon commence and will lift the hearts of millions of people all over India into a higher level of devotion, religious fervour, faith and worshipfulness. Upon the night of the 4th will start this annual worship and on the 13th will be the great vijaya, the day of VICTORY. Defeatist mentality, frustration, dejection, pessimism and failure-oriented living should all take to their heels and vanish upon this great and auspicious day. Let there be the upsurge of the new hope and new vitality and a new spirit in our national life and in your own life, too. May you enter into a new life upon Vijayadasami day.

Upon the rising tide of fervent devotion let the inner and outer life of this country rise into an exalted plane of purposeful endeavour, of resolute will and all-round achievement. More than ever before we all need today the Shakti of the Divine Mother. The course of current events has to change giving place to the positive, constructive and progressive era in the immediate future. Let us therefore, invoke, in one voice, the Mother's Divine benediction. In a single united prayer from Northmost Himalayas to Kanya Kumari and from Eastmost Assam to our Western limits let our aspiring hearts rise up to the feet of the Divine Mother, so as to draw Her Grace upon this land.

May you all see the Divine Mother visibly embodied in Bharatavarsha, the great Mother in Whose lap our Culture and Civilisation has been cradled for centuries past. Bharat-Mata is Divine Mother, personified. Join to make a strong, united and loving brotherhood in the worshipful service and love of this Motherland. Work together to make this land a land of peace, a land of wisdom, a land of plenty and a land of Universal Love. Build up a Sharatavarsha that becomes a force for good among the world of nations. Among yourself be united. Feel the unity of your culture. The great disease of modern mankind is the emphasising of differences and the forgetting of the unifying factor. Be cured of this disease. Stress not upon diversity. See the unity underlying apparent superficial diversity. Your heritage is one. Your view of life is one. Your common aspiration must bring you closer and unite you into oneness. Then alone Bharatavarsha can fulfil the ideal of Lokahita, the ideal of Viswa-kalyana and Manav-seva. In doing this verily you would be worshiping Divine Mother Durga or Parvati Whose living presence is manifest in the Motherland. India needs Mother's grace more than ever before at this present moment, this time. Do not

LET US INVOKE MOTHER'S DIVINE BENEDICTION

approach Her with your little personal prayer. Do not ask Her of fulfilment of petty selfish desire. Rather may your 9 days' worship be dedicated to the cause of the welfare of the entire nation, pray for all humanity. May your worship be dedicated for the release of Bharatavarsha from her present afflictions. May your worship of the Mother be dedicated to the cause of National unity, cultural brotherhood and welfare of the entire land. This achievement of unity, brotherhood and common-weal would be your greatest victory rather than gain against any other country or people. Make effort in the right direction. Unify. Unify. Unify. May Divine Mother bless you.

O blessed Mother of the Universe! O compassionate Mother, deign to cast Thine eye of mercifulness and love upon suffering humanity. I implore Thee Mother with folded hands to grant that all mankind may have peace and happiness. I bow at Thy feet and beseech Thee to bring to an end all hatred, enmity, war and violence. May there be peace on earth. Grant that all those in sorrow, pain and suffering may be relieved of their distress and obtain comfort, joy and well-being. Grant to man the light of better understanding so that he may cast aside greed and selfishness and walk the path of virtue. Fill his heart with the spirit of service and spontaneous love for all beings. Guide Thou his footsteps along the path of wisdom and goodness so that mankind may soon move into a brighter tomorrow of harmony, concord, mutual tolerance, co-operation and spiritual oneness in God. May man cast out evil tendencies from his nature and adopt the rule of Dharma and virtue in his conduct and his dealings! Universal Mother, draw away erring man from the path of self-destruction and genocide into the path of Divine Life of Truth, Purity and Universal Love. Upon my knees in worshipfulness and fervent prayerfulness I call upon Thee Mother to take mankind towards Peace, Happiness and Blessedness. Victory to Thee! Mother; May Thy divine might triumph over all that is unspiritual and un-divine and ungodly. May this world become a house of joy for Thy Children to dwell in and to work for their destined goal of spiritual perfection. May love prevail in the hearts of all! May justice and compassion impel their hands to right action. May Your Presence be felt by all and at all times. Glory be to Thee! Hail, Hail to Thee O Glorious Mother of the Universe!

Beloved and blessed Children of the Divine Mother, live divinely in a way worthy of your Mother both as the invisible Universal Self, as well as the visible Bharata Mata. The way to peace and happiness lies not through falsehood, greed and selfishness but in truth, simplicity and selflessness. Virtue leads to happiness. Where there is deliberate adoption of evil ways of living and acting great pain and sorrow result. Decline of virtue is the source of sorrow. Natural calamities come as the direct consequence of evil ways. The universal law of cause and effect should not be ignored. This law is not only for the individual but to whole groups, entire societies and to nations as well. To cherish and inculcate and encourage virtuous living is the greatest service of the motherland. The rule of virtue as a social code of conduct should be adopted over the entire country and the same should be taught systematically as a Science of Life in all educational institutions in the form of a specific subject in the syllabus in all universities throughout India. In this lies the salvation of this country. This alone will make our reverence of Goddess Saraswati true and significant. Do not confine your concept of the great Mother Vidya-Dayini merely to History or to Algebra and Geography nor to Botany and Biology. They are like accumulation of zeroes minus the positive factor of the Science of Life implied by Dharma Shastra. Man must first be taught how to live like a noble and ideal human being. Then other forms of knowledge add to his happiness and progress. Otherwise lacking the gift of humanity all other knowledge runs the risk of perversion and misuse. This very knowledge then becomes the root of suffering and the cause of self-destruction.

Let Dharma Shastra therefore take its rightful place in our social and national life. Let Dharma Shastra become part and parcel of education which is being given to the growing generation. This alone will be guarantee tomorrow of national stability and order, in the place of the instability and disorder today. Man creates conditions and circumstances according to his nature and behaviour. His nature and behaviour are moulded by right education. Right education creates character, refinement and culture. Character and true culture are the only true safeguards against varnished barbarism. Let education, therefore, be illumined with ethics and become a process of character-building and of man-making. Let education create a decent and dignified generation which in its turn would effectively create a stable and progressive society that would lead the nation into a bright future. Let us invoke the aid of God that our prayer may be realised in coming days.

Beloved Atman, this is your sacred mission in life,—to promote virtue in all fields of your society, in which you live and move, as a responsible citizen and an individual benefiting from the society and its wealth. As a member of this spiritual institution and as a true follower of our worshipful Gurudev Swami Sivanandaji you must raise aloft the great principles of service, devotion and spiritual idealism. You must raise your voice in the cause of righteousness. You must strive ceaselessly to live in truth, purity and selfless love and service. You must ceaselessly strive to propagate these virtues through your life and labours. Thus I urge you to be earnest, purposeful and dynamic in Divine Life. May God bless you.

May the Grace of Divine Mother enable you to victoriously achieve this noble mission of living and spreading Divine Life through the sincere and persistent combined efforts of you all. May truth, righteousness and goodness emerge triumphant for the highest good of all.

Wishing you joy, peace and blessedness and with my warmest regards,

1st October, 1967

*Yours in Gurudev
Swami Chidananda*

Sivanandashram Letter No. XLVI

LET THE LIGHT OF VIRTUE EVER SHINE BRIGHT IN YOUR CHARACTER

Beloved Immortal Atman!
Blessed Seeker after Truth!

Om Namō Narayanaya! Om Sri Mahalakshmyai Namah!

Salutations and greetings of the season to you all. In the holy name of Sri Gurudev I wish you all a most happy Dipavali and pray that the radiant Goddess Lakshmi may shower Her Grace upon you and grant you prosperity, plenty, success and all-round blessedness. May auspiciousness attend upon you at every step. May health, beauty, virtue and spiritual progress accrue to you. I wish you and all your near and dear ones health, joy and advancement in life.

This bright Festival of Lamps comprises a Universal collective expression of the spirit of our ancient Vedic prayer TAMASO MA JYOTIR GAMAYA,—“from darkness lead us unto Light.” Upon this Dipavali night every year we affirm our determination to banish darkness with bright lights. Spiritual ignorance is darkness. Anger is darkness. Hatred is darkness. Greed is darkness. Illiteracy and lethargy is darkness. Deceit and treachery is darkness. Disloyalty and subversion is darkness. Unrighteousness is deep darkness. So is gross materialism. The opposite of these comprises light.

Through virtue and wisdom, through purity and truthfulness, through unselfishness and service awaken the Light of Divine Life and banish darkness. Let the light of virtue and goodness shine bright in your character and conduct. Let thy thoughts be noble, thy feelings sublime, thy speech polite and friendly, all the actions kind and good. Let every noble word and deed be as so many bright lamps in this darkness of selfish materialistic earthly life. Become a centre of Light.

My special greetings this month to all devotees and votaries of Lord Kartikeya or Skanda Bhagavan, the warrior-son of Uma-Maheshvara. The devotees of Velayudha Muruga everywhere in India will be observing the holy Skanda Sashti this week. Places like holy Palani, Tiruchandur, Tiruttani and similar Kshetras will be overflowing with Subrahmanya Bhakti and the praise of the youthful wielder of the Divine Spear. Earnest devotees in our country’s Capital will be worshipping on 7th November at His shrine at Uttar Swamimalai. Bhagavan Kartikeya bestows success in Sadhana to spiritual aspirants! He is the embodiment of Daivi Sampatti and Sadhana Shakti. He personifies the power of Divine Grace as the irresistible inner force that ultimately overcomes all unspiritual and ungodly factors in the seeker’s life. His Divine Spear is the power of sustained meditation which overcomes all obstacles and pierces the veil of Ajnana bringing the Sadhaka face to face with God.

We bow to the exalted memory of the great Sage Yajnavalkya, the most towering spiritual personality of the Upanishadic era. His Birth Anniversary falls on the 11th of this month. He was the grand old man of Divine Wisdom who shone resplendent in the great royal court of the philosopher-king Raja Janaka of Mithila. Some of the most precious wisdom-gems from the priceless Upanishadic treasure are the illuminating words of Sage Yajnavalkya. In his immortal discourse to his perceptive wife Maitreyi, the venerable sage expounds the Atman as the one and the only supreme value in all existence. In this inspiring dialogue between the sage-husband and aspiring wife, we find the essence of India’s spiritual genius and the central concept of the Indian vision of man and his life’s goal. In this we have the keystone to the invisible structure of our sublime spiritual heritage. I salute that great soul Yajnavalkya who gave us this inspiring and electrifying truth. O children of Bharatavarsha, lose not this vision of life. This is the very life-impulse in Indian culture.

A unique worship takes place in this month. It is the worship of sacred Tulasi (holy Basil) exclusively conducted by ladies only. It is a woman’s worship of a Holy Lady, who has been sanctified and elevated to the status of a celestial being. There is significance in this worship. For Tulasi personifies the lofty virtue of feminine chastity. Tulasi is the ideal of faithful and unswerving loyalty to the chosen Lord of one’s heart. It is a singleness of devotion, and dedicated adoration of the one and only chosen partner of your life. Tulasi is Maha Pativrata. She ranks with Anasuya, Sita and Tara. Feminine chastity is a Divine Virtue. It is the glory and resplendence of Bharatya

Sanskriti (Indian Culture). It is a rare fragrance in woman's personality. It is a real power possessed by a lady, which makes her a Goddess in her family and a shining light of the home. A chaste woman is worthy of worship. The gods themselves bow at her feet. A woman who is firmly established in this lofty virtue of chastity is verily a Divine being, though in human garb. She purifies the entire society in which she lives. They can overcome the whole world. All men are as mere children before such an exalted soul. This is the true glory of real Indian womanhood. Hail to Devi Tulasi! Hail to all ideal women of chastity, purity, spotless morality, nobility and sublime dignity. My silent prostrations and adorations at their worshipful feet again and again.

I should not conclude without recalling to your mind two great religious reformers and spiritual leaders who have left their mark upon the Indian Society and given to us a heritage of wisdom and worship. The great Guru Nanak in Punjab and the extraordinary Sant Jnaneshvar Maharaj of Maharashtra opened up new era of religious toleration, broad-mindedness and universality. They form a common heritage of the whole of this nation. The teachings of Guru Nanak Dev are incorporated in the holy 'Guru Granth Saheb'. The teachings Of Sant Jnaneshvar Maharaj are enshrined in his immortal classic "The Jnaneshvari Gita". These great leaders brushed aside empty forms and rituals and brought out the spiritual essence of real religion. They strove to root out blind superstition and gave back to man a living faith in and love for the Universal Godhead. They boldly proclaimed the spiritual oneness of all men. They challenged the claim of selfish orthodoxy to a monopoly of man's approach to his Creator. They expounded the indescribable greatness of God's Divine Name and the importance of leading a pure life of good conduct and service unto others. They stressed upon the spiritual meaning and purpose of man's life on earth. The culture of this country has been indeed enriched by the lofty contribution made by the life and work of these noble two sons of Bharatmata namely, Sant Jnaneshvar Maharaj and Sadguru Nanak Dev. May their teachings spread. May their name live forever. May they be ever enshrined in your heart. Glory to Guru Nanak. Glory to Sant Jnaneshvar. O you resplendent sons of Mother India, may you guide the people of this blessed land towards unity, selflessness, mutual co-operation and a life of purity, service and sacrifice. May your inspiring teachings guide us all along the path to a Good Life and God-vision.

I close now with some good news to all lovers of Divine Life. The Society's Branches in Andhra Pradesh have finalised the plans for the holding of the Eleventh Andhra Pradesh Divine Life Conference. Shri P. Ramalingeshwar Rao, advocate, is organising the Conference and the venue is Kovvur, (in West Godavari District) which is his hometown. The dates are made to coincide with the Makara Sankranti or Pongal holiday, that is the 13th, 14th and 15th January, 1968. I wish the Conference glorious success.

Another happy event is the Fourth International Yoga Convention at Gondia, Maharashtra, organised by the International Yoga Fellowship of Monghyr under the able guidance of my spiritual brother His Holiness Paramahansa Swami Satyanandaji to whom the institution and all its admirable activities are devoutly dedicated by its holy Foundress Ma Yogashakti, the dynamic chief disciple of Paramahansa Satyanandaji Maharaj. The Convention is meeting from the 1st November to the 7th November and is attracting Yoga enthusiasts from many countries. This is a developing Yoga Movement which promises great future possibilities, holding much benefit to people all over the world. I wish this Yoga Movement all the success that it richly deserves.

With my prayer to the Lord for your highest happiness and welfare and with my best Dipavali good wishes and greetings I close this letter. Accept my best regards and Prem.

1st November, 1967

Yours at Sri Gurudev's feet,
—Swami Chidananda

Sivanandashram Letter No. XLVII

SPIRITUAL AWAKENING—PURPOSE OF HUMAN LIFE

Beloved Immortal Atman!
Blessed Seeker after Truth!

Om Namo Narayanaya! Great indeed is my good fortune to communicate with you through this letter, month by month, during this present year that is now drawing to its close. Through my monthly letter to you I have endeavoured to talk to you and express myself and share my thoughts on matters pertaining to your life, to our culture, to Sanatana Dharma and to Sri Gurudev's great spiritual message and precious spiritual teachings. This to me is sacred service to Sri Gurudev and is also to me a means of keeping personal contact with you and thus coming closer to you as a member of Divine Life fraternity, brought into being by our holy Gurudev Sri Sivanandaji Maharaj. It is a joy to me therefore to keep in touch with you, through this Sivanandashram Letter in this way.

Blessed Atman! Through these lines I seek to arouse within you a constant awareness of the spiritual purpose of your life. I seek to remind you of the great importance of upholding Dharma in your daily life. I strive earnestly to hold up before your vision the lofty goal of God-realisation and to place before you our worshipful Sri Gurudev's central teachings of selfless service, devotion to God, daily spiritual meditation and Supreme Divine Illumination. To bring the light of spiritual and moral ideals in every walk of life and into every activity of yours is the aim of this monthly letter of mine that comes to your goodself from this most holy and beautiful Ashram of Sri Gurudev Sivananda, where it is my sacred privilege to serve at his feet as his earnest servant and slave. It brings to you the voice of the Himalayas and message of the mother Ganges and it comes you with a call to Divine Life of truthfulness, purity, compassion, kindness, love and practical goodness. The Sivanandashram Letter tries to further this spiritual service of seekers and Sadhakas, which was Gurudev's central mission in life. It carries the essence of Yoga and Vedanta and Gurudev's gospel of religion in daily life and worship through service. If by doing this, I am enabled to repay even the tiniest fraction of the immeasurable deep debt of gratitude, which I owe to the sacred feet of Gurudev, I would deem myself most blessed. Thus this monthly Sivanandashram letter is to the writer the means, whereby the great Guru is served and by which you too who are Gurudev's spiritual heirs receive my service. It constitutes one of the avenues through which I render service to sacred Bharatavarsha and Bharatiya Samskriti (our mother-culture) by constantly reminding her children about their noble heritage, their serious duty and the sublime ideal which they must fulfil in their lives, individual as well as corporate. In this letter I come into your home. I sit by your side and I speak to you in person of tasks to be done, of things to be remembered, of the importance of living life spiritually and of great blessedness of human birth. I speak of the path to peace and the way to bliss and above all of the pervading presence of God and His ever-nearness to you. Beloved Self, in

God and God alone can you ultimately find true happiness and real fulfilment. Apart from Him, life is a meaningless burden to those ignorant of the glorious spiritual goal. God is the greatest value, Grand Glorious REAL. All this I say to you and the Sivanandashram Letter brings you my words, as prompted by Sri Gurudev, whose servant I am. It is an expression of my love, symbol of my Seva, fulfilment of spiritual duty and means of offering homage to God.

Look back and briefly review the eleven months that have gone by. How has been the year with you? Or rather shall I ask you how have you been during this period of the year that is now drawing to close? Have you made it a year of progressive self-culture and self-conquest? How much have you gained physically, ethically and spiritually? Have you earnestly worked towards certain set goals and significant attainment? Have you striven to make life a Divine Life? Have these past eleven months seen a substantial advance in truthfulness, purity and self-control, kindness and goodness and the overcoming of anger? These are the questions before you, which you must answer at this moment. It is in the light of these true and honest answers that you can move towards the coming India, with the right understanding of yourself and right determination to utilise the days ahead properly and well, to your highest benefit and for your greatest good. This right understanding, right resolve and right action verily constitute the essence of real life.

The most valuable and the most important thing in a country and its people is the culture that they evolved. Their culture contains their distinctive sense of value, their view of life and their ideals of conduct and what they consider to be the ultimate goal to be attained by them through this life. Life in India had ever been based upon the great culture, derived from the Vedas that were the repositories of deep wisdom. The highest wisdom of this richest treasure is to be found in the later parts that are known as the Upanishads. The very essence of this Upanishadic wisdom is contained in the sublime little scripture, The Bhagavad-Gita, the Universal Gospel of all mankind. It is the direct personal teachings of God Himself in His incarnation as Lord Krishna. The supremely auspicious day, upon which this Divine Wisdom was given to man, is marked by the Gita Jayanti, which is the sacred Anniversary to all people throughout India. On the 12th of this month this auspicious Anniversary will be observed everywhere in this land by all patriotic sons and daughters of India. The Srimad Bhagavad Gita is an immortal treasure inherited by you. Peace, joy and freedom from fear will be yours if you received the teachings of Gita and imbibe its wisdom. To live in the spirit of Gita is to be master of all situations and to possess the secret of successful living. Will you be victim of life or come victorious through life? You can choose and decide what you will. The wonderful Bhagavad Gita will enable you to do this and will help you to go through life as a master and as a changeless witness of the changing scene. All things are possible to man if he will manfully exert and persevere in his efforts. Thus declares the Gita.

Absorb into your very self the wondrous message of Gita. Live, breathe and act in the spirit of its sublime gospels. Follow its practical teachings; you will obtain strength, joy and peace. It will grant you complete freedom from tension, worry and fear. It will reveal to you the secret of mental equipoise amidst all circumstances. Herein I give you a gist of Gita teachings. Listen carefully. Remember and act. Thou art immortal Soul. Thou art neither body nor mind. Thou art indestructible, imperishable Atman. Nothing can harm you. The physical body has birth and death. But it is only a covering or mere cage in which you reside while on earth. You are deathless. In your real nature thou art Immortal. Remember this. Realise this. Now become free from all weakness, fear and superstition.

Live with this radiant awareness and perform all actions in a spirit of inner detachment and desirelessness. Have neither love nor hatred. Be balanced in pleasure or pain, loss or gain, and success or failure. Be alike to good and evil persons. Neither become unduly elated nor depressed by any events, or occurrences. Such equanimity brings peace. This peace grants happiness.

Control the senses. Control the mind. Subdue desires. Persevere in this practice. Have self-reliance; be confident. Uplift thyself through determined effort. Slay all cravings. Sit alone in silence every day. Sit in a steady posture. Do not shake the body. Be relaxed. Breathe evenly. Withdraw the mind and the senses. Turn thy gaze and fix it within. Now gently concentrate and meditate. Gradually the mind will become steady like the flame of the lamp in a windless place. Meditate, Meditate, Meditate. You will come face to face with the inner Reality and attain wisdom.

Do not indulge in mere talk and philosophical gossip. Be a practical man. Do something noble in this life. Develop virtue. Live to serve others. Regard life as a sublime Yajna or self-offering meant to be glorified by dedication to the noble cause of working for the happiness of others. Such work verily becomes worship of the Supreme. Inwardly be ever united with the Divine through constant remembrance of Him. This Universe is the manifestation of the Lord. Behold Him in the glories of the Nature. See Him in all names and forms. Feel His Presence at all times. This enables you to enter into communion with Him. You will have the descent of His Grace.

Prepare thyself for this Divine descent through right conduct, right faith and purity of life. Overcome Rajas and Tamas. Fill your life with Sattva Guna. Make your life pure and Sattvic in all its details. Have knowledge of the three gunas. Learn to discriminate between the divine and the undivine, between the spiritual and unspiritual, between the holy and the unholy. Manifest in your life and conduct the divine qualities and totally renounce and cast out the undivine from thy nature. Give up totally lust, anger and greed. Surrender yourself at the feet of the Lord. Follow the sacred teachings of the Gita. Fulfil the Divine Will. You will never come to grief. Health, prosperity and victory will be thine. Cling firmly to the Lord and go thy way doing all thy duties in a spirit of detachment and joy. Blessed Self, this is indeed the call of the Gita to you. Respond to it. Crown your life with success.

I am glad to tell you that we are having three Divine Life Conferences next month (January, 1968) in Gujarat, Andhra Pradesh and Orissa consecutively. The First Gujarat State Divine Life Conference is to take place on the 4th, 5th, 6th and 7th January, 1968 in Baroda. The Twelfth Andhra Pradesh Divine Life Conference is fixed for 11th, 12th and 13th January, 1968 at Kovvur (West Godavary Dist.). The Twenty-first All India Divine Life Conference and the Third All-Orissa Divine Life Conference are to take place at Berhampur, (Dist. Ganjam) on 21st, 22nd, 23rd and 24th January, 1968. Divine Life Society Members and devotees in the different States mentioned above should make the best use of this opportunity and try and attend their respective Conferences.

The Cuttack D. L. S. Branch has rendered noble service in the cause of the relief of people affected by the terrible typhoon that has caused untold havoc in Orissa. Report has been received of their group of volunteers that went to the affected area and served the distressed there. This is a noble activity that is pleasing to the Lord and will confer blessings upon the selfless Sevaks.

I bow in Homage to Bhagavan Sri Dattatreya and to Lord Viswanath whom we remember and specially worship during this month. May God shower His Divine grace upon you all and grant you health, long life, prosperity and Divine Blessedness.

With regards, Prem and Om,

Yours in Sri Gurudev

1st December, 1967.

—Swami Chidananda

Sivanandashram Letter No. XLVIII

GLORY OF GURUDEV'S UNIVERSAL PRAYER

Radiant Immortal Atman!
Blessed Beloved Divinity!

Adorations and homage unto the supreme Universal Being! Salutations to you in the holy name of the worshipful Guru Sri Swami Sivananda. At the dawn of the New Year I send you through this letter my sincere Greetings and good wishes for your long life, health, happiness, prosperity and highest spiritual blessedness. May God shower upon you His Divine Grace, and fill all your days with joy, peace, plenty and spiritual beauty. May all obstacles be overcome, may all difficulties depart, may all problems be solved and may discord give place to harmony. May the Music of Divine Life fill your life with melody and sweetness.

Upon this solemn and auspicious anniversary of the conclusion of the old year and the commencement of the New Year, I wish to proclaim to you briefly Gurudev's Message of Divine Life now. Resolve to live a life of selflessness and service unto all beings. Worship God with devotion and develop Divine Love. Meditate upon the Supreme Being regularly each day without fail. Ever aspire to realise the eternal Reality (God), through right enquiry, discrimination and metaphysical reflection and spiritual contemplation. Strive to lead a pure life of noble good conduct and holiness in thought, word and deed. Be a doer of good action. Develop the vision of One in the spirit of Unity. Practise the Presence of the Divine and dedicate all the actions to the Divine. Life is meant to manifest the highest divine nature that is inherent within you. Utilise life towards this sublime end here and now. Start living this Divine Life today. Waste not time. Postpone not. Do not hesitate. Do not worry. Be bold and cheerful. You will have a glorious future. Strive on with fullest hope. You are bound to succeed. You will succeed, I assure you, my beloved Friend! God speed you upon this bright path to divine perfection and eternal blessedness.

Today on the threshold of the New Year I call upon all and appeal to you, and urge you to exert ceaselessly and do your best to give a positive touch and constructive turn to the prevailing atmosphere and mood of negativity, vandalism and arrogance that appear to be prevailing on all sides at the moment. Live and work to uphold the name and honour of your Motherland, of your culture. Work for love and unity. Do everything you can to save the integrity, solidarity and identity

of your country and its worthy way of life. By every means strive to safeguard the ideals and values you have inherited as the food of the life and labours of numerous noble dedicated sons and daughters of our country, who had lived before us over the previous centuries.

The two great needs of humanity as a whole are being neglected everywhere and this is resulting in gloom and confusion. These vital needs are to live with the idealism and adherence to virtue. Social ills, economical ills and political ills, all result out of the degradation of the human nature and individual character through loss of faith in idealism and development of selfishness. Consequently virtue has become a casualty and unhappiness and confusion are the direct results. The law of life cannot be ignored and broken, nor its consequences escaped. The Law is that virtue and goodness ultimately lead to welfare and happiness. Misery and misfortune are the inevitable results of evil ways of living bereft of virtue. This is a fact. And when will man be wise and realise this? There is urgency to do so now. Do all that you can to practise and uphold these two great principles of idealism in life and adherence to virtue. Man must be guided by them or otherwise there is no other way out of conflict, calamity and suffering. Why court sorrow and needlessly invite sufferings upon yourself when you can behold right at hand the gateway that leads you to joy and blessedness to peace and stability? I ceaselessly pray that wisdom might prevail and mankind will invite joy and well-being through the Good Life. Blessed Atman, join me in my prayers. Let us pray ceaselessly for commonweal and universal welfare, prosperity and happiness.

Let me remind you of worshipful Gurudev's admonition, He said, "Watch and pray. Pray and work. Work and wait". This then must you do to achieve any worthwhile goal before this life passes and you have to quit this stage of the eternal drama of life. Be watchful. Be prayerful. Be active and be patient. Activity without prayer will lead you to greater bondage. Prayer without watchfulness will be assailed by temptations too strong to overcome. Work without patience will lead to frustration and pessimism. Prayer when not backed up by corresponding work to express itself runs the risk of evaporating into unrealistic sentimentalism. Be watchful unto prayer. Pray and diligently labour to make the prayer to come true. Work and patiently wait upon the will of God. For to work is your duty and the part that you have to play. The bringing about of the result of work, you should leave in the hands of God.

When this letter reaches your hands I shall probably be in Baroda (Gujarat) participating in the All-Gujarat Divine Life Conference. For I shall be leaving Rishikesh this evening to commence my annual tour. On the night of the 7th, after the conclusion of the Conference, our Ashram party will leave Baroda for Andhra Pradesh via Bombay-Hyderabad to arrive at Kovvur for the 12th Andhra Pradesh Divine Life Conference, fixed for 11th to 13th January. From 14th to 18th January follows a brief tour of A. P. visiting three or four centres. We are to reach Berhampur on the night of the 19th to have last moment consultations on the next day regarding 21st All-India Divine Life Conference & the Orissa D. L. Conference, both of which commence simultaneously on January 21st and conclude on January 23rd. There is a week's tour in Orissa including a visit to sacred Jagannath Puri before departing from Balasore for Calcutta on 31st. At Calcutta our brothers Sri Rajani Mohan Chakrawarty and Sri Sivananda Neelakantan, with the generous help of Sri Raghunath Singh Aggarwal, are bringing out the Bengali Edition of the book, "GOD AS MOTHER" and intend to have it released on the 1st or 2nd of February. Therefore this servant with his party will sojourn briefly in the city of the Divine Mother on the first two days of the month of February. Then I am to visit the Divine Life Society Centres at Rourkela and Rajgarh (M. P.) before

continuing further. The return to the Ashram will be early in the 4th week of February, to be in time for Holy Mahasivaratri, which is on 26th February. During the whole of March this servant will be at Sri Gurudev's Ashram at the Headquarters. The Chikmagalur Branch of the Divine Life Society in Mysore State has decided to conduct the 3rd All-Karnataka Divine Life Conference at Chikmagalur on 5th, 6th and 7th April. This Sevak will attend. Immediately after the Conference, there is likelihood of his having to travel to South Africa from where insistent requests have been coming for a visit. If it is the Lord's Will I shall have to go whenever the inevitable travel formalities are finalised. I suppose Gurudev will look to it as he thinks fit.

In the meanwhile chill winter has closed in upon these northern parts; there is a comparative lull in the temple of visiting devotees and seekers at this holy Ashram. Yet despite the cold there are always some earnest souls braving the winter and seeking the peace and spiritual inspiration of this Ganges bank abode of Gurudev Sivananda. The special Forest Satsanga before the Dattatreya Temple on the 16th December on holy Dattatreya Jayanti day was reminiscent of the holy function during Sri Gurudev's time. The Forest resounded with the Kirtan of the Lord's Name and the devotees partook of the Prasad squatting under the trees upon the bare earth in the jungle. Holy Christmas was solemn and inspiring and actively assisted by a number of seekers from countries abroad who happened to be present on that Great Day. The midnight worship of the great Yogi of Nazareth, the divine incarnation Jesus, was celebrated with both devotion and fervour as well as gaiety and joy so as to give the seekers from foreign lands a touch of homely spirit to this their holiest and most important festival of the year. They were made to feel that this too was their home and that they were truly in the midst of their family (Spiritual family). The 24th Pratishtha Anniversary of Lord Sri Viswanath was celebrated at the Sri Viswanath Mandir on the 31st of December. That night the Satsanga went upon beyond 12 o'clock midnight to conclude with solemn midnight meditation of the Great Night commencing in the last portion of the departing year and carried onward into the first quarter of the New Year. All the devotees arising from the meditation took leave of one another after exchanging New Year Greetings.

Beloved Friend, a New Year lies before you. Look forward and move into this period ahead with faith and hope and in charity. The past has passed on. Forgive and forget your erring friends or offenders. Enter into a new life of Divine Compassion, goodness, love and magnanimity. Now, this day, take God into your home and make Him a member in your family. Learn to live with God, in God, for God. Establish Him in your heart. Express Him through your life. Let your home radiate with the living Presence of the Divine. May thy entire family grow into a divine household. Strive to achieve this and this will be your greatest contribution to contemporary society as well as to your Bharatavarsha, your Mother Country. This indeed would constitute the really wise, sane and rational process of bringing about a true Welfare State. The goodness of man is the key to happiness of mankind. Individual character and conduct is the root of social and national welfare. Character is the greatest wealth. Sadachara is Divine. In character lies the secret of successful planning and of all during attainments. Our Culture stands for Character. I commend to you the UNIVERSAL PRAYER by Sri Gurudev as the unfailing formula for happiness, prosperity and success. Peace and progress will result from this Great Prayer. The sublime essence of all the scriptures and the teachings of all the holy saints and men of wisdom is contained in this wonderful prayer. Make it your life-breath. Beloved Friend, try earnestly to live this prayer. During this year propagate this prayer far and wide. It is of priceless worth. Each line of it is more worth than its weight in gold! I request all of you who read this, to try to get the prayer printed (in any size, big or small, and on any

paper, fine or coarse) and distribute it widely and freely. Print it on one side only so that people can paste it on board or frame it. Translate it into your vernacular language. Get it published in monthly magazines or weeklies or daily papers. Introduce it in schools, clubs and groups. It is universal. It belongs to the whole world. It is above religion. If it is done on costly paper and in big size, you may fix a nominal price if you may wish. If you cannot manage to print it by yourself get together half a dozen of your friends and manage to print a thousand copies at least. Let this world-saving prayer reach every home. Make this prayer circulate throughout the universe. Teach it to your children. Recite it daily at dawn and eventide. **MAKE THIS YEAR 1968 A PRAYER YEAR.** Great good will come out of it. In this issue of this magazine I have got this Universal Prayer printed on a separate page elsewhere. That page is perforated. You can carefully detach the page by tearing off along the perforated line. Preserve it as a special New Year gift from Gurudev Swami Sivananda, the holy Master of the Himalayan Region. It will bless your home. It will take you towards Divine Perfection. It shows the path of Divine Life. May God bless you. May this New Year be a glorious year for you. You have my best wishes for your long life, health, happiness, prosperity and success. I send you my love, regards and salutations in the name of God and in the name of Gurudev Sri Swami Sivananda, the light of our life. Thou art Divine. Live Divinely therefore. Abide in God and walk in Light.

Yours in Sri Gurudev,

January, 1968.

Swami Chidananda

Sivanandashram Letter No. XLIX

LIVE DIVINELY

Worshipful Atma Swarup!
Beloved seekers after Truth!

Om Namo Narayanaya! May the blessings of Sadgurudev be upon you. May He grant health and happiness, peace and prosperity to you. I am writing this monthly letter from Andhra Pradesh, where we just had the sanctifying Darshan of Lord Ramachandra at the Bhadrachalam temple. The living Deity of this temple is a unique aspect of Lord Sri Rama, as the transcendental Divine Being. The Lord is worshipped here not as Dasaratha-Rama, but as Vaikuntha-Rama. The Lord here is in the Chaturbhuj of four-handed form. He bears the Sudarshan Chakra, the sacred Shaukha and He has the bow and arrow at the other hands. The famous saint Bhadrachalam Ramadasa Swami was supremely graced by Lord Sri Rama here. Through him I pray to the Lord to bestow upon you all Vidya, Tushti, Pushti and Paramashanti.

After taking leave of you in my January, '68 letter, I came away the same day to Delhi and thence to Gujarat, where was held the All-Gujarat Divine Life Conference on 4th, 5th, 6th and 7th January at Baroda. The Gujarat Conference was indeed a great success and created a spiritual thrill in that city. It was hailed as a great event, where the light of Indian Culture shone resplendently once again and the call of the Motherland was sounded to bring people back into the path of Dharma and

to the message of the great souls. Men of wisdom were brought to the eager citizens of Gujarat in general, and Baroda in particular, during the four momentous days. A soul-nourishing feast of wisdom and inspiration and practical guidance for noble living was verily offered to the thousands of people, who turned up day after day, by outstanding personalities like the most revered and worshipful Sri Narahari Shastriji Maharaj, the renowned exponent of the holy Srimad Bhagavatham, Acharya Sri Panduranaga Shastriji Maharaj of Bombay, H.H. Jagadguru Sri Sankaracharyaji Maharaj of Dwaraka Mutt, H.H. Revered Yogiraj Sri Manuvariyaji Maharaj of Yoga Sadhana Ashram of Ahmedabad, Sri Swami Krishnanandaji, Bhadran, Sri Goswami Indu Bhushanji Maharaj, revered Swami Mahadevanandaji Maharaj of Brindaban, Sri Swami Narayanaji Maharaj, revered Swami Bhadraji, venerable Jain Muni Yatish Hemchandraj, the venerable Jivandas K. Mehta, revered Sri Nalinbhai Bhatt, Sri Vishnudev S. Pundit, Sri Prabhakar Dongre and Sri Moulvi Moulana Mohammud Sakir Saheb.

Shri P.C. Mankodiji and U. V. Swadiji together with their very sincere group of devoted friends worked earnestly day and night to make this holy event a successful and noble Seva to the citizens of Baroda and Gujarat, by bringing to them the message of Yoga, Bhakti and Vedanta and the Satsanga of holy people and the venerable leaders and providing them with period of invaluable spiritual regeneration through Satsanga, prayer, Shravana-Sadhana and Nama-sankirtana and Katha. The chief guests on the various days dwelt upon the present social and ethical problems of the country and drew the attention of the audience to their solutions and appealed to them for co-ordinated efforts by all in working for the progress of Bharata. A sublime spiritual atmosphere was created in the city and may felt uplifted as the result of the conference and Darshana of numerous holy people, who had graced the occasion. I verily felt blessed to be in their sacred company. All the organisers deserve our most grateful thanks for this noble undertaking. We left Gujarat for Andhra Pradesh on midnight of the 7th and reaching Bombay on the 8th morning, we proceeded to Kovvur via Hyderabad for the Andhra Pradesh Divine Life Conference on the 11th, 12th and 13th January.

Kovvur received the special love of Sadgurudev during his memorable tour in 1950 as the place that accorded him a most glorious welcome, wherein lakhs of people had gathered from all surrounding villages over a radius of more than 40 miles. The Kovvur Conference was a thorough success due to the keen enthusiasm and devoted efforts of Sri P. Ramalingeshwara Rao Guru, who had organised the wonderful reception in 1950. Very many saintly persons and learned scholars gave the people a spiritual feast of lofty teachings, inspiring admonitions and invaluable ethical and spiritual guidance to help them and to achieve self-conquest and to lead an ideal life conducive to the welfare of all beings and to the attainment of spiritual blessedness. Holy men of erudition and spiritual wisdom like Kavi Yogi Sri Shuddhananda Bharatji of Yoga Samajam, Trivikrama Ramanandaji of Courtallam. H.H. The Gayatri Pithadhipati, revered Swami Avdhutendra Saraswati, revered Swami Nityanandaji Maharaj of Yajnavalkya Ashram, revered Vidyanandaji of Shivagiri Mutt, revered Sri Janabai Mataji of Sadhu Mata Ashram at Rajahmundry, Gita-Vyas Sri Subba Rao of Secunderabad, Satchidananda Saraswati of Chevendrapalayam—all blessed the Conference with their enlightening Upadesha Messages of India's Ethical and spiritual culture and Gurudev's Gospel of Divine Life were brought into the lives of numerous people by this holy Conference of three days at Kovvur. A unique item in this Conference was the formal unveiling of the Sivananda Stupa (a memorial pillar) to commemorate the historic visit of Gurudev Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj to this holy Ghoshapadi Kshetra in 1950, during His Holiness' All-India Tour.

Situated in the Sivananda Park, this Pillar is topped by a beacon light visible all around and contains the teachings of Gurudev and the Mahamantra engraved upon it. Sri P. Ramalingeshwara Rao, our Gurubhai, exerted himself, day and night, to make the Conference fruitful and successful in giving much spiritual benefit to countless people. He has verily earned the Grace of God by this great and noble Jnana Yajna.

The very next day of the Conference we crossed the river Godavari to visit Rajahmundry, where H. H. Sri Swami Karunyanandaji Maharaj, our Gurubhai is carrying on noble humanitarian service through his well-known institution Gautami Jiva-Karunya Sangha. Sri Swami Karunyanandaji had arranged a very big public function in the evening of the 14th January at the Sri Ramakrishna Samathi Hall in Rajahmundry and we were taken in a grand Kirtan procession to the Hall. This servant rested for that night in the calm, quiet Tapovanam away from the city, before leaving early morning for Bhadrachalam. While we were in Andhra Pradesh we visited two Divine Life Society Branches for functions on the 17th and 18th. The one at the village of Madikondur near Guntur was organised by Sri Lakshmiah, Central Excise Inspector, a very ardent, disciple of Gurudev who had convened a very well attended meeting of the entire village. The second was at the Sivananda Sevashramam at Dendaluru near Eluru. Here, the foundation was laid for a Prayer Hall in front of the Ashram. The last function in Andhra Pradesh was at the beautiful Gita Bhavan at Eluru. Very huge crowds awaited our arrival at Dendaluru. After bowing before Bhagavan's Vighraha with Rukmini by His side, I had the holy privilege of conducting Sankirtan of the Divine Name with the vast gathering and giving them a message of service, devotion, meditation and Self-realisation. Immediately after the meeting I boarded the train at Eluru.

Travelling northwards we went to Orissa State next, where the Divine Life Conference took place on 21st, 22nd and 23rd at Berhampur, about which I shall write later. After the Conference we travelled to Puri, the holy city of the Lord of the Universe, to pay our homage to Sri Bhagavan Jagannath. Then, after a brief tour of some of the Branches in Orissa State, we left for Calcutta. In the last part of the tour I had the joy of meeting beloved Gurubhai Sri Ram Premji Maharaj at Balasore. I was very happy to meet him after many years.

Thus has passed on the month of January. So do pass on days, weeks, months and years of this brief life on earth. Therefore, great is the need for one to be awake, alert and active in the path of God-quest so as to attain the goal, before life passes away. Blessed souls, utilise well every moment of this precious life, that is a divine gift from God. Strive towards this noble goal. Do all the good that you can, at all times that you can, to all beings on earth. Become an ideal person. Have the goal of a perfect moral life and God-attainment before you and live to attain it through purity, truth, selfless service, worship of the Lord and daily meditation. Ever discriminate between the Real and the unreal, between the Eternal and the temporary. Do not postpone this all-important task of life for an uncertain future. Do it now. Be a seeker after Dharma and Atma-Jnana. All else will pass away. These two alone are the enduring values in this universe. Let Dharma and Divine Realisation be your goal. Lead the Divine Life of service, devotion, meditation and ceaseless quest and attain this goal here and now in this very life. May God bless you.

With kind regards, Prem and Om,

February, 1968

—Swami Chidananda

Sivanandashram Letter No. L

HOLY MISSION OF GURUDEVA

Beloved Immortal Atman!
Blessed Seeker of Truth,

Om Namo Narayanaya. Loving salutations and greetings in the holy name of Gurudev Swami Sivananda. May the divine grace, of the great God, the Lord of the Universe, Jagadishwara, Mahadeva be upon you and may He grant you, progress, prosperity, success and supreme happiness both in your secular and spiritual fields of life.

I am most happy to tell you in this letter about the very successful conduct of the 21st All India Divine of the 21st All-India Divine Life Conference and the 3rd Orissa Divine Life Conference conducted at Berhampur through the sincere efforts of the Berhampur D.L.S. Branch and the Orissa D. L. S. Central Committee with a well represented local Reception Committee headed by Sri P. V. N. Murthyji, Sri Ramachandra Rao, Kedarnath Raju and others. It was excellently organised and the three days' sessions provided great spiritual inspiration and awakening to the numerous people who attended in large numbers day after day. Revered Sri Sarat Candra Debo, the Chief organiser of our Orissa tour itinerary was host to me at Berhampur, and as usual looked after me and my party with great love and hospitality. During our one-week's stay Berhampur, Revered Mataji Srimati Sivananda Narayana Rao was hostess to us one day and Sri Murthy Garu and Sri Kedarnath Rajuji were hosts upon different days.

The Conference was addressed by a number of saints and holy men and eminent thinkers. H. H Maharshi Kavi Yogi Sri Shuddhananda Bharatiji Maharaj inaugurated the All-India Divine Life Conference on the 21st January morning after having hoisted aloft the Divine Life banner, amidst the roaring chant of the sacred Pranava (AUM). Next, after his address followed the inauguration of the 3rd All-Orissa Divine life Conference by revered Sri Vishwanath Dasji, ex-Governor of Uttar Pradesh and a great Bhakta of Lord Jagannath. H. H. Sri Swami Avadhootendra Samswatiji, the great Sankirtanist Bhakta, thrilled the gathering daily, with his most elevating Sankirtans of the Divine Name of the Lord. Sri Swami Bodhendra Puriji gave an inspiring discourse in Telugu. H.H. Sri Swami Ekatanandaji of the Sri Ramakrishna Math of Bhubaneswar lovingly participated in this spiritual conference and blessed all by his beautiful spiritual discourse on the spiritual path and the Goal of Divine Realisation. Prof. Venkateswara Rao of Vizianagaram College, Dr. G. S. N. Murthy of Kharagpur, D. C. Chaudhuryji of Berhampur and others gave inspiring lectures, and a very impressive Yoga-Asana-demonstration was given by Sri N. S. V. Row of Tanuku and his nephew, an able young Yoga student. Another excellent feature of this Conference programme was the large-scale poor-feeding, that was arranged on the day after the Conference. It was well organised and a large number of deserving people partook of this feeding. Dakshina was also given to them. An effective spiritual awakening was brought about in this city through this conference and a religious wave created by the three days' programme. The Conference has brought out a valuable tri-lingual Souvenir to mark this important spiritual event in the cultural history of Orissa State.

After this 3rd D. L. Conference within the month of January, there was a week's tour of Orissa to fulfil engagements in different D. L. S. Centres like Dighopahandi, Bomaki,

Govardhanpur, Chatrapur, Khurda Road, Keonjhar and Balasore. Sacred Puri was visited to pay homage to the Lord of the Universe in the famous temple of Jagannath. At Keonjhar mammoth gathering turned out to hear and receive Gurudev's Message of Divine Life and of Yoga and Vedanta. The Nagar-Kirtan filled the entire town with the Divine Name of the Lord. At Balasore I met brother Sri Ram Premiji at Ram Niketan after more than twelve years. We were both happy at this meeting. From Balasore we travelled onward to Calcutta at the special request of beloved Sri Sivananda-Nilakantanji who had arranged a public function to release the first Bengali edition of the book 'God As Mother' which describes the mystery, the glory and the greatness of the Divine Mother. On Thursday, 1st February, we arrived at Calcutta. That afternoon after paying our homage to Divine Mother Bhavatarini at the holy temple of Dakshineswar and paying my respects to H. H. Sri Swami Vireshwaranandaji Maharaji at Belur Math we proceeded straight to the Ravindra Sarobar Hall for the Public meeting. The Bengali Book was duly released after prayers to Gurudev and the Divine Mother. The publication of this book is the result of the loving labour of Sri Rajani Mohan Chakravartyji, Sri Sivananda-Nilakantan, Sri Niranjan Sen and Sri N.C. Ghosh. May the Blessings and Grace of the Divine Mother be upon them all for this noble Seva rendered to the brothers of Bengal.

At Calcutta Sri Ram Ratan Prasadji of Koderma (Gaya) took leave of me to go to Gaya to meet Sri Swami Venkatesanandaji, who was coming from Rishikesh. Sri Ram Ratanji had been of immense Seva to the servant throughout this tour during the entire month of January. Our next programme was at Rourkela where the D. L. S. Branch had fixed up suitable public engagements in different parts of the township. This included the inauguration of an Eye Camp organised by the Lion's Club and an address to the young engineers of the Steel Town at the Gopabandhu Auditorium. Sri Kasipathy, Taneja, Sarthy and others looked after us all with great care and devotion, and made all arrangements nicely during our two days' stay. Raigarh (M. P.) was our next camp for two days, on the 5th and 6th February. Sri G. P. Sharma had made suitable arrangements for a number of Satsangas and public meetings. The discourse to the students of the Science College received rapt attention and warm response by the gathered students and staff. We visited the School of Yoga set up there under the auspices of the Raigarh Divine Life Society Branch. It is doing excellent Yoga training work under the direct guidance and inspiration of H. H. Paramahansa Swami Satyanandaji Maharaj. Dr. Sharma, Sri Chottelal, Prahlad Rai and friends were all full of devotion and took keen interest in this Jnana Yajna.

We left Raigarh for Hyderabad via Gondia and Nagaur. On 7th morning we arrived at Gondia for a brief visit to the Sivananda Public School, whose dedication was to take place on the 13th. Sri Amubhai Seth very kindly received us and took us home for our brief halt and sent us by car to Nagpur to board the train for Hyderabad. Sri Patwardhanji, D. F. O. who has been taking very enthusiastic part in the progress of the Sivananda Public School work met me at Nagpur, and I was glad to hear from him about the plans for the commencement of the work at the Public School this summer.

At Hyderabad a sacred Nam-Saptah had been arranged by the devout Mataji Sri Lalita Deviji who had accompanied worshipful Swami Ramadas Maharaj on his world tour in 1954. For a whole week, from the 8th to the 14th of February, we experienced veritable Vaikuntha at her residence "Durga Nivas". It was converted into a blissful spiritual Centre resounding with the all-purifying chant of the all Powerful Divine Name day and night. The thrilling Sankirtan of H. H.

Swami Avadhootanandji lifted the audience into elevated moods of devotion and fervour. Three separate booklets expounding the glory and greatness of the Divine Name were published for distribution to the devotees who come to this spiritual feast. It was a rare blessedness in this age of scepticism and disbelief. From Hyderabad this Sevak visited Bombay briefly to attend the inauguration of the Bombay School of Yoga and its Yoga Seminar on 18-2-1968 and thence came to Jaipur on the 19th for a three-day programme of Satsanga and spiritual discourse arranged by the Jaipur Branches of the Divine Life Society. Thus through the Seva of this body and mind the Lord gets done the work of His great messenger Gurudev Sivananda at whose feet this servant's life is dedicated in devotion.

This present letter would really be incomplete without my expressing once again my deepest appreciation, admiration and joyful thanks to the organisers of the three Divine Life Conferences at Baroda (Gujarat), Kovvur (A. P.) and Berhampur (Orissa) in particular and the organisers of all the different Satsanga and lecture programmes in different Centres in general for their noble participation in furtherance of Gurudev Swami Sivanandaji's holy Mission of revitalising and spreading the culture of our Mother-Land. I am immensely happy and most grateful to them all. They are doing a noble service to the people of Bharatavarsha by their work in the field of Jnana Yajna and the propagation of the message of Divine Life of selfless service, devotion to God, unflinching and regular daily meditation (inner spiritual communion with Divinity) and aspiration for Divine Realisation. Theirs is indeed a truly national service by the spread of Yoga and Vedanta without which our culture cannot survive and without the knowledge of which no Indian can be really a true Indian. Yoga and Vedanta constitute the very essence of Indian Culture. The recent tour undertaken by this servant has shown him the good work being done in this special field of our national life by the various followers of Sadguru Swami Sivananda Dev and the various Centres of Divine Life Society in different States of India. May God shower His Grace upon all these noble souls engaged in this worthy spiritual work, even amidst their multifarious day-to-day domestic and professional activities. Let them carry forward this noble good work with confidence and enthusiasm and progress onwards in their spiritual service to the country and their inner life of Yoga and Vedanta. They are playing a humble yet vital role in the reconstruction of Dharma and the rebuilding of spiritual India. This is a sacred task, which will contribute to human welfare and world-peace in the days to come. This Karma Yoga in the form of Loka-seva is the need of New India that is struggling to emerge out of a world crisis through which She emerged undamaged in spirit and yet with a new and clear knowledge of Her proper role in the world ahead and with the fitness and the power to fulfil this role for the benefit of all mankind. May God grant the people of Bharatavarsha the needful vision for this lofty task and also the unity, nobility and the sense of mission to rise up to it at this crucial turning point in world history which is also her own history inevitably! May the followers of Gurudev Sivananda Dev and the votaries of Divine Life recognise this historic significance of their work and work dedicatedly to contribute their highest and best in this great national spiritual resurgence and service through Her Cultural re-emergence.

The last place to visit upon this tour was Delhi enroute Hardwar. Here I had the very great joy of meeting beloved Swami Muktananda Paramahansa Maharaj, the worshipful head of the Gurudev Ashram at Vajreshwari near Bombay. Sri Swamiji Maharaj is an illustrious disciple of the renowned Siddha Purusha Sri Swami Nityananda Yogi of Ganeshpuri. Revered Muktanandaji received this servant with great love and showered his divine affection upon me when I visited him at the house of his ardent devotee Capt. Pratap where he was residing at Delhi. I feel very blessed

indeed for having had the good fortune of the holy Darshan of this holy man of God. We had a joyous Satsanga for an hour during this visit. Great is the blessedness of meeting saints.

I take leave of you all now with love, regards and good wishes. Remember that this year is a special year. It is the 25th Anniversary year of the Pratistha of the holy Sri Vishwanath Mandir as well as the Silver Jubilee of the Akhanda Maha-Mantra Kirtan at the Ashram. May you take to the Likhit Japa of this Holy Mahamantra with earnest devotion. The prince among Bhaktas, Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu revived this Mahamantra and spread it throughout India by his wonderful Prachar during his lifetime. This month is most appropriate indeed of such a similar nation-wide propagation of this wonderful Mantra because on 14th March falls the holy Birthday anniversary of Chaitanya Mahaprabhu or Lord Gouranga. May you all celebrate this divine Birthday and make it the starting point of a wave of Prachar of this wonderful Mantra given by God, for the redemption of man in this Kali Yuga. Let all the quarters resound with the chant of

“Hare Rama Hare Rama, Rama Rama Hare Hare;
Hare Krishna Hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna Hare Hare.”

May all beings be uplifted from bondage, sorrow and ignorance and may all attain the supreme realm of Freedom, Bliss and Divine wisdom. God bless you all!

Yours in Sri Gurudev,

March, 1968

—Swami Chidananda.

Sivanandashram Letter No. LI

WONDERFUL IS THE SIGNIFICANCE OF MANTRA-WRITING

Beloved Immortal Atman!
Blessed Seeker after Truth!

Om Namo Narayanaya. Loving salutations in the holy name of Gurudev Swami Sivananda. I am immensely happy to inform you all that there has been an enthusiastic response to the call for the Mahamantra Likhit Japa Yajna in connection with the forthcoming Silver Jubilee of the Mahamantra Akhanda Kirtan that has been in progress since the year 1943, from the December 3rd. Already Sri Gandhiji and Sri Govinda Rajuji of the Berhampur Branch and Smt. K. Gopalraj Urs of the Ladies' Branch, Mysore have set to work starting a Mantra-writing Campaign at their places. Similarly the Baroda Branch has also started a Mantra-writing Campaign and have printed special Mantra-writing notebooks for distribution to all those who join this sacred Nama-Yajna and undertake to commence the Mantra-writing systematically. May this Yajna create a sublime, elevating and all-purifying spiritual wave that will uplift the minds of all men and flood the heart of humanity with finer feelings of compassion, tolerance, brother-hood, spiritual oneness and Universal love. May the divine power of the Name purify the world-atmosphere and bring about the

cessation of hatred, war and violence, and make love prevail and establish abiding peace in the world.

Since this servant's return to Gurudev's holy abode, he has become aware of the increasing interest, that is being evinced in the Divine Life Message and Gurudev's teachings in all parts of India. Correspondence from all directions makes abundantly evident this increasing trend towards the spiritual side of life. Active work in bringing more and more fortunate people into the path of ethical and spiritual idealism is being done. I would like to mention here as a typical example the exceptional noble Seva of Sri B. Narasimha Rao of Bangalore, who within a short period has enrolled more than 50 new members to the Divine Life Society, thus opening to the fortunate souls the doorway to the actual treasures of our spiritual culture and Divine science. Sri B. Narasimha Rao is indeed a Karma Yoga Veera and deserves to be congratulated for his entirely selfless Seva to the cause of noble Jnana Yajna. God bless him.

Since 1st January, 1968 numerous devotees have been enrolled as new members. I welcome them all and wish them a bright and glorious future full of ideal living, spiritual joy, divine peace and highest blessedness.

I have some good news for all members and readers in general. The two long awaited books will soon be ready and available to you. 'The Bhagavad-Gita' with translation and Gurudev's invaluable commentary (10,000 copies) is nearing its completion at the Ashram Press. It is likely to be ready by Gurudev's holy Aradhana Day, this year. The other book, 'EPISTLES OF SWAMI SIVANANDA' (4000 copies) brings you the incomparable Upadesha of Sri Gurudev in his own hand-writing. This is a rare treasure. It will be ready in a couple of months' time. I most heartily thank the numerous Jnana Yajna donors who have readily given their noble contribution towards the bringing out of these two books as also some other works that are in the Press. Great is the blessedness of these wonderful souls, who have become participants in this noble spiritual work in bringing the light of wisdom into the lives of modern men and women. They have become the instruments of God in bringing divine peace any joy into the hearts of countless beings in this restless world. Jnana Yajna is the noblest Seva of mankind. Jnana Yajna is the greatest of all Yajnas.

In this letter I must tell you something about my programme of the near future. If it is Lord's Will, this servant is likely to go abroad sometime, on Gurudev's work. He is being called to South Africa by the persistent loving insistence of the noble spiritual brothers over there. I am pressed to come there on a visit of 3 to 5 months. Nearly ten years ago, towards the end of 1958, Sri Gurudev was requested to send me by the saintly Swami Sahajanandaji Maharaj, the pioneer organiser of Divine Life work in South Africa. He had founded the First Branch at Durban in 1948-49. At that time I could not go. The next time in 1959 when Sri Gurudev sent me abroad to the States, Swami Sahajanandaji Maharaj requested me to consider the possibilities of a visit to South Africa, en route to West. I could not do so; neither could I come via South Africa on my way back to India in 1961. Since then he tried to take me there along with him in 1963 when he visited the Headquarters sometime after Sri Gurudev's Mahasamadhi but the time had not come and God's will was otherwise. It seems now that the time has come and I must go. If the travel formalities are finalised, then I shall sail from Bombay on the 2nd May. In that event I shall arrive at the Sivanandashram, Durban, on 10th May and witness the glories of the holy Master's Divine Work in that country. It will be a blessed day indeed for me.

Meantime, I am on my way to Mysore State to participate in the 3rd All-Karnataka Divine Life Conference at Chikmagalur convened by the Chikmagalur Branch of the Divine Life Society. After the Conference (which is on 5th, 6th and 7th April) I proceed directly to Coimbatore, to bring the message of Bharatvarsha's culture and idealism to my brothers in the Government Central Jail there, which is one of the largest jails, having nearly 3,000 inmates. Then I have to return to the Headquarters before the Ardha-Kumbhasnan upon Vaishaka Sankranti-day, on 13th April.

During my absence from the Headquarters, my Beloved and worshipful Gurubhai, revered Sri Swami Krishnanandaji Maharaj will be presiding over the holy Ashram and gathering, and bless all the devotees who visit there to pay their homage to Sri Gurudev at His Holy Samadhisthana. Revered Sri Swami Krishnanandaji is my own self and we are not two but one. He shall be in Gurudev's place to all devotees and disciples of our brotherhood, during the occasions of the forthcoming sacred Guru Purnima, Aradhana, Birthday, etc. Sri Gurudev's grace is fully upon him. Sri Swami Madhavananda Maharaj and Sri Swami Premanandaji Maharaj are ably assisting him in administering the activities at the Headquarters.

I shall leave you now to direct your hearts and minds toward the Supreme Divine Reality in Its glorious form of Bhagavan Sri Ramachandra. The advent of the supremely ideal Avatars is an event of national worship in this country. May you all engage yourself in the worship of Lord Rama. May the Divine Rama Nama be enshrined in your heart and constantly uttered by your tongue. Contemplate the ideal of this Divine Being. Worship Him with devotion. Meditate upon the Lord. Behold Him in all beings and things. Adore Him through truth, purity and service. Offer Him the flowers of good deeds, virtuous conduct and ideal life. Let Lord Rama be your goal and ideal. Let Him be your supreme refuge. May His grace crown your life with supreme blessedness and Divine Illumination. Om Sri Ramaya Namah. Om Sri Ram Jai Ram Jai Jai Ram. Glory be to Lord Rama. Glory be to Sri Gurudev.

With regards, love and all good wishes,

1st April, 1968

*Yours in Gurudev
—Swami Chidananda*

Sivanandashram Letter LII

LET US WAKE UP

Beloved Immortal Atman!
Beloved Seekers after Truth!

Om Namō Narayanaya. Loving salutations and greetings in the holy name of worshipful Gurudev Swami Sivanandaji, I greet you also in the name of the Compassionate Buddha, the veritable embodiment of divine love and merciful kindness, the Light of mankind, who will be worshipped all over the world upon the coming full-moon Day of Vaisakha Purnima. That is Buddha Jayanti. This is a particularly significant and specially sacred day to this servant because it was on this day, 25 years ago, that I reached the feet of our worshipful Master, whom I had the holy

privilege of serving for nearly twenty years. It was on this Sacred Buddha-Purnima-Day that I first beheld his stately radiant personality, bowing down my head in homage at his lotus feet. That blessed moment sustains this servant ever upto this present moment. Hail Buddha! Hail Gurudev Sivananda! May their grace be upon us all.

Since writing to you last in my April letter of the previous issue, the travel formalities have been finalised and as I had already mentioned I shall be mentally bidding good-bye to all of you and departing from India on Thursday, the 2nd May. A most auspicious day indeed as it is Thursday, the Guru's day, and also it happens to be the holy Adi-Sankaracharya Jayanti, the Birthday Anniversary of Jagadguru Sri Adi-Sankaracharya. May this great world teacher's benedictions help me to spread the message of Vedanta and Yoga, wherever the Lord takes me. The steam-ship Cambodge departs from Bombay harbour on 2nd May, and upon it Sri S. Nagarajan, my devoted and faithful Personal Assistant and myself are booked to sail that day. Departing that day, the voyage to Durban is scheduled to be completed in seven days' time, reaching Durban on the 8th day, namely the 10th May. This means, that by the time you receive this letter this servant will be in the open sea. I pray that the gracious blessings and good wishes of you all may go with me to guide me in this Seva.

Now, let me tell you of two auspicious and successful events. One was the visit by a Divine Life party to Assam to bring the message of Yoga and Vedanta there. Devotees of Gauhati had arranged an eight-day spiritual programme from 24th March to 31st March at Gauhati and Shillong. I joined them on the 29th. This eight days' programme has created a spiritual stir and numerous people have responded to the message. A new Branch of the Divine Life Society was inaugurated at Gauhati, and it promises to be an active centre of Satsanga and Jnana Yajna. The other outstanding event was the most successful Third All-Karnataka Divine Life Conference, organised by the Chikmagalur Branch of the Society at Chikmagalur town. This Conference was attended by thousands with tremendous enthusiasm and was graced by eminent holy saints like the revered Shivakumar Swamiji Maharaj of Siddha Ganga Math, a great Jnani Swami Shankaranandaji Maharaj of Ajampura Ashram, H.H. Jagadguru Shankaracharya of Dwarka, revered Sri Swami Parbuddhananda of the Ramakrishna Mission Ashram of Bangalore, and several others blessed this conference with their presence and spiritual discourses. A large scale feeding of the Lord in the form of the poor was conducted on the 8th April. All credit goes to the very earnest efforts of the sincere organisers Sri B. Subbayaji, Sri M. J. Kodandarama Setty, Sri K. Satyanarayana Rao, Sri Kashi Viswanath Setty and their colleagues of Chikmagalur Branch. May God bless these noble souls and their families as well as their other helpers and associates in this glorious spiritual conference. Truly they have all worked wholeheartedly and brought about a sublime Adhyatma Yajna in this Kali Yuga. My heart overflowed with great joy when I attended and participated in this holy conference. On the concluding day, the afternoon session was highlighted by the addresses of His Holiness Jagadguru Dwarka Sankaracharya, General K.M. Cariappa and Padmashri Shivamurthy Shastriji Maharaj. The holy Jagadguru spoke on the essence of Indian Culture ideal in life, while General Cariappa addressed the audience in deep earnestness, making a fervent appeal to all people of the country to uphold a high standard of purity and morality in public and private life and work for a Nationwide revival of a spirit of selfless service and dedication to the country's welfare. He exhorted all to cast out selfishness, shake off laziness, purify the heart and to serve the Nation at large. His was a stirring call to the nation and the essence of the message is LET US WAKE UP. By your life, conduct and every action to raise high and uphold the good name of your motherland is the first and foremost duty. This is true mother-worship. The Chikmagalur

Conference has brought out an excellent bi-lingual Souvenir, entitled Satsanga, which contains 350 pages and a number of valuable instructive articles both in Kannada and in English language as also a number of select illustrations. It is a very fine publication.

This servant had the joy of meeting all the representatives of Divine Life in Karnataka. The next Annual Divine Life Conference in Karnataka will have its venue at Bellary at the request of Bellary Branch of the Divine Life Society. Karnataka is progressing ahead in Divine Life work. Now the Taskar Town Branch at Bangalore has raised its own building. The first floor is to be a Swami Sivananda Mandir with Gurudev's Marble Murty enshrined in it. The ground floor is already housing the printing press. Karnataka is a holy State, which is publishing 5 different monthly journals; Bangalore Branch publishes Divya Jeevana (Kanares), Bhadravati Branch Divya Darshana and the Taskar Town Branch one bulletin in English, one in Tamil and one in English and Tamil combined.

The holy season of Yatra has commenced. This year the Kumbha-Mela at Hardwar has brought lakhs of people and therefore the pilgrimage to the Himalayas will be very large indeed. Innumerable people will also come to offer their worshipful homage at Gurudev's sacred Samadhithana. They will have the privilege of paying their respects to revered Sri Swami Krishnanandaji Maharaj at the Ashram. He is my veritable Self and during coming months he will preside over all gatherings and meet and bless the devotees, who flock to this place. I hope to keep in touch with you through the monthly Sivanandashram letters. All correspondents may henceforth directly address their letters, on matters of guidance, to revered Sri Swami Krishnanandaji Maharaj as the Acting President during my absence, or to Sri Swami Madhavanandaji Maharaj, functioning in the former's place.

Beloved Atman! walk in the footsteps of Lord Buddha. Be a man of compassion, love and peace. Hurt not any one. Be generous and kind. Walk the pure way. Be a door of helpful deeds. Live to serve. Then only the Light of the Lord can descend on you.

Be bold. Let the Truth of Vedanta fill thee with strength. You are essentially divine. Fearlessness and freedom are your birthright. Be Divine. May God bless you.

With regards, love and prayerful good wishes,

Yours in Sri Gurudev,

1st May 1968

—Swami Chidananda

Sivanandashram Letter No. LIII

HEARTY SEND OFF FROM BOMBAY AND WARM RECEPTION AT THE DURBAN SIVANANDA ASHRAM

Worshipful Immortal Atman!
Blessed Seeker after Truth!

Om Namo Narayanaya! Salutations in the name of Gurudev and my greetings and good wishes to one and all of you.

This letter is being mailed to Rishikesh from the Sivanandashram at Durban, (South Africa). I despatch this with a special pleasure and eagerness. Because, I am now out of India and this letter provides me a valuable means of speaking my thoughts to you all, even though separated by thousands of miles from you, and a far distance away physically. I thank Gurudev for this facility provided through this medium.

This present letter I have commenced on board the ship "CAMBODGE", on which I travelled from Bombay to South Africa. Since departure from the Bombay Harbour on Thursday the 2nd May, the voyage has been smooth on a calm sea under a clear sky and in bright sunny weather. The atmosphere being restful, the body has had an opportunity to relax and get a little rest without pressure of any programmes and engagements.

Prior to embarking on the voyage, the last two weeks in India were very busy ones; 24th of April was the busiest date at the Ashram. There were many leave-taking programmes including a special Satsanga in the forenoon in front of Gurudev's sacred Samadhithana immediately after conclusion of Paduka Puja, offered to Gurudev. During that Satsanga I had the privilege of making revered and beloved Sri Swami Krishnanandaji Maharaj occupy my seat and declaring to the assembled gathering that they should all regard him as the Head of the Institution and that they would receive from him the same Bhava and the Seva as I have been trying to manifest towards them all. Sri Swami Krishnanandaji Maharaj also addressed the audience and gave them a brief account of the circumstances that have led to my undertaking this present visit to South Africa and what it meant in terms of Sri Gurudev's Spiritual Mission and His Institution, the Divine Life Society. During this talk he touched upon the unique work of the South African Divine Life Society and the excellent progress it had made since its inception in 1951 and revered Sri Swami Sahajanandaji Maharaj, who now guides the work from the Headquarters of Durban.

Taking leave of all Gurubandhus at the Ashram on 24th April, I arrived at Delhi the next morning for a full day's programme before leaving for Hyderabad the same night. The Delhi programme included a devout worship offered to Gurudev's Paduka (as it was Thursday) by Sri C. R. Sud and all his family at their residence, "DIVYA DHAM" at Bengali Market. The Swami Sivananda Cultural Association had arranged a send-off function at the nice auditorium of Punjab National Bank on Parliament Street. At Hyderabad I had a full day programme with a similar send-off function in the evening, organised on behalf of all the Divine Life Society branches of Andhra Pradesh. Many delegates had come from the different DLS. Centres including delegates from two Centres outside Andhra Pradesh, namely from Khurda Road and Bellary. The Kovvur

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Divine Life Society Branch had prepared a special address for the occasion in addition to the address prepared by the Hyderabad Divine Life Society.

Bombay Divine Life Society branches arranged a number of programmes on the last two days I was in India, i.e. 30th April and last of May. Here also there was one main send-off function arranged on the forenoon of the 1st May at the Kannada Educational Society High School at Wadala. I wish to express here my deepest gratitude for the immense good-will and affection which these Gurubandhus have showered upon me on the eve of my departure.

Just before coming to Bombay for the abovementioned programmes I had the unique privilege of visiting His Holiness Sri Swami Muktanandaji Maharaj, at his "Sri Gurudev Ashram", Ganeshpuri, and spending 3 days in his holy company. He is a well-known spiritual leader and disciple of the great Siddhapurusha, the worshipful Sri Nityanand Bhagavan. This visit is a fulfillment of a promise, made to the most revered Sri Muktananda Babaji Maharaj, when this servant had the joyous privilege of meeting him last time in February at Delhi. It proved to be a rewarding spiritual retreat, when I had the opportunity of visiting the sacred Samadhisthana of Nityananda Bhagavan as also of partaking of the Satsanga of revered Swami Muktanandaji Maharaj. The Ashram is beautifully kept up and very systematically conducted under the personal directions of revered Swami Muktanandaji Maharaj. There are many cottages, a fine Guest House and spacious Satsanga Hall called Turiya Mandir. Daily programme is very punctually carried out in an organised manner. Hari Nam Sankirtan, Gita-Patha and Vishnusahasranama-Patha are daily done by all Satsangas. Sri Swami Maharaj is generous-hearted and very charitable in nature. The beautiful garden gives joy to the eyes. Swamiji is an excellent organiser. Diamond Jubilee Anniversary of his Birthday was approaching at that time and those at the Ashram and all his devotees were busy in preparing for this important and special event. After taking the saint's blessings, I came to Bombay on the 29th night.

During the brief stay at Bombay I had the joy of visiting Sri Natvarlal G. Parikh, the great devotee of Sadguru Sri Swami Ramadas Maharaj (beloved Papaji) of Ananda Ashram. Sri Swami Ramadas Maharaj had graced Sri Natvarlalji's residence upon various occasions by staying with him while visiting Bombay. Sri Natvarlal Parikh has preserved with great reverence the chair, upon which Pujay Papaji used to sit, while staying with him. He also played for us the tape-recordings of the chanting of the holy Ram Mantra by Pujya Papaji himself as well as Pujya Mataji and other devotees.

The departure day, 2nd May, was especially auspicious and holy as it was both a Thursday as well as the holy Anniversary of Jagadguru Adi Sankaracharya's sacred Birthday or the Sankara Jayanti. Therefore, at the Harbour before going on board the vessel I was prompted to observe this holy Anniversary. Accordingly, we put up Gurudev's sacred Padukas upon a seat and with Swami Devanandaji's help duly conducted at the harbour itself Guru Paduka Puja with Archana, Arati etc. The holy Prasad was then distributed to all those who were present. Invoking the grace of Sri Dattatreya Bhagavan, of Adi Shankara Bhagavat Pada and of Sri Gurudev upon all the devotees present, I prayed to the Lord to confer upon everyone long life, health, spiritual progress, illumination and supreme spiritual blessedness. The Embarkation Hall resounded with the loud Sankirtan of the Lord's Name and the holy Chant of Maha Mantra and Maha-Mrityunjaya Mantra.

After going on board the ship, we had a period of meditation and silent prayer in the specious lounge until all visitors were requested to leave. They all then got down from the ship and stood in a group on the pier and commenced to sing the Names of the Lord until the ship started to move away from the harbour soon after midday.

A number of devotees had travelled all the way to Bombay to participate in the farewell programmes and to give this servant a personal send-off at the harbour on the sailing day. The were Mr. & Mrs. Sud, Mr. & Mrs. A.D. Sharma, Sri K. M. Massand and Sri A. Sundaramji from Delhi, Sri U. V. Swadia from Baroda, Sri Sreyas Kumar Shah sent by his father Sri Suryakant B. Shah on behalf of Ahmedabad D.L.S., Sri Dr. Sivananda-Adhwaryooji Maharaj from Virnagar, Gujarat Divine Life Centre, and Sri Pranalalbai Maharaj and his entire family from Rajkot. From Hyderabad D.L.S. Sri T. Venugopala Reddyji had come similarly to give personal send-off, from Poona N.V. Viswanathan (the brother of Sri N.V. Karthikeyanji of Hq.) had come with his revered mother. I wish to say how very much I appreciate this very kind gesture on the part of all these above-mentioned devotees, in having taken so much trouble in order to be graciously present to see me off. My many thanks also to the various kind devotees, who presented me with gifts of personal utility on the eve of my departure. Among them I must mention Sri Atmaram Nagarkarji Maharaj of Poona (father of Sri D. Nagarkarji of Sivanandashram) who had sent a Thermos Flask and a set of stainless steel vessels for my daily use specially monogrammed with my name in Hindi. I am grateful to him for his thoughtfulness and to others too, who gave their kind presents

In this connection I should not fail to mention the excellent gifts of free literature printed and presented to me by certain good friends for free distribution during this tour. The literature lovingly offered is firstly by Mr. Manchandani of Nilam Printing Press, Lajpat Nagar, New Delhi and Sri M.M. Massand, D.L.S. Lody Colony with the help of Sri A.D. Sharmaji, 74 Rabindra Nagar, New Delhi, 1000 copies of the booklet 'Key to World-Peace and Happiness' containing teachings from the main great Religions of the World, compiled by Gurudev Swami Sivananda (culled from a former similar booklet printed by Sri Gamadas of Sri Vidya Press, Kumbakonam, Madras State under the title "Unity of Religions"), the Universal Prayer with border, 20,000 copies of book marks, Divine Life for Children and art cards containing spiritual teachings on one side and the prayer on the other. Secondly, by Dr. Sivananda-Adhwaryoo big sized framable copies of Universal Prayer in Gujarati version and English version separately, with beautiful border and the Divine Life motto Serve, Love, etc. 1000 copies. Thirdly by Sri Raviraj Bhalla of Janta Press, Connaught Place, New Delhi similar framable Universal Prayer on large sized card and some small sized cards containing an inspiring paragraph of spiritual sentences. I am very specially grateful to the gracious persons responsible for the above-mentioned gifts. God bless them. Besides these, the Ashram press has also kindly contributed its item to this free literature in the form of an art card with a spiritual message on one side and the Universal Prayer on the other. Sri Swami Dayanandaji and Sri Narasimhuluji of the Y. V. F. A. Press were kind enough to expedite this work and get it ready in time before the departure date.

While writing this on board the ship, it is 4 p.m. and the sea is clam and there is a brilliant sunshine outside. Letters from South Africa to India seem to take about 8 days in reaching Rishikesh even when sent by Air Mail. Thus, this is likely to reach Sivanandashram in the later part of May for being sent to press with the Divine Life matter for its current June issue.

HEARTY SEND OFF FROM BOMBAY AND WARM RECEPTION AT THE DURBAN SIVANANDA
ASHRAM

At this point, in the middle of the present year 1968, I would wish to urge you all once again to remember two important Yajnas being undertaken by Sivanandashram. These have been announced earlier in the Jan. and Feb. '68 issues of this journal to which I draw your attention again now. They are (a) Jnana Yajna Project and the (b) Maha-Mantra-Koti-Likhit Japa Yajna. The former will be found in the outer cover of the January issue. It is a special Yajna instituted last year (September 1967) under the auspices of the 80th Birthday Anniversary of Sadgurudev. The reprint of 5000 copies each of the two important books "Practice of Yoga" and "Conquest of Mind" is the objective. These two are invaluable major works of Sri Gurudev Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj of inestimable value to all the Sadhakas on the path of Yoga. The latter Yajna, namely, the Maha-Mantra-Koti-Likhit Japa Yajna is under the holy auspices of the Akhanda Maha Mantra Kirtan that has been going on since 1943 December. The writing of 3½ crore times Maha-mantra is the Yajna and its purpose is universal welfare, peace and progress of mankind towards a life of Dharma, unity and spiritual fellowship. Wonderful response from numerous quarters has been forthcoming towards this Likhit Japa Yajna. I would suggest that all devotees throughout India and abroad should join together and contribute and construct a special room to be termed Divya-Nama-Mandir wherein all the holy Likhit Japa received will be carefully preserved and reverently worshipped as Chaitanya Shakti of Satchidananda Parabrahman. I have not thought of the details of the design but this idea to befittingly enshrine the sacred Name has occurred to my mind and this I have placed before you for your active consideration and early action. Big contributions are not necessary. If a great number of people take part in this work even a small contribution of 50 paises per person or one rupee per head will enable the construction of a suitable Nama Mandir. If the campaign is not extended to a great number of people but if it is confined to a limited number only then there arises the need for comparatively bigger contributions. However that be, it would be in the fitness of things if this construction is completed as early as possible, to be declared open on the auspices of this sacred Silver Jubilee. Otherwise the Likhit Japa received from numerous quarters is likely to be placed in different places due to want of a central place. It is my earnest desire that the sincere and devout efforts of countless seekers and Sadhakas do not go in vain. That should be befittingly perpetuated in the form of permanent collection of this most sacred Nama Yajna.

To all readers I would like to mention here that our Ashram (D.L.S. Hq.) has agreed to actively coordinate with the efforts of the Tehri-Garhwal District Leprosy Relief Association in its work of reorganising the Brahmपुरi Leper Colony and putting it upon a stable financial basis. We have decided to co-operate in this work upon the special request of the above association, which is facing difficulty in carrying on its work. I therefore request all those who have a special interest in helping the cause of our brothers afflicted with this disease to make special contribution towards this work. They may be sent to Sivanandashram, Rishikesh in the name of the "Divine Life Society" P.O. Shivanandanagar, Dt. Tehri-Garhwal, (U.P.), with separate covering letter to specify the purpose of this remittance. In case you send your contribution by M. O., then please do not mix up, specifically earmark for this purpose alone. List of the contributions received each month will be published in the "Divine Life" Magazine of the subsequent month. This is a noble cause and all must help.

In this connection I must certainly acknowledge with deepest gratitude the very loving contributions graciously being given by the kind-hearted mother Mrs Banoo Ruttonjee, Sri

Dinshaw Paowalla, Mr. & Mrs. B.N. Kaul and a couple of others, towards relief of the lepers in the locality.

Before I conclude, I must tell you of the blessed moment when the ship drew alongside the pier at Port Natal (Durban Harbour) and I had the Darshan of the worshipful Sri Swami Sahajanandaji, Gurudev's favourite spiritual child and spiritual representative in South Africa and all the most blessed souls assembled at the quay side to receive this servant. After going through the formalities of Immigration, Sri Swami Sahajanandaji personally came up into my cabin before I came down from the ship. We were meeting after 4 years and my joy was great. We sat for a couple of minutes of brief Satsanga offering our prayers to Sri Gurudev and to the Almighty Lord. We then went down to the assembled devotees patiently waiting since forenoon for the ship's arrival. There was joyous exchange of greetings, feelingful welcoming and devoted offering of beautiful carnations wreathed into Malas. We then had a little Kirtan and prayer right there on the pier and were soon speeding towards the Ashram in a car brought by devotees, with all our luggage following in the Divine Life Society-van. Half an hour's drive through the city brought us to its outskirts to the area known as the Reservoir whereupon a breeze-swept hillock stands the Sivanandashram. Down in the valley beside the Ashram flows the Umgeni river, our local Ganga here. It is wonderful to be at Sri Gurudev's Ashram in this land 6000 miles away from Sivanandanagar. I felt like arriving at home. After sitting out for a while with devotees, who were awaiting there, I rested for a little while and proceeded to the spacious Prayer Hall for an evening Satsanga, when I conveyed to all assembled devotees the affectionate good wishes and greetings of all my Gurubandhus of Sivananda Ashram, Rishikesh. Thus at last I was amidst these wonderful, devoted and dedicated children of Gurudev in this far-off land. I do not yet know what programmes await me here but you will know all about it in next month's South African letter.

The season of Satsangs and holy Yatra had already commenced at Rishikesh and nearby even before this servant had left Gurudev's abode. Now they must be in full swing in all the important institutions like Gita Bhavan, Paramarthaniketan, Swarg-ashram etc. This is the period when you can see the dynamic spirituality that actively fills this blessed area of the sacred Uttarakhand. Kirtans and Bhajans, prayers and spiritual practices, devotional gathering and discourses, reflection and meditation go on apace from morning till evening. Countless aspirants come from distant parts to renew themselves spiritually and to nourish their inner self with the nectar to be obtained in the blessed Satsangas that specially abound here during this period. The real inner India and the undying soul of Bharatvarsha is glimpsed here and you come face to face with a living culture that has braved many a storm and withstood the vicissitudes of time. As this letter reaches your hand many a thousands of your brethren of Bharata would be high up in the Himalayas rejoicing in the thrilling Darshan of Lord Badrinarayan and Kedarnath Shiva, in their remote shrines situated in the region of the snow-clad peaks of the Himalayas. Blessed seekers! wherever you are, may your life be rich with such Satsanga and Darshan. May your life be filled with worship, devotion and spirituality and ever be blessed with the awareness of Divine Presence. May your body mind and personality be a veritable holy Uttarakhand filled with purity, spirituality and God's Presence. May your inner self ever be seeking to be united with Divine Reality.

With regards, Prem and Om Namoh Bhagavate Vasudevaya,

June, 1968

*Yours in Sri Gurudev
—Swami Chidananda*

Sivanandashram Letter Nos. LIV & LV

SIVANANDA'S MISSION SPREADS ACROSS THE OCEAN

Worshipful Immortal Atman!
Beloved Seeker after Truth,

Om Namo Narayanaya. Salutations to you all in the holy name of Sri Gurudev Sivananda, to whose feet we have offered our heart's adoration and devout worship upon the holy day of Gurupurnima and the sacred Anniversary of his attaining to the Eternal. May the light of his teachings ever illumine life's path for you and may his sublime spiritual message of Divine Life inspire you to walk the noble way of truth and purity, of love and goodness and of service, worship, meditation and God-realisation. May Guru Kripa ever abide with you.

Last month I failed to communicate with you through this monthly letter and for this, you must pardon me. The matter for July Sivanandashram Letter got delayed in the post. Through the letter I had wanted to inform you that though away in South Africa I would yet participate in the holy worship of both the sacred days by conducting them here at the Sivanandashram, Durban. I am happy to inform you now that the Gurupurnima day was befittingly observed here with a full day programme of early morning prayer and meditation at 5.30 a.m. (it being mid-winter here now), forenoon Satsanga with Guru Padukapuja at midday, afternoon Sadhana hour at 3.30 p.m. when we read the Brahma Sutra Bhashya and a glorious night Satsanga with Kirtan, Bhajan, discourses, music etc, from 6.00 p.m. to 10.00 p.m. which concluded with a showing of movie film taken at Headquarters Sivanandashram, bringing Gurudev's glorious Darshan to the huge audience on that blessed day, and surprisingly enough the movie included a scene of Padapuja actually being offered by a batch of devotees to Gurudev in his Kutir. Thus was Gurupurnima.

My stay and tour of visits to Divine Life Branch Centres in different places in this country have been verily a revealing experience to me. I have been inspired to behold the depth of devotion people here have for Gurudev and the boundless faith they have in him. I marvel at the phenomenon and wonder at the way in which Sri Gurudev living in a small under-ground-cellar like room by the Ganges's Side in remote Rishikesh has yet reached out through his Satsankalpa and his lofty labours into this distant land and brought the light of Divine Life into countless homes here, inspiring people towards Dharma, Yoga and Bhagawad Bhakti. Their Guru Bhakti is exemplary and I feel humble before the living quality of the faith of these devotees in Gurudev, his holy name and his unfailing grace. It is thus that the spiritual mission is progressing across the ocean in such a far distant land through the miracle of dedicated work by the South African disciples of Sri Gurudev. My adorations to these noble souls, who have spread the light of Divine Life and Sanatana Dharma and Yoga in this land. Long may the light of Gurudev's spiritual gospel continue to shine in this land and throughout the rest of the world, too.

It is gratifying to note from some of the correspondence received from India that quite a number of D.L.S. Branches in India have taken the observance of Gurudev's sacred Mahasamadhi Aradhana in a very befitting manner with suitable religious programmes. In doing this some of them have remembered to place the necessary emphasis upon Gurudev's Jnana Yagna mission and

thus have arranged to bring out very useful and valuable publications. Among such I may mention the Pattamadai and Rasipuram Branches and Bangalore and Mysore Branches.

At the time when you receive this letter you will all be looking forward to a month full of very auspicious and inspiring celebrations of different kinds. Already you would have finished observing the important Birthday Anniversary of Sant Tulasidas who blessed India with his immortal work, the holy Ramacharitamanas. The many-sided ideal of Lord Rama's exemplary personality has been brought close to the vast masses of common people by this boon conferred upon India by Sant Tulasidas. Lord Rama is enshrined in countless thousand of hearts today due to Sant Tulasidas. He has made the Ramayana a living force in a great part of India and thus endeared himself to the laymen, who know no Sanskrit. Sant Tulasidas is a benefactor of the nation.

An important religious Anniversary falls on the 8th. It is the Upakarma Day when millions in the nation will rededicate themselves to the sacred Gayatri Mantra. It is a day for the renewal of the sacred thread and for Gayatri Japa in a special way. Brahmacharins and Grihasthas alike are reminded of the vow of triple self-control. They resolve anew to turn towards the light and worship wisdom in their quest for illumination. On the 15th, while the entire nation will celebrate the advent of Lord Krishna, our beloved members in Maharashtra will observe in addition a similar anniversary i.e. the Jayanti of Sant Shri Jnaneshwar Maharaj, the bestower of the immortal work Jnaneshwari Gita. The last day of the month is Sri Radhashtami dear to the lovers of Sri Krishna and the Vaishnava devotees following the path of Prema Bhakti. Blessed Mother Radha shines as supreme embodiment of total self-effacement in an all-absorbing love of the Lord. Fervent hearts will thrill with inspiring and intense devotion MA RADHE. The holy village of Barsana will be turned into heaven upon this blessed day. I shall leave you all to this wonderful month of August by bidding you Om Namoh Bhagavate Vasudevaya.

May you be steeped in the pure bliss of the Lord's Name and of Divine Krishna Prema. May you ever abide in the peace and light of the Lord's Divine presence.

With kind regards, Prem and Om,

Yours in Sri Gurudev

1st August, 1968

—Swami Chidananda

Sivanandashram Letter No. LVI

SIVANANDA'S BIRTHDAY MUST BE A DAY OF RETROSPECT AND SPIRITUAL REASSESSMENT AND SELF SCRUTINY

Worshipful Immortal Atman!
Beloved Seeker after Truth,

Greetings in the name of Sri Gurudev. Om Namō Bhagavate Sivanandaya. This letter brings to you my heart-felt spiritual good wishes on the eve of the sacred SIVANANDA JAYANTI. The 8th of September is a day that shall ever be regarded by countless thousands of souls as a supremely blessed and auspicious day because it gave them that great and noble saint who brought a new awakening into their lives and whose teachings came as a great shining light to illumine their path towards Divine peace and blessedness. To all Gurudev's disciples the 8th September is a great day, which gave to them their spiritual Master, Divine guide and loving saviour. May this Sivananda Jayanti now bring into your hearts the Illumination, Realisation and the Divine bliss and Wisdom that is Gurudev. This Divine Light and Wisdom which enlivened the outer form of Swami Sivananda is the Eternal Gurudev, who has never ceased to be and who now is enshrined in your heart as a light within at every moment. Whenever you move and act upon the lofty principles of Divine Life, then and there is Sivananda born anew into your life.

To walk along the holy path of truth, purity and universal love is to celebrate his Birthday. To practise selfless service, devotion to God, daily meditation and enquiry into the nature of Reality is verily a perennial Sivananda Jayanti. Gurudev lives in all and is ever born afresh in all those, who are practising and perpetuating his gospel of Divine living. Gurudev is Divine Life. He is in Divine Life. Divine Life is rooted in him. He lives vibrantly active in those, who earnestly strive to live in the spirit of his sublime spiritual teachings. May God give us the strength and inspiration to make Gurudev a living force in this present-day world, where the crying need is idealism. Gurudev is personified idealism in a living way. May His Birthday impart a fresh and vigorous impulse to your aspiration towards an ideal life of virtue and spiritual quest. This is my special prayer to the Almighty Lord upon this holy Anniversary of Gurudev's earthly birth. May his life shine for ever.

May every day, each sunrise see "Sivananda" being born anew in countless thousands of hearts and countless lives everywhere in the world in the form of ideal daily life. Let each rising sun see the lotus of Divine Life blooming out in the hearts of Gurudev's innumerable disciples and devotees the world over. Thus may the beauty of the Divinity within manifest in this world as Auspiciousness and Bliss. SIVANANDA.

Beloved Atman! the essence of life is the fulfilment of the duty that stands before you. It is the proper doing of that which requires your attention at this moment. Reflecting too much about the future, speculating too much about the future are deceptive processes that deprive you of the present, which is in fact the only true time that you have got. Now is what you have. Recognise this vital fact about life and be wise. Be up and doing on the path of virtue and actively fulfil Dharma and move towards perfection. It is not to say that forethought and intelligent planning are useless

and to be discarded. But the point is while you exercise forethought and you are planning, at the same time be up and doing in the present. The planning has its place but it is not a substitute for action in the Now! They are to be carried on simultaneously. Action initiated is by itself the valuable factor that points out the lines on which the right planning is to be done. Learn to live in the NOW. Recognise the value of the Present. Money that has been lent away to another, time that has been allowed to go by and become the past,—these two will not be available to you when need for them arises. Let not fanciful tomorrows rob you of the most important today. Strive to make each day as perfect as you can. Live each day ideally and fill them with spiritualised activity. Do this and your future will be safe and contain a harvest of blessedness for you.

There is no need to unnecessarily keep waiting for some wonderful opportunity or extraordinary opening to prove your worth to God or man. No need to keep on thinking and speculating what your true work or life's mission is, or how you can commence a task in the most proper way and do it in the best manner it can be done. The important thing is to take circumstances as they are and start doing the thing that is before you to do. As you are, as things are now, do what you can here. If you do this, God will open up new avenues for you and take you towards bigger and better tasks. For He has seen, is seeing that you are DOING what He has already put before you in life for your hands to do. Use what opportunities you have. Do not wait for imaginary opportunities to present themselves. You are where you should be. What you have to do that verily is given to you. Therefore, where you are, there do what you are called upon to do. Longing for great achievement is all right. But working for it is the very essence of its ultimate attainment. And this working is neither done in the past nor done in the future. Work is only done NOW. This is the truth. Recognise this and you make your life a success.

In spiritual life and in spiritual evolution it is the little things in every day life that have tremendous importance. It is through doing little things in an ideal way day after day, that one ascends the spiritual way up towards perfection. To forget little things of every day life and await for some great opportunity and keep preparing for some unique and tremendous act is a great Maya which deludes and leads astray many really sincere seekers and aspirants. They are deceived by their own mind. The ordinary little things of your day-to-day life, by their very littleness begin to seem insignificant and thus they fail to arrest your attention and thus you lose the hundred golden opportunities that you daily come across hour by hour and minute by minute on every side. Be aware of this. Remember! myriad tiny strands they are that go to make up a mighty strong rope. Every day, all day long, through the years, use every little opportunity moment by moment in your ordinary life. This is the essence of Yoga. This is the secret of attainment. This is the key to progress and success. There is a wise Sanskrit saying, "By the falling of drops of water the pot is gradually filled up. In the same way verily is it the case with wealth, with learning and with Dharma, too". Precisely thus indeed your spiritual life also.

On a little hillock stands this Durban Sivanandashram of the Divine Life Society of S. Africa, from where Chidananda sends you this letter. About a furlong away down the slope of this hill flows the river Umgeni which I have named as our local Ganga. We have been having very strong winds from the interior which herald the approaching summer season. Winter has started to take leave. In India the fierce summer would have given place to the monsoon rains. At Rishikesh the holy river Ganga must be in floods, reaching the upper banks of Muni-ki-reti and Swargashram with its rushing torrent. She was always the beloved Mother to Sri Gurudev and doubtless she has

SIVANANDA'S BIRTHDAY MUST BE A DAY OF RETROSPECT AND SPIRITUAL REASSESSMENT AND
SELF SCRUTINY

risen close to the verandah of our holy Master's Ganga-Kutir. May the Grace of holy Mother Ganges grant you all long life, health, happiness and highest spiritual blessedness. Mother Ganges is verily an aspect of Divine Mother Para Shakti Herself. She is a visible manifestation of Mother's sin-destroying, life-purifying and liberation-bestowing power of Adi-Shakti. The holy Ganga is Vidya-Maya manifest in tangible form in this world of ours. Glory to the Mother. Blessed are those who are privileged to live on her holy banks. Their lives will be crowned with Divine Illumination.

The auspicious worship of the Divine Mother is to take place in this very month. During the quarter of a century, that this servant has had the privilege to live at Gurudev's sacred feet, he has rarely missed the annual Navaratra Puja. This time, however, Gurudev has wished my presence in another part of his spiritual estate. Very many Hindus here in S. Africa are Devi worshippers. They all observe the Navaratra Puja.

Beloved Sadhakas, pray fervently to the Divine Mother Durga to inspire you with inner spiritual strength to progress onward upon the spiritual path with courage, wisdom and firm determination. Observe strict discipline during the entire period of the Puja, from September 23rd to the 30th. Get up at 4 a.m. in the morning, take bath and sit and do Japa of Mother's Name. Glorify her through Stotras and Bhajans. Pray fervently from the bottom of your heart. Ask her the boons of discrimination, dispassion and true devotion. Pray to her to bless you with a pure character, ideal good conduct and the grace of Divine Life. Seek from her the strength to control your senses, conquer desire, curb the egoism and stick to the vows of truth, purity and loving kindness into all beings. Observe partial fast (taking only milk) throughout the day and break your fast at sight only after worshipping the Divine Mother. After Puja take only some very light, pure diet as her Prasad. Sleep only six hours at night. Look upon women as veritable manifestations of Divine Mother. Take the vow of adhering rigidly to the great Eka-patni-vrata. Let the Vijaya Dasami day see triumph victoriously over all unspiritual Samskaras, sinful tendencies and wrong habits of the past. Be gloriously reborn into shining new light of spiritual purity, sublime idealism and lofty Divine Life of Yoga and Vedanta and highest Dharma. Become for ever established in discipline, austerity, self-control and spiritual practice. Strive towards a worthy ideal and ever more towards the Supreme Goal. May the blessed Divine Mother shower upon you her abundant Grace and grant you peace, bliss and immortality. Jai Bhavani.

This beautiful country, half a century ago, gave to India a transformed and inspired Mahatmaji (Bapuji) who came to Bharata as an apostle of freedom and a friend of the masses, converted by the lofty life and the stirring teachings of Leo Tolstoy and John Ruskin to a life of simplicity, service and sacrifice. The youthful patriot returned home as a saviour to dedicate himself for the emergence of Svatantra Bharata. His noble life, his idealism, his selfless dedication and patriotism shine as great example for the people of India today. The youths of India must turn to his great life and inspiring example if they really would be worthy sons and daughters of Bharatavarsha.

The nation is preparing to pay homage to his memory at the centenary of his birth, next year. The whole of India, young and old, rich and poor, non-officials and officials, will take a pledge to walk in his footsteps and to carry out his ideals and this should be the most important feature of observing his sacred Birth Centenary. On a nationwide scale, everyone must take up the devout

study of his Autobiography (My experiments with Truth). Study circles must be formed everywhere for this purpose. All must purchase a copy of this book immediately and commence reading. The Nav-Jeevan Trust could do well to bring out an easy and simplified, abridged edition of it for young folks to read. From October this year a great movement must be set a foot to fill people with Gandhi-consciousness all over the country. All journals must join hands and help in this task. His 18-point constructive programme should receive countrywide attention. Earnest leaders and other persons must approach the holy Acharya Vinobhaji and request for his guidance and advice as to how best Bapuji's Centenary should be observed and his advice must be heeded.

The holy memories of his noble life rose up before my mind when I went on a humble pilgrimage to the Phoenix Settlement here, near Durban, which he founded in 1904 and when he lived a simple life of service and formulated the concept of Satyagraha and published the Newspaper "Indian Opinion", this simple wooden cottage set in the country-side and surrounded by farm land is still preserved as it was during his time. There were no cots. Gandhiji and his children slept on the floor. His daughter-in-law (his son Manilal Gandhi's wife) received us courteously and we were shown round Pujay Bapuji's cottage. Many old photographs are there which recall long by-gone events and occasions. Gazing at them one is transported into an era of courageous idealism, towering moral stature, real greatness and far-sighted wisdom. I was thrilled to find in one of the rooms a series of uniform paintings placed in a row along the walls, each painting depicting visually the central meaning of each line of Sant Narsimbhakt's well-known Gujarati song "Vaishnava jan to tene Kahiye". The full text of this song itself appeared in bold script by the side of the first picture in the series. Upon enquiry I learnt that it was probably purchased by Mrs. Manilal Gandhiji. Phoenix Settlement still carries vibrations of peace, spiritual beauty and serenity of Gandhi's spiritual personality. This visit was memorable. May his life and lofty example be to our country as a great shining light to guide its people along the upward path of honour, dignity, virtue, truth and purity.

Before closing let me appeal to each one and all of you individually and collectively to prepare to observe Pujya Mahatma Gandhi's Birth Centenary year that is close approaching. Please commence this task from the 25th of September, one full week in advance of Bapuji's Birthday on 2nd October. Draw up a yearlong programme of silent, yet ceaseless activities to bring about a total revival of Bapuji's teachings and the Gandhian way of life throughout the length and breath of Bharatavarsha. Herein lies your supreme welfare and the future good of the nation. Flood the entire country with the light of Gandhi-Vad. This is the special duty of the youth of India. Let Yuvak Bharathi wake up to this noble task awaiting them now. God bless you all!

Jai Sri Gurudev! Jai Bapuji!

Regards and Prem,

1st September, 1968

—Swami Chidananda

Sivanandashram Letter No. LVII

GANDHIJEE—PERSONAL GOSPEL OF DIVINE LIFE

Worshipful Immortal Atman!
Beloved Seeker after Truth,

Om Namō Narayanaya! Loving salutations in the name of Sri Gurudev and Mahatma Gandhi, the Father of our Nation who dedicated his entire life to an attempt to re-establish the ethical ideal in the life of the people of our country. The period from 2nd October, 1968 to 2nd October 1969 is verily a hallowed 12 months, for it will constitute the Gandhi Year. It is a blessed year marking the centenary of this truly Great Soul's advent upon earth. To me this Gandhi-year really signifies a Rama-Nama Year as well as a year of Truth speaking, Promise-Keeping, Self-Searching, Fasting and Praying and Selflessly Serving. To me all these mean Gandhiji. He also means to me unflinching daily prayer, deep love for India, an identification with villagers and their villages. He also means self-control, moderation, rejection of chemical drugs and trust in Nature. To follow these ideals that he embodied and practised in his life is the most essential and indispensable part of this Centenary celebrations. May God inspire each son and daughter of Svatantra Bharatavarsha to turn to Gandhiji as a guiding Light in the path of the nation's onward march. Enough has India suffered by rejecting the Gandhian way of life. Let the country's main task in the observation of this Gandhi Year be a restoration of the Gandhian way to its right and proper place in the life of the nation which seems to revere Gandhiji but does not heed his golden teachings. Here is now an opportunity to set right this error and accept the Wisdom Light of his teachings back in to people's daily life. This is the nation's chance now.

Sri Gurudev Swami Sivanandaji had great admiration for Mahatma Gandhiji. He held him in high veneration and concurred with his ethical teachings. Gurudev considered Bapuji as the foremost exponent of Nishkamyā Karma Yoga in this age. Referring to him Sri Gurudev has written, "Study the autobiography of Mahatma Gandhiji. He did not differentiate between menial service and dignified work. Scavenging of the latrine was the highest Yoga for him. This was the highest worship for him. He himself had cleaned the latrines. He had annihilated this illusory little 'I' through service of various sorts.

"Many highly educated persons joined his Ashram for learning Yoga under him. They thought that Gandhiji would teach them Yoga in some mysterious manner in a private room, and would give lessons in the science of Pranayama, meditation, abstraction, awakening of the Kundalini, etc. They were disappointed when they were asked to clean the latrine first, and left immediately. Gandhiji himself did the repairing of his shoes. He himself used to grind flour and would take upon his shoulders the grinding work of others also, when they were unable to do their allotted portion of work for the day. When an educated person, a newcomer, felt shy to do grinding work, Gandhiji himself would do this work in front of him, and then the man would do the work himself from the next day, willingly."

Sri Gurudev regularly sent each and everyone of his books to Gandhiji, whenever it was printed. The Divine Life Magazine and Gandhiji's Harijan Magazine were in exchange. Towards the closing period of his life, Pujya Bapuji had a desire to spend sometime in silence and seclusion

quietly in Uttarakashi. His well-known secretary, beloved Sri Mahadev Desai, came to Uttarakashi to personally inspect the place and fix up a suitable *hamlet* for Gandhiji. Sri Jugal Kishore Birlaji undertook to provide facilities and accommodation, in the Himalayas. Sri Mahadev Desai came to Sivananda-Ashram to consult and get advice from Sri Gurudev in this connection. Pujya Gurudev endorsed this idea and heartily recommended that Gandhiji should certainly avail himself of such Ekanta. But, alas, his work among people so claimed him that he was never able to fulfil this inner urge for silence and seclusion.

In the year 1946, this servant had the unique blessedness of having a private meeting with Bapuji when I went as an emissary of Gurudev taking with me a set of his books as a present to Gandhiji and conveying his greetings, love and good wishes. It was in New Delhi in the summer of the year 1946 and I was a junior Brahmachari of the Ashram and in my 29th year. Gandhiji was then putting up at the Bhangi Colony at the northern end of Reading Road (now Mandir Marg) where it met the Panchkuye Road. At 2.30 p.m. on a torrid June day, I went into his presence inside a thatched mud-hut, where he was resting on a long wooden plank, with a moist towel round his head. I saluted him placing my forehead at his feet. Bapuji made kind enquiries about Gurudev and remarked that he was receiving all valuable books by Swamiji. When I presented the bundle of books, he had the bundle untied and took up and glanced through each one of the eight or ten books I had taken with me. He knew of the work of the Divine Life Society and voiced his warm appreciation. I sought his blessings for my spiritual life. Bapuji replied that I was already blessed that I had the good fortune of the guidance of a holy saint like Swami Sivanandaji. And he added, "May the Almighty grant you His Grace in your quest." While departing I asked him for a message to Gurudev. He replied, "What message can I give? Swamiji's message of spiritual living is inspiring thousands all over the world. We need such good work, Please convey to him my Pranam." While saying this Gandhiji brought his palms together in Namaskar. I took leave giving place to other visitors waiting outside. That was the last time I saw him. During the week before this interview I attended Bapuji's evening prayer meeting on two days. Bapuji was a Karma Yogin, a devotee of stupendous faith and a saintly man whose depth of humility has left an indelible impression upon this servant. Gurudev beamed with affection and joy when I narrated about this meeting with Mahatma Gandhiji and about what I felt in his presence. Subsequently, Bapuji did send a brief message to Sri Gurudev.

I read regularly all Bapuji's writings appearing in the Harijan. I also read 'the Unseen Power' compiled by Sri Jeg Pravesh Chandra, "Gita the Mother", "Self-restraint vs. Self-indulgence" and such other books of Gandhian teachings. The little book of prayers and Bhajans, the "Ashram Bhajanavali" has ever been a favourite book of mine. In the December of 1947 I was physically ill during the Autumn material season. Sri Gurudev sent me and Gurubhai Sri Swami Visveswaranandaji Maharaj to Nagpur in Central India for medical treatment under a pious doctor-devotee, Sri B.A. Vaidya. He had his clinic at Dhantoli and was a highly respected honorary physician in the well-known Mayo Hospital of Nagpur. He got me admitted there for treatment and while at Hospital, the sudden shocking news of Bapuji's passing away reached us there on the hospital radio. The entire hospital staff was stunned. I remembered they had a prayer meeting to which I was called though I was a patient there.

You will note that between the Divine Life Society's cardinal principles and Gandhiji's own ethical principles there is a complete identity. Both Gurudev and Bapuji insisted upon

Satyam-Ahimsa-Brahmacharya as the indispensable basis of the Good Life and the very essence of Sadachara. They gave to character the highest place in human values. Moral principles and ethical conduct came first in the teachings of both of these great sons of modern India. Thus Ahimsa, Satyam, Brahmacharya and prayer, selfless service and practice of the Divine Name constitute the identical fundamentals of both Gandhism and Divine Life. These also comprise the very basis of Gandhiji's and Gurudev's personal life. May God give unto all the children of Bharatvarsha the inner strength and aspiration to practise these great precepts and live a life according to these principles. May the sublime memory of Gandhiji's life and teachings inspire you to grow into an ideal person and fulfil the sublime pattern of the Good Life. Glory be to Mahatma Gandhi. May you all join whole-heartedly and work earnestly to celebrate this Gandhi Year in a worthy, dynamic and effective manner. I wish you every success in this immediate noble task which is the duty and the privilege of every Indian.

There is a unique significance in the occurrence of the holy Vijayadashami day (Dassera) on 1st October, just one day before the 2nd October which inaugurates this Gandhi Centenary year. The Divine Mother's victory over demons or Asuras is not to be regarded merely as a long bygone event in some remote mythological age in the forgotten past. If, year after year this annual Vijayadasami day just means the memory of some fossil event of the distant past, the observance would be meaningless and quite devoid of a currently dynamic content. This is not so. It has a vital implication for today, and for here and now, to us. This day is meant as a day of dynamic reassertion of our firm faith in the power and ability of the higher forces in man to overcome and subdue the baser instincts and urges of the lower self in human nature. This day is meant to provide scope repeatedly for man and the world to correct themselves and recover their lost ground and forge ahead in their progress towards idealism. It is a day of hope, of renewed self-confidence and fresh efforts to establish the rule of righteousness in your heart. Let the significance of the close association of Vijayadasami and Gandhi Jayanti this year be well recognised. Conquest of evil must be followed with the practice of good. May the Indian nation as a whole enter into a glorious new day of moral awakening and ethical progress under this sublime auspices of Mahatma Gandhiji's Shatabda Samvatsar or Centenary Year. May the *muck* and darkness of untruth and impurity in private and public life, in individual and collective life, now vanish and give place to the good life of truth, purity, nobility and morality. Thus, may you all people of good-will join hands from the Himalayas to Kanya Kumari, from Assam to Punjab in heralding the advent of the real Divali. Prepare thus for the coming Festival of Lights and worship of the Divine Mother Mahalaxmi, the Goddess of auspiciousness and blessedness. May She Shower Her Grace upon you all.

You are surely contributing Mantra writing to the Mahamantra Yajna on 3rd December. I urge you all to contribute the maximum possible quota of *Likhita* Japa towards this spiritual undertaking. Ever since I made known this Japa Yajna project to the devotees in South Africa more and more people have commenced the Mantra writing. During my ten days' stay in Johannesburg in August, the devotees there already put a quota of 80,000 Mantras before I left them. They will be sending the Japa Sankhya direct to the Ashram in the 3rd week of November. I call upon you and all your family and friends to vigorously carry on this great Likhit-Japa Yajna. There is a special reason for my saying it. Different Yugas have their distinct Sadhanas for attaining God. Thus what used to be attained through penance, ceremonial worship and meditation in the previous Yugas is now attainable in this present age through the practice of the Divine Name. Nama-Sadhana is Yuga Dharma in the spiritual field in Kali Yuga. In the various forms of Nama Sadhana like Japa, Kirtan,

etc. Likhit-Japa has a very important place. It effectively brings the concentration of mind by binding down the practitioner's total attention in this unique integrated process of the Mantras to the accompaniment of audible repetition of the same. Practise it and experience it for yourself. You will see the amazing effects it has of arresting the wondering mind and giving you peace and concentration.

Move onward. Time does not stop. Life hurries by. You must be active in spiritual life as the minutes and hours fly past, as days and months flow by and as the years roll on. You must progress onwards and ascend higher and higher towards the pinnacle of Divine Perfection. Attain this glorious destiny. You are born for it. May your days be filled with Light. With calm resolution, with bright hopefulness and with cheerful boldness proceed without pause upon the blissful path of spiritual life. In joy move forward, in joy carry on Sadhana. Attain supreme Joy.

Before I conclude let us offer salutations to the noble Bali Chakravarti, who is a supreme example of the highest and the ultimate Sadhana of Nava Vidha Bhakti, namely Atmanivedana. Bali Chakravarti's greatness called forth the advent of the Lord as the Divine Vamanavatara. In this form the Lord accepted the supreme self-offering of the great king Bali Chakravarti. On the 22nd of this month numerous devout people worship king Bali of hallowed memory. We also salute the illustrious sage Yajnavalkya; this month ends with the birth anniversary of this greatest Jnani of the Upanishadic era. I shall now leave you to look forward to the solemn six-day worship of Kartikeya Bhagavan during the period of the annual Skanda Shashthi Puja. May the blessings of the resplendent Siva-Kumara, who is Wisdom and Divine Power personified, bestow upon you fullest success in spiritual life and grant you bliss, peace and immortality. I pray for the welfare, prosperity and happiness of all beings in the entire universe. Om Sri Sharavanabhavaya Namah.

With regards, Prem and Om,

1st October, 1963

*Yours in Sri Gurudev,
Swami Chidananda*

Sivanandashram Letter No. LVIII

GURU NANAK—WORLD AWAKENER OF MODERN AGE

Worshipful Immortal Atman!
Blessed Seeker after Truth,

Om Namo Narayanaya. Salutations and greetings in the name of Gurudev Sivananda. May the inspiration of Gurudev's sublime spiritual teachings impel you ever onward upon the shining path of virtue, noble character and moral perfection. Let Gurudev's call to spiritual life take you onwards towards the goal of God-Realisation. Ethical living and spiritual striving constitute the very soul of Bharatavarsha. These two indicate the very essence of Indian culture. Take these two away from your life, then life becomes essenceless, meaningless and useless. Without these two factors the Indian Nation and the Indian Culture will be dead things. Remember this and be

awakened and alert. Lose not these laving principles of India's existence. Keep them alive. Help to propagate these all over India, throughout the country.

Last month I shared with you my thoughts about the great soul, Bapuji. I tried to define Mahatma Gandhiji's personal Gospel of the Good Life. This wider teachings of National awakening and progress was also touched upon in the previous letter. This month it is the Lord's wish that I say something about our country's concept of ideal womanhood. A true lady, in the view of the Indian culture, is an embodiment of virtues. Modesty and chastity are the basic qualities of the Bharatiya Nari (Indian woman). Purity of character was indeed the very life of the true Indian lady. The great ideal before the Indian woman is undoubtedly the lofty ideal of Pativrata Dharma. This meant the chaste wife's total loyalty and fidelity to her husband whom she must love, revere and serve with deep devotion, looking upon him as her visible God. Except her husband there is no man existing for her. All men in the universe she regards as her children, feeling herself to be the mother of all humanity. For, in Bharatavarsha the woman is primarily glorified as the Mother and not as the wife. Her wifeness is but the concern of only one individual in the whole world and that is her lawful wedded husband, the Patidev. To the rest of mankind she is mother. This is instinctively recognised and accepted by everyone throughout India. Go anywhere in India you will find that in all the numerous vernaculars the universal common term of addressing a woman is "mother". It is Mataji or Amma or Ma or Thayi etc. all meaning mother. The Pativrata Nari (woman) is verily a Goddess on earth. She is worshipped by the celestials. Her home is a heaven on earth. Everything she touches becomes sanctified. In her Divine Life radiates. She will become a worthy mother of noble offspring. The glory of such a Pativrata is indescribable. Such Pativrata upholds the entire nation, nay the entire world at large.

The ideal woman of India is also the ideal mother of her children. She is the first educator and inspirer of the unfolding soul in young children. Her home is the nursery of the generation of tomorrow. Queen Madalasa imparted spiritual consciousness to her infant sons. The mother of Shivaji inspired him and moulded him to become the defender of Dharma and Vedic Religion. The noble Sumitra blessed her only son Laxmana and willingly sent him to the forest to follow and to serve his elder brother Sri Rama. What wonderful courage and self-sacrifice and idealism on her part. With a great example to all mother, to be ready to set aside selfish affection for the sake of duty and righteousness. This is the true love of a mother; not deluded attachment merely.

November, this time, has a unique feature. It contains an unusual emphasis on "Vrata" because it has three Ekadasis or Lunar days of fasting. The 1st, 16th and the 30th of November are all Ekadasis. The first and the last are very special in that the Ekadasi on the first is the very sacred Hariprabodhini Ekadasi and the last one is the famous Ekadasi i.e. Gita Jayanti. It is very interesting to consider the spiritual aspect of these disciplines like periodical fasting, vigil, silence, etc. These entail self-restraint, self-denial and renunciation. They also imply your refusal to allow some particular sense of yours to give expression to its natural propensity. It means forgoing something you like to do. In this is involved the exercise of sense-control which in turn entails exercise of your will-power. On the whole it is a process of manifesting the dominion of the spirit over the flesh. Thus it is an invaluable aid in the process of awakening and manifesting spiritual consciousness. Understood in this light, such penances become significant and valuable not merely to the devotee or a Bhakta but it becomes equally important and effectively helpful even to a Vedantin or Raj Yogi who may start their Sadhana from the higher level of the mind.

The spiritual mechanics of a Vrata lie in the power of the seekers' genuine aspiration, overcoming the sense-urges of his physical nature, the desire-urges of the mental nature and the Adhyasa springing out of the ego-principle. This assertion of its choice and preference of love of God to love of earthly things becomes at once a token of its sincerity and earnestness as well as the recognition of the all fullness and self-sufficiency of the true self as opposed to the lower nature in man. The exercise of such self-restraint and self-denial when rationally practised can ignite spiritual awakening within the seeker. Amongst numerous Vratas fasting, vigil and silence have retained a unique place of their own not merely in the field of formal religion but more especially in the spiritual life of seekers in quest of Self-realisation.

The third Ekadasi in this month is also the sacred Gita Jayanti day. This year Gita Jayanti assumes a very special significance (and importance too). Because, the Bhagavad Gita was verily life itself to Mahatma Gandhi. Bapuji regarded the Gita as a veritable Mother to him. He declared that throughout his life the Bhagavad Gita has been to him a guide, friend, adviser, unfailing help and sure solution to all problems. He who turns to the Gita never goes away empty-handed. The Srimad Bhagavad Gita was Mahatma Gandhiji's constant companion, most favourite scripture and supreme source of inspiration, light and wisdom. He drew strength, courage and comfort from the Gita. It behoves the present Government of India to initiate a campaign to bring about a nation-wide interest in studying the Gita. The All India Radio must have a daily Gita period for Sri Dinanath Dinesh to recite one whole chapter of Gita every day. The different State broadcasting programmes should also start Gita recitations on their daily programme. The Spirit of Bapuji will surely rejoice.

Now, there is a request to make when this letter reaches you I would have already departed from South Africa for Mauritius and Rhodesia, etc. There is continuous touring and engagements throughout the months of November and December. I shall be moving from country to country. As such letter correspondence would be almost impossible due to continuous engagement in different places. Hence I would request that people may refrain from writing letters to me except in such matters that may be extremely urgent, or important and absolutely indispensable. Such letters can only be few and I shall try to attend to them as best as I can.

If there is any such matter of importance which you wish to communicate, then it may be addressed to my Nairobi camp which we shall reach on 17-11-1968. Such important letters could reach me here uptill 27th November. After that I shall be getting ready to depart for West Germany. The Nairobi address is c/o Sri D.N. Sodha, J.N. Sodha & Broshers P.O. Box 2128. Nairobi, Kenya, East-Africa. It will be my endeavour to attend to any such letters depending upon its urgency. It should be appreciated that while serving Gurudev in this part of the world I have necessarily to bestow my time and attention to Lord's children here. Hence this inability to devote time to letter writing.

The country will be observing this month the holy Birthday Anniversary of the great Hindu Saint and Religious Teacher, the worshipful GURU NANAK DEV of sacred memory. Among Hindu saints revered Guru Nanak holds a unique place of spiritual importance due to the fact that he worked to remove the superstitions and defects that had grown into the religious life of India and obscured the glory of Sanatana Dharma. Nanak Dev was a Mahapurusha (a great illumined soul) who came at a turning point in the history of Hinduism to reform it by clearing up the cumbersome burden of the rigid formalities, ritualism and ceremonial worship and preach the direct and simple

spiritual approach to God-realisation by declaring the Yuga-Dharma or the special Sadhana of the present age, namely the practice of the Divine Name, the Sadhana of ceaseless remembrance (Smaran), service unto all beings (Seva) and the path of good conduct. The Path to God taught by Guru Nanak Dev is the greatest boon bestowed upon all of us in this age. Nam, Smarana, Seva, Sadachara, these constitute the supreme Sadhana of this age. The essence of religion and spiritual life was thus revealed by Guru Nanak and a great wave of spirituality was generated by him which raised up Hinduism to a new high level through his advent and divine teaching. The entire Hindu world owes a deep debt of gratitude to this great messenger of God. I earnestly appeal to all my beloved Sikh brothers and sisters who revere and honour this great holy teacher to come together in a loving unity with the entire Hindu fraternity by recognising in Guru Nanak Dev the great unifying factor. The esteemed Sikh fraternity must reflect well and understand that the great Guru Nanak whom we all equally revere and love would not have dreamt of creating a barrier and a division between the children of Bharatavarsha by his life and teachings. On the contrary Nanak Dev expounded the way of love, brotherhood, service and spiritual unity. Let all sons and daughters of India respond to Guru Nanak's call to spiritual life, love, Seva and Sadachara Jivan. Sanatana Dharma and the Path of the Ten Gurus are not contrary to each other but are complimentary currents in the progressive stream of India's spiritual life. They are twin treasures that really go together to enrich the cultural heritage of our country, its people and their religion and spiritual life. The great and grand organisation that came into being to defend the ancient Dharma of the land, now let it enrich and strengthen and beautify that same Dharma and help to support it in the midst of modern ungodly trends and currents. May Guru Nanak Dev become the focal point for a coming together in love and for a greater unity of all Indians whether they be Hindus, Sikhs, Christians, Muslims or Parsis, because Guru Nanak's spiritual teachings are universal and thus are acceptable to one and all the lovers of God and Man and of Dharma! May we all honour and pay homage to his sacred memory in this way upon his holy Birthday.

Worshipful Nanak Dev is a great Hindu Saint, the holy Adi-Guru of the Sikh brothers, a national teacher of India and world awakener of the modern age. Glory to Guru Nanak! Long may his spiritual teaching be practised by thousands all over India and the world. May He continue to guide Mankind upon the path of Love, Service and God-realisation. Jai Satguru Nanak Dev!

Beloved Seeker, be intent upon leading the Divine Life of Truth, Purity, and Universal Love and Compassion. Practise the Sadhanas of selfless service, devotional worship, meditation and ceaseless inquiry into the supreme Reality which is your ultimate Goal and destination-divine. The leading of the Divine Life saves you from a hundred dangers and removes all affliction and misery. Doubt not, discuss not, nor argue unnecessarily about higher spiritual matters. But be rooted in faith and practise Sadhana daily. Never forget this important point. The essential thing is faith, sincerity, and practice. God bless you with Joy, Peace and Illumination.

With best regards, Prem and Pranams,

1st November 1968

Yours in Gurudev,
—Swami Chidananda

Sivanandashram Letter No. LIX

SWAMI VENKATESANANDA AND SWAMI SAHAJANANDA LIVING MIRACLES OF GURUDEVA

Hare Rama Hara Rama, Rama Rama Hare Hare;
Hare Krishna Hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna Hare Hare.

Worshipful Immortal Atman!
Beloved Seeker after Truth,

Om Namo Narayanaya! Salutation and my loving greetings to you in the name of Gurudev Sivananda. This letter brings you my very best wishes for a Happy New Year, Bright and Joyful, and containing twelve months filled with prosperity, progress, success and much auspiciousness, blessedness and peace. May Gurudev's Grace grant you great spiritual unfoldment and divine experience bringing to you peace, bliss and illumination! To my beloved fellow-seekers in India I extend my greetings for the most auspicious holy anniversary of the sacred Makarasankranti day, the day of the Uttarayana Punyakala. May this significant, sacred day mark for them a day of enhanced spiritual aspiration, for a whole-souled dedication to the quest of God over and above all other lesser objectives and pursuits of mundane life. Gurukripa shower upon you this Makarasankranti Day!

On Wednesday, the 23rd of October, 1968, came to a close my half year's visit of South Africa. After exactly five months and 12 days stay in this progressive republic, this servant left for the islands of Mauritius at the loving invitation of revered Sri Swami Venkatesanandaji Maharaj sent through the officials of the Divine Life Society in Mauritius. This stay, tour and service of the spiritual seekers and lovers of God in this beautiful country of S. Africa has been to me a matter of deep satisfaction and spiritual consolation. The devotion, the loyalty and the sincerity of all the members of the Divine Life Society of South Africa and its various Branches is most exemplary and worthy of highest praise. Everywhere I went I met conclusive proof and repeated confirmation of it and this filled my heart with great joy. Verily, it is not without reason that Sri Gurudev cherished such a great love towards his South African devotees, right from the start until the last days of his life. Our beloved Swami Sahajanandaji is Gurudev's living miracle. The South African devotees of Sri Gurudev are a spiritual treasure that Gurudev has bestowed to this great continent. These devotees and the Divine Life Society of S. Africa indeed constitute the blessing and an asset to social life of that country. Their loving work inspired by Gurudev's ideals in the interest of the religious life of the South African Indian community has done a very great deal to restore the genuine spirit of real Hinduism to that section of people, who were fast drifting away from their spiritual moorings and being swept away into the vortex of dry materialistic living and mere pursuit of sense-satisfaction. The practice of collective Sankirtana, Japa of the Ishta Mantra, regular study of spiritual literature, conduct of weekly Satsangas, periodical Sadhana sessions, all these have now become practices familiar amongst our people, thanks to the sincere work of the Divine Life Society under the leadership of revered Sri Swami Sahajanandaji Maharaj. Swami Sahajanandaji, with the broad-heartedness, universal vision and feeling of brotherhood, all qualities so much like Gurudev's nature, has become a unifying factor to the different sections of the Hindu community. They have all come to feel at home in the Divine Life Society, no matter to what particular religious

subsection they may belong to by their family tradition and lineage. Not only this; even towards the people and groups belonging to other faiths a pattern of perfect tolerance has been demonstrated which has made the Divine Life Society and the Sivanandashram of Durban a by-word for universality and fellow-feeling. Sri Swami Sahajanandaji (and through him the Sivanandashram and the Divine Life Society, Durban) has become identified with all religious institutions, movements and groups in Durban so much so that it has evoked in all these quarters similar reciprocal feelings towards Gurudev's Divine Life Work. I thus witnessed an abundance of good-will created by this practical application of Gurudev's teachings and principles.

The same noble attitude and principle is followed by the Divine Life members in all the places, they function in S. Africa, Sri Les and Pat Pearson, through their Sivananda School of Yoga and Choto Govan and his colleagues keep up this ideal of service, devotion, tolerance and universality in Johannesburg. Sri Chavda, Munsook, V. Daya, P.D. Govender, Christi Reddy and their friends all work nobly in distant Cape Town. Mr. and Mrs. Buttner and daughter and O. Gopar and family of East London and Sri Velayudha Reddy and family and their friends at Port Elizabeth similarly spread these teachings in these two important cities. Sri T.V. Lilavathy Pillay and Dr. Padeyache keep alive this light in the historical town of Kimberley. Sri S.V. Sollier and his family with the loving co-operation of Sri Pat Pillay and family and with abundant good-will of Mr. F. L. Gteen, Director of the Daily Representative carry on this noble work in the beautiful and peaceful Queenstown. The direct personal guidance of Sri Desai and Narayananda make the town of Tongast an important Centre of this Divine Life work. The Centres of Stanger, Darnell and Dalton are similar outposts that usefully cater to the religions and spiritual needs of this semi-rural and purely rural communities of the above places. Merebank and Chatsworth near Durban are progressive branches and Mr. C.N. Chetty of the former is a dynamic worker in the cause. The price of place for an outstanding feature however goes to Pietermaritzburg devotees of Sri Gurudev. They have by their wonderful effort brought into being two beautiful Ashrams in this provincial capital of Natal. Thanks to the earnest work of Sri Bridgemphan and his friends Sri A.S. Pillay and Sri Morgan Naidoo, Mother Christi, Sri Krishnan and their colleagues. All this wonderful and noble work has made my visit and tour an inspiring experience, which I shall long remember with much admiration, immense satisfaction and great joy. I also express here my grateful thanks for their gracious gesture in giving a generous purse upon the eve of my departure from Durban on 21.10.1968 at the farewell Reception at Sivanandashram. This is a noble gesture indeed. May the Lord grant them a thousand fold in return.

I must record here my keen sense of gratitude and deepest appreciation to the South African Government, and specially to its Department of Indian Affairs, for the kind attitude and very sympathetic understanding towards my visit and my spiritual work in their country amidst their people. This was most encouraging. Local Officials in the different cities I visited tended to be helpful and co-operating in providing the needful facilities for this good work. The religious tolerance of the Government is noteworthy. Its helpful attitude is praiseworthy. The kindness shown to me by officials, small and big alike, in Government Departments I remember with gratitude. My thanks to them all. May God bless them.

My eight days' visit to Mauritius and my stay at the Sivananda Yoga Ashram under the gracious personal supervision of our beloved Gurubhai, the revered Sri Swami Venkatesanandaji Maharaj, is one of my most cherished memories in this present tour. Sri Gurudev is very active upon

this island through the wonderful work of Swami Venkatesanandaji Maharaj. All the officials of the Divine Life Society of Mauritius and the entire following of brother Venkatesananda Swamiji, were kindness personified to this servant of Gurudev. They showered their love upon me and looked to my every little need. Gatherings were organised all over the island to receive my humble Seva unto the children of that island-country. My grateful thanks to one and all of them. May God bless them all.

Right here I wish to express to you the wonderful joy that filled my heart last month when I received a Cablegram from the Ashram informing me about the completion of the three crore and a half of the Mahamantra Likhita Japa to celebrate the Silver Jubilee of the Akhanda Mahamantra Kirtan Yajna at Sri Gurudev's holy Ashram. My heart verily danced with joy and sang in happiness when I visualised the spiritual rejoicing that must have marked the functions at the Ashram upon that divine jubilee. Indeed Sivanandanagar must have been a veritable Vaikuntha upon that blissful day thrilling with Nama-Sankirtana. I extended my heartfelt congratulations to one and all who have participated in this great Likhita Japa Yajna and contributed towards making up the aggregate total of three and a half crore of the sacred Mahamantra. Great is the blessedness and the unique good fortune of all those, who had joined this Yajna of the Divine Name and whose Nama-Dhana will now be enshrined permanently in the Divya-Nama-Mandir. You are indeed thrice blessed!

I send you all my heartiest greetings and Best Wishes for a Joyful and Auspicious New Year. May God shower His Divine Grace upon you all in whichever part of the world you are. May he grant you a Bright, New Year full of much Blessedness. Look back briefly to assess the valuable lessons you have learnt during the past year. Enrich yourself with this knowledge. Be wise. Move into this New Year equipped with this wisdom, wakeful and alert, hopeful and resolute, confident in faith and trust. Utilise every moment of the coming year profitably and to your highest gain. This is a Divine factor. Use it with reverence. Safeguard it as the treasure that it verily is. Utilised well, it can grant you success and prosperity that can bestow unto you bliss, peace and immortality. Be fully resolved to fill your New Year with much selfless service, much spiritual Sadhana, duties faithfully done, with Japa, Kirtan, meditation and Divine experience. Here and now create Vaikuntha and Satya-Yuga by your spiritualised activities and Divine Bhava. I wish you a glorious New Year in every way.

At this time of the commencement of the New Year I wish to state my heartfelt thanks and gratitude to the numerous people, who have sent me their loving Greetings and gracious Good Wishes for the holy Christmas and the New Year. It is most kind indeed of all of them to remember this servant at the feet of Holy Master Sivananda and thus express their affectionate goodwill through their greetings. I thank each and every one of them from the bottom of my heart. To each I hereby express my sincerest good wishes for their happiness throughout the New Year. This Year also I would pray that all of you propagate the Prayer of Sri Gurudev. Let this prayer go around the whole world, enter into every heart and be upon everyone's lips. May this prayer be given place in all newspapers and periodicals throughout the length and breadth of the country. May God bless you all with spiritual Light, Joy and Divine Peace. May the Lord inspire you to stick to the noble path of spiritual aspiration, service, Sadhana and God-realisation. May each day find you advancing higher and higher towards the glorious goal of Divine Perfection. Om Namoh Bhagavate Sivanandaya! Jai Gurudev!

With my best regards, Prem and Pranams,

Yours in Sri Gurudev,

December, 1968

—Swami Chidananda

Hare Rama Hare Rama, Rama Rama Hare Hare;
Hare Krishna Hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna Hare Hare.

Sivanandashram Letter No. LX

MYSTERIOUS WORKING OF GURUDEVA'S GRACE

Worshipful Immortal Atman!
Beloved Seeker after Truth,

Om Namō Narayanaya. Salutations and my loving greetings to you in the name of Gurudev Sivananda. This letter brings my very best wishes to you all, for this present letter, in a way, constitutes a Jubilee in itself because it is the 60th Sivanandashram Letter and it has entered therefore its Diamond Jubilee, numerically speaking. I give thanks to Sri Gurudev at this juncture of its Jubilee number for having prompted me to commence this letter when I did. It has enabled me to convey to you my thoughts and feelings, my ideas and prayers and my views and wishes to you and thus seek to serve Gurudev's spiritual children in His name. Being quite unable to correspond individually with the numerous devotees of Gurudev, I have found some satisfaction and solace by these Sivanandashram Letters because they have enabled me, to some extent at least, to make up for this regrettable shortcoming.

Gurudev has taken this servant onward into other circles of his devotees since writing to you the last letter. From Rhodesia after a brief visit to Malawi (the former Nyasaland) at the loving invitation of Sri Gordhandas Mathuradas, we travelled to Zambia for a week's programme of public lectures and Satsangas from 11th Nov. to 16th Nov. The Zambia programme was arranged by Sri Uttam Ranched, an ardent Bhakta who had recently returned from India after a week of retreat in Sivanandashram in Rishikesh. We had Satsangas in the main towns of Livingston, Lusaka (the Capital City), Luanshya, Ndola, Mufilera and Chingola through the various Indian centres in these places. On the 17th of November flying from Ndola this Sevak landed in Mombasa the same evening through an extraordinary working of Gurudev's grace. Actually there was no flight to Mombasa that day and the Air Zambia plane was bound for Dar-es-Salaam in Tanzania where I was supposed to spend the night. Mombasa was all organised for programmes the very same evening. It looked inevitable that they were all to be terribly disappointed. In this situation, just at the last moment when the plane approached Dar-es-Salaam airport for landing, the ground control refused permission to the pilot for landing saying that recent rains had made the air strip temporarily unsafe. The pilot was instructed to fly to Mombasa Airport instead. And for the first time ever the Zambian Airways jet went on and landed there bringing this Sevak wonderfully in time to start with the Mombasa programme as though everything had been pre-planned with perfect timing! This is but

one of the many ways at many times that the mysterious workings of Gurudev's grace has been manifesting itself throughout.

Mombasa people could hardly believe the occurrence when the facts dawned upon them. The devotees' rejoicing knew no bounds. Dr. J. R. Sharmaji had organised a busy programme for the three days 17th, 18th and 19th November. On 20th we arrived at Nairobi and had the joy of meeting two well-known devotees of Gurudev, namely Sri D. N. Sodha and Sri C. J. Patal whom I had known through correspondence for many years. It was such a happiness to see the torch of Indian Culture being kept brightly burning in this distant outpost across the ocean by the Indian community at Nairobi. A learned scholar and educationist, Shri Shantilal Thakar had taken great pains to organise an excellent programme and with the willing selfless Seva of Sri D. N. Sodha he had given fullest possible publicity to the various meetings, etc. The High Commissioner for India in Kenya, Sri Prem Bhatiaji, presided over the main meeting in the city. Sri Bhatiaji I found to be a highly cultured gentleman with great humility and devotional temperament. He was indeed a worthy representative of Bharatavarsha's culture and possessed the true Bhava of a Bhakta and a Grihasthashrami of noble nature. Sri Shantilal Thakar I saw was an evolved Sadhaka and Yogi and was centre of inspiration and spiritual light to the Indians in Nairobi. He is doing yeoman service in spreading the knowledge of the lofty Upanishads and the Bhagavadgita. Sri Ramanbhai Patel who was our host in Nairobi is a noble soul who served us with great sincerity and devotion during our stay with him.

From Nairobi Sri Gurudev took his servant to Kampala in Uganda to the pious home of Sri Bepin K. Vadgama, who is a great Bhakta and Satsanga-Premi. He is the life and soul of the Divine Life Society in Kampala and he had organised the entire tour of East Africa. We had busy engagements in Kampala, Jinja, and then at Kisumu and Nakuru and finally concluded the tour at Nairobi again on the 30th before flying to West Germany that night. Mr. & Mrs. Hans Franke of the Divine Life Society Branch of Porz-Eil have put their home at our disposal during these ten days of the W. German programme. Meetings at Cologne, Erlangen, Dortmund and at Porz-Eil were very satisfactory and the Satsangas at the Branch wonderful. Winter has well set in. It is extremely cold. Last night the temperature was minus and there was frost upon the ground. At the Franke's home they put out rice and bread crumbs on the open balcony outside the window and numerous sparrows and blackbirds crowd. The river Rhine flows by the town at about a mile's distance from the house. Gurudev's books and photographs fill their home. Devotion pervades it. Recordings of Kirtans, Bhajans and Mantras are played here every day. My only difficulty here has been accustoming myself to delivering discourses sentence by sentence and waiting for each sentence to be translated into the German language for the German audience. I have to keep hold of the emerging ideas and prevent them from running away.

There is a distinct awakening and a rapid spreading of spiritual values in all countries in the West. This is evident in every place this servant has been visiting during this tour. As in Germany, even so is in France and in England, too. At this moment, right here in Paris, there is evidence of great interest in Yoga, not only Hatha Yoga but also Raja Yoga and the inner spiritual life. Genuine and earnest spiritual aspirants among the French people I have had the happy privilege to meet. A great many of them have been directly or indirectly influenced and inspired by Sri Gurudev's spiritual teachings.

Like Sri Hans and mother Margarete Franke in Porz-Eil in W. Germany, here in Paris Mr. Guy des Pinardes conducts a D. L. S. Branch under the name of Centre de Yoga Vedanta Sivananda. Mr. Des Pinardes got his training from Yogiraj Sri Swami Vishnudevananda, Montreal, in 1962-63 and from Swami Sharadananda at Rishikesh Ashram in 1965. He was blessed by Sri Gurudev in 1962.

There are many other Yoga Centres working here. The spiritual discourses of the recent Paris programme were very attentively received, with great earnestness. Though the process of speaking through an interpreter who translates your talk sentence by sentence makes you feel rather cramped and stiffed at times, yet it is satisfying and rewarding to the heart when one considers the spiritual service that it implies and the response that it evokes in the listening souls. Who can say that Sri Gurudev is gone and that he does not actively continue his spiritual ministry. Sri Gurudev is very much active indeed and his work is certainly moving forward and gaining momentum. To witness this is itself a benediction and an inspiration.

This servant leaves for Belgium on 2nd February, 1969, for a two weeks' programme in that country where there is a very strong movement of Yoga quite widespread with various centres in many towns and cities including its capital Brussels. The Divine Life Society Branch in the town of Aalst is being conducted by the Kiekens family with very great sincerity and loyalty to Sri Gurudev to whom all the members are deeply devoted. They are endowed with much spiritual Samskaras. After Belgium, a pressing request from Greece by our old friend Mother Lila Vlaouch of Athens takes me there for a week's tour. Then the important programme of Holland by Dr. L. Eversdyk Smulders, writer and traveller well known in North India, who had visited Sri Gurudev in 1958-59, will bring me to Holland in the first week of March for 10 day's engagements. Then this servant will have to cross the Atlantic where work awaits through Yogiraj Sri Swami Vishnudevananda Maharaj, Sri Swami Shivapremananda Maharaj, Bill Eilers & Mrs. C. Sheldan, etc. who expect this Sevak on the other side.

I am filled with immense joy to learn from the glowing reports received from my beloved brothers at the Ashram about the wonderful and enthusiastic way in which the two sacred Silver Jubilee events were very successfully celebrated under the gracious and able guidance of most revered Sri Swami Krishnanandaji Maharaj and Sri Swami Madhavanandaji Maharaj with the loving and enthusiastic help of the numerous Ashram Sadhakas and visiting devotees. They are indeed most blessed and extremely fortunate, who took part in the festival of spiritual joy which these two sacred Jubilees occasioned. The Divine Name Temple (Divya Nama Mandir) will become a centre of tremendous attraction to draw all souls towards the Spiritual Path and the Sadhana of the practice of the Divine Name of God. It will infuse power into the hearts of those who behold it and approach it. Those who worship the NAME enshrined therein will obtain the boon of Bhakti.

From here I send my special felicitations to Sri Swami Vivekananda of Sivanandashram who contributed half a lakh (50,000) of Likhit Japa towards the Mahamantra Yajna, this figure being the highest among the Ashram residents. Divine Mother endow him with such Sadhana Sakti and such Nishtha and Dharana always and take him rapidly towards the goal of God-realisation.

Akhand Nama Sankirtana should increasingly become a very regular feature of the activities of all Divine Life Society Branches all over the country and the world at large. They must all adopt Akhanda Kirtana as a prominent feature in their programmes. Even where there is no D.L.S. Branch, devotees and disciples of Sri Gurudev wherever they are living should take a keen interest in having such periodical Akhanda Nama Kirtanas organised for varying durations as in within their capacity. Dawn to midday is one method. Sunrise to sunset is another form. From midday to 7 p.m. or 8 p.m. is another method which people will find suitable to participate in on Saturdays. When you wish to combine vigil, then the pattern of sunset to sunrise is to be followed. Some arrange such continuous chants from sunset until midnight upon special festival days or holy days. Sri Gurudev Sivanandaji Maharaj always encouraged and enthused devotees to arrange Akhanda Kirtana upon occasions of marriage, birthday, any auspicious inauguration, New Year, etc. and also upon all holy days like Sri Rama Navami, Sri Krishna Janmashtami, etc. The state of things in the present day world calls for the infusion of spiritual force into the stream of human life in this universe today. The supreme method of doing this in this age is by generating and releasing the indescribable Power of the Divine Name into the life stream of contemporary mankind. This will help greatly in creating goodwill, erasing of tensions, overcoming hatred and pacifying conflicts and hostilities. It will bring about peace and change the hearts from Tamas into Sattva-Guna. Thus will you help restore order and harmony to a world that seems bent upon heading towards disharmony and chaos by its deliberate wilfulness. Spiritual power is positive force and is certain to overcome negative forces. For, this is the Law. Join ranks and co-operate in evoking this spiritual force through the potency of the Divine Name.

Loving greetings to you all in the name of the Lord of the universe, the great God, Lord Siva, for whose devout worship the entire country is preparing itself upon this most auspicious month. May the choicest blessings of Bhagawan Vishvanath be upon you all. May He bestow upon you all auspiciousness, Divine Bliss, supreme Peace, Spiritual Illumination and Highest Blessedness.

The sacred day of Mahasivaratri I shall observe with our Hindu brothers in the Indian community in London on the 15th February. My prayerful thoughts will be with everyone of you who are in the holy land of Kashi, Rameshwar and Baijyanath Dham. May Lord Siva grant you all Bhakti, Vairagya, Jnana and Kaivalya! May you be ever absorbed in the worship of Siva manifest as Jiva and strive for union with Him manifest within you as the Self, the Antaryamin, Pratyagatman!

With love, regards and Om Namah Sivaya, Om Namo Bhagavate Sivanandaya.

Yours in Sri Gurudev

January, 1969

—Swami Chidananda