

Satya ka Avahan

Invoking the Divine

सत्य का 50 years
आवाहन

Year 7 Issue 2 March-April 2018
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Sannyasa Peeth, Munger, Bihar, India



Hari Om

Avahan is a bilingual and bi-monthly magazine compiled, composed and published by the sannyasin disciples of Sri Swami Satyananda Saraswati for the benefit of all people who seek health, happiness and enlightenment. It contains the teachings of Sri Swami Sivananda, Sri Swami Satyananda and Swami Niranjanananda, along with the programs of Sannyasa Peeth.

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✉ A self-addressed, stamped envelope must be sent along with enquiries to ensure a response to your request

Front cover: New Year's Eve 2017

Plates – Sannyasa Peeth Activities 2017:

1: New Year's Day; 2–3: Pashupat Astra Yajna; 4–5: Guru Poonima; 6: Chaturmas; 7: Sri Lakshmi-Narayana Mahayajna; 8: 25th December



SATYAM SPEAKS – सत्यम् वाणी

When you have gone beyond the five koshas, you are in the spiritual veil and all your experiences are spiritual experiences. Your external life too becomes a path of spiritual experience – pain, enjoyment, injustice, insult, abuse all become spiritual experiences.

—Swami Satyananda Saraswati

जब तुम पंचकोषों के परे चले जाओगे तो तुम आध्यात्मिक आयाम में प्रवेश करोगे, जहाँ तुम्हारे सभी अनुभव आध्यात्मिक अनुभव हो जाते हैं। तुम्हारा सांसारिक जीवन भी आध्यात्मिक अनुभवों का पथ बन जाता है। सुख, दुःख, अन्याय, अपमान— सभी आध्यात्मिक अनुभव बन जाते हैं।

— स्वामी सत्यानन्द सरस्वती

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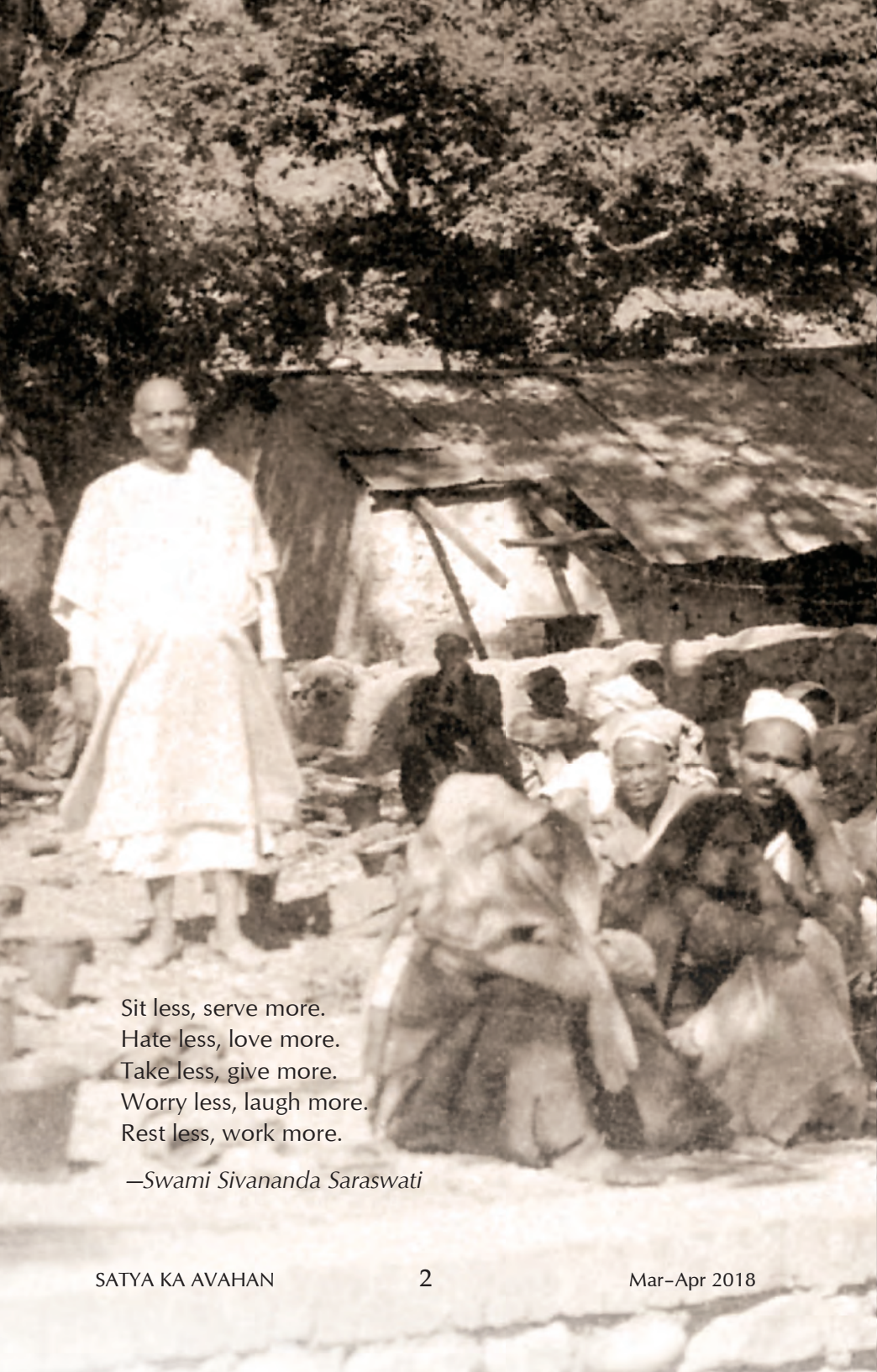
न तु अहं कामये राज्यं न स्वर्गं नापुनर्भवं । कामये दुःखतप्तानां प्राणिनां आर्तिनाशनम् ॥

"I do not desire a kingdom or heaven or even liberation. My only desire is to alleviate the misery and affliction of others."



Contents

This issue of *Avahan* is dedicated to the activities of Sannyasa Peeth during 2017



Sit less, serve more.
Hate less, love more.
Take less, give more.
Worry less, laugh more.
Rest less, work more.

—Swami Sivananda Saraswati



Everybody must try to practise the spirit of sannyasa in their day-to-day life.

—Swami Satyananda Saraswati



Sannyasa Peeth 2017: A Report

The activities of Sannyasa Peeth continued apace in 2017, while its inspirer, Swami Niranjanananda, performed the hardest and the concluding year of the panchagni tapas – sitting amid five fires from January until June.

Sannyasa, in essence, is not about activity but the attitude towards any activity. Swamiji seemed intent upon shifting attitudes and freeing minds of their narrow confines by making the sannyasins see the precise nature of their limitations squarely in the face. This was most evident at the commencement of the Sri Lakshmi-Narayana Mahayajna this year, when he said: “Sannyasins are the biggest philosophers of life, they can philosophize on anything but when it comes to applying anything to themselves, they are zero. They can speak on peace and bliss, forgiveness and forgetfulness, but they cannot forget or forgive anybody who disturbs their life. That is the nature of sannyasins. They are all hypocrites. To such people Swami Sivananda gave eight instructions. Serve, to come out of your self-oriented shell. Love, not your own thoughts and ideas, but other people. Give, the best that you have, to other people. In that way, purify yourself. Only when you have been able to do that and overcome the hypocrisy of your life can you reach the state of being good and doing good. Only when you become good and do good, can you meditate, go deep into the state of meditation and realize. Otherwise it is just a journey down fantasy-lane. These guidelines are specifically for sannyasins who are caught up in their own ego eccentricity and think they are enlightened, but who don’t even know the ground rules of spiritual life. This is the sutra and the message of our paramguru, Swami Sivananda.”

JANUARY

New Year's Day: 1 January

The first day of the year commenced with re-strengthening one's connection with guru as Sri Swami Satyananda's voice guided everyone to a meditation of ajapa japa at the yajnanashala in Ganga Darshan. Following this, a havan dedicated to Ganesha, Mother Sita, Rama and Hanuman was performed, and then the joy-bestowing *Sundarkand* was chanted. Thereafter the uplifting and vitalizing power of Sri Hanuman swept the gathering of more than 5,000 as the Hanuman Chalisa was chanted before the Chhaya Samadhi of Sri Swamiji. For each Chalisa, Hanumanji received a laddu in offering.



In his satsang, Swamiji asked everyone to follow a fourfold sankalpa: karma, dharma, faith and belief.

Swami Niranjanananda: We started today's program in a beautiful manner with ajapa japa meditation by Sri Swamiji. The ajapa japa meditation is one of the most ancient meditative techniques mentioned in vedic literature. We have started our New Year with this ancient of meditations in the voice of our guru, our inspirer, Sri Swami Satyananda. Then we moved to the invocation aspect and called upon the grace of Ganesha, Mother Sita, Hanuman and Sri Rama.

Remember that today you are receiving a new diary. Close the old diary and start writing in the new diary: 'diary' means the mind, not a notebook, the mental diary in which you write every day. The diary of 2016 is over and last night you wrote the last words: "Thank you." From today,



you have to start a new diary in your mind. To do that, you have to take a sankalpa: 'Following the path of karma and dharma, endowed with the qualities of faith and belief, I shall walk the path of goodness and righteousness.' This sankalpa should guide the writing of the diary for 2017. During the year, remember this sankalpa, this idea, every day and see whether you have lived it during the day. If you are able to live this understanding 365 days of the year, you will become a true human being.

Satyameshwar aradhana and panchagni commencement: 12-15 January



The commencement of Swamiji's panchagni sadhana was heralded by an anusthana dedicated to Satyameshwar Mahadeva. Pandits from Varanasi conducted Rudrabhisheka and havan at Akhara in the morning, and in the afternoon abhisheka and havan was conducted at Satyameshwar Peeth in Paduka Darshan.

On the 15th morning, the day of Makar Sankranti, Swamiji commenced the fifth year of his panchagni sadhana. On this occasion, a new havan sadhana was initiated at the Akhara, dedicated to Mother Kali.

The fifth year of panchagni entails many more strictures and the sadhaka is required to be *swapaki*, one who prepares his own food. Preparing himself for the toughest year so far, as the sadhana this year would go on until June, in satsangs during the Satyameshwar aradhana, Swamiji explained what this would entail.

Swami Niranjanananda: The panchagni is a sadhana of sannyasa; it is not a sadhana of yoga. It is not part of hatha yoga, raja yoga, kriya yoga, kundalini yoga, nada yoga, bhakti yoga, laya yoga or any yoga that you may know of or invent in the future. It is not part of any yogic tradition, practice or culture; it is part of the sannyasa tradition.



In 2008, Sri Swamiji said in a satsang, “Everything that I have received in my life is to benefit others. When I started on my journey, nobody knew who I was, yet everybody supported me, so I am grateful to everybody. What you see is not my creation, it is the contribution of many people. Therefore, I returned everything to them in form of prasad.” He gave guidelines on how to do that: through service and through giving. He also said, “I am not leaving any inheritance for the sannyasins either. In fact, I tell them that if they need money to serve, they can even sell the ashram, but they should continue to give back to society, to serve society.” Then he looked at me and said, “As my inheritance, you are only going to receive my langoti.” *Langoti* is a loin-cloth, and that is the symbol of handing over the sannyasa aspiration. That was the indication that I have to maintain and develop the sannyasa culture.

In order to follow this mandate, I started the first year of panchagni in 2013. This is 2017, the fifth year, which involves many rules: maximum isolation, make your own meals, and so on. This year will be the final year with all the five fires for five months. It will last until June, therefore it will be an intense period, for which preparations have started.

The panchagni is a sadhana of isolation, *ekanta*. It is an austerity that demands complete sanyam: not maximum sanyam but complete sanyam, therefore it is performed in isolation.

If you wish to participate, let the only participation be that of sending good wishes and thoughts of support so that this fragile human being can walk this difficult path.



The Padma Bhushan is conferred upon Swamiji: 26 January

On 26th January 2017, the twelfth day of Swamiji's panchagni sadhana, special news reached the ashram: 'Swami Niranjana Ananda has been nominated for the Padma Bhushan award.'

The third highest civilian award in the country, the Padma Bhushan is conferred upon recipients by the President of India, and is given for distinguished and exceptional achievement in a particular field.

All ashramites were overjoyed, thrilled, exultant, moved to tears to hear this news – their inspirer-guardian-guru, their friend-philosopher-guide, their most beloved Swamiji was today recognized by the whole nation! When Swami Niranjana received the news, however, he displayed characteristic sthita prajna, simply smiling in acknowledgement.

The investiture ceremony of the award was held on 30th March 2017 at the Rashtrapati Bhavan in New Delhi. Swamiji, however, chose to not break his sadhana and thereby to forego the public honour of the occasion. In a heartening move, the Government of India decided to respect the tradition of tapas and sent the award to Munger to be bestowed upon Swamiji at his convenience. Not only the government, the media



also appreciated the sankalpa of Swamiji's tapas, signifying a nationwide awareness of the values that have upheld the spiritual culture of the country.

On 26th January, after completing his panchagni sadhana for the day, Swamiji shared his inner feelings with the residents.

Swami Niranjanananda: Since the announcement of this award, there has been a stream of phone calls, news reports and emails. I want to share with you all that it is not because of Swami Niranjan, for Swami Niranjan is the most unqualified person: skill-less, education-less, jobless, penniless. These are my qualifications. After all, what knowledge do I have except being a yoga teacher!

The recognition has been given to the work, which was inspired by Swami Sivananda and by Swami Satyananda. We have simply continued in their footsteps. What has been recognized is that it has been and is good work. This has been acknowledged by people at large, as the award has been a public decision based on merit.

What is especially heartening is that everybody associated with us has felt that the award has been given to them. Everybody has felt that they have personally received this award. Definitely it does not belong to an individual, but to everyone who has worked for yoga. And all of you are recipients of the award too, so congratulations to you.



JANUARY–FEBRUARY

Adhyatma Samskara Satra: 28 January–5 February



During the first Adhyatma Sadhana Satra of the year, the scope of the sadhana was expanded for the select participants. A morning session of asana-pranayama was included where the focus was on using the body to attain a deeper awareness of oneself. In the afternoon, after a short yoga nidra, they were guided into the practice of likhit japa as per Swami Sivananda's instructions. Along with this, there was reading of the booklet *Water*

the Roots, which contains the guidance of the masters on cardinal points of a sadhaka's journey.

During this period a mantra anusthana was also conducted in the Akhara by pandits from the Munger Shivalaya. Even though Swamiji was engaged in the panchagni sadhana, he took time to meet with the participants and helped them understand the requisites of sadhana.

Swami Niranjanananda: There are many conditions that have to be fulfilled if a sadhana is to be lived as sadhana. For example, when Sri Swamiji came to Rikhia, a sign was put on his door, 'Don't come again'. That isolation is necessary to maintain a specific awareness for twenty-four hours. If the sadhaka meets with people, there is a break in concentration, *vikshepa*. If the mantra has to be chanted twenty-one thousand six hundred times and you speak to someone for ten minutes, there is a break of a hundred breaths. The sadhana is broken, the aim is not attained, and one has to start again.



The vikshepas and blocks have to be cut in sadhana. If the mind is a vikshepa, a distraction, then the mind has to be cut, and cutting the mind is the purpose of austerity, *tapasya*. Tapasya is not following the mind; dhyana is following the mind and stilling the mind. Tapasya is cutting the mind. When the mind is cut, everything else is cut.

Thus in sadhana, isolation is important. You should not even see the face of another person, not even hear the voice of another person, not even know that another person exists. That is *ekantavas*. From this isolation, the awareness of one's own mind develops, as there is nobody to interact with except yourself. At that time, the sadhaka observes the mind and rectifies the *swabhava*, the nature, of the mind.

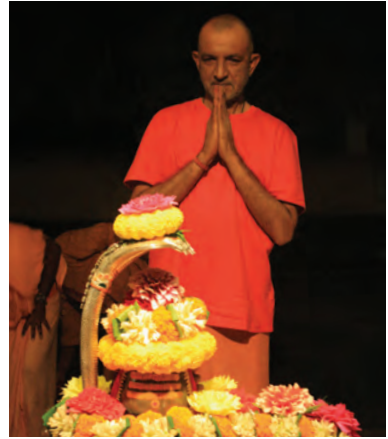
FEBRUARY

Swami Dharmashakti's mahasamadhi day: 12 February

Swami Dharmashakti's mahasamadhi day was commemorated with an evening program held at the Akhara in which havan was performed at the yajna vedi by sannyasins in Swamiji's presence. Ammaji's life and the inspiration she provided was relived as sannyasins spoke about her.

Shivaratri: 24 February

On Shivaratri, all sannyasins and residents of the ashram went to the Munger Shivalaya for a program dedicated to Shiva conducted by the children of Bal Yoga Mitra Mandal (BYMM) and the ladies of Ramayan Mandali. On returning to Ganga Darshan, they gathered at the Akhara in Swamiji's presence for a havan dedicated to Shiva.



MARCH

Holika Dahan and Holi: 12–13 March

On 12th March, the ancient custom of Holika Dahan was followed with the burning of a huge bonfire in the car park under a full moon. Amid kirtans, sannyasins related the story of Holika, the wicked aunt of Prahlad and how she tried to burn him to death but got burnt herself. That is how the custom of lighting a bonfire in memory of Prahlad's devotion, originated.



Next day, on Holi, all students, guests and residents gathered on the Kutir lawn and amid song and dance, the festival of colours was celebrated. Senior sannyasins put tika on everyone and received pranams.

Later, at the conclusion of the daily havan in the Akhara, which was performed at midday this year, Swamiji placed the blessings of colour on everyone's forehead. In the late afternoon, Swamiji met all residents for satsang where his entire thinking seemed to be tuned to a different dimension.

Swami Niranjanananda: Holi and Holika don't have any connection to each other. These are two separate events that took place many thousands of years apart. The incident of Holika's burning occurred at the time of Narasimha avatara, in Satya Yuga. The playing of Holi started in Dwapara Yuga at the time of Krishna.

Krishna was dark in complexion and Radha was fair and Krishna always used to question this. So one day, Mother Yashoda gave a box of colours to Krishna and said, "Why don't you experiment by putting colours on yourself and see which one suits you better?" Krishna took the colours and started playing with his friends, painting himself and his friends to see which colour looked better and could be compared to Radha's complexion. That is how the festival of Holi originated.

The play of colours is something you see in the universe too. The colour of the universe is dark. Light is only perceived in the dark as a glow. That is the cosmic reality: the bursts of white light in the infinitely dark space looking like fireflies flashing at night. That sets the scene for the manifest creation, prakriti. Similarly, dharma and adharma: dharma is only sparks of light in the darkness of adharma.

Adharma cannot be eradicated and dharma cannot be established permanently on Earth. The day Krishna died, dharma died and adharma came back. The day Rama died, dharma died and adharma came back. The day Buddha died, dharma died and adharma came back. It happens like that every time. The nature of this Prakriti is tamasic, and everything that has a form and shape has a limited purpose and use. However, while we are in this world, it is the positive expression of that conditioned form that has to be found. From my perspective, discovering that positive quality in the conditioned object is spirituality. If you can find a more creative and benevolent use of something, you are living spirituality.

In human history, a process of continuous, communal education has taken place and humanity has evolved due to that. 'Communal education' means the society as a whole growing together. For example, evolving from the Stone Age to agrarian society was not one person's imagination, it was a group phenomenon, and each one in the group contributed. Similarly, from agrarian societies developed communities with walled cities. This was all the result of a group mentality. Likewise, the industrial revolution was a group mentality. In all these situations, everybody was affected by the changes that were taking place around them.

Do we have a group mentality now, globally? Is there an event, an idea, a situation that can carry everybody forward and become the catalyst for development?





At one time, the process of lighting fire was known only to a few, but it created a revolution. Today we have so many tools to light fire and they are accessible to everybody. This is the result of a global evolution: from the first bulb that Edison lit to the number of bulbs that are now manufactured every year. Such evolution provides a platform for the mind to go to the next level. Scientific advancements are still being made, but there does not seem to be any common focus today for society at large, except earning, surviving and enjoying. There is nothing that propels us to take the next step for the betterment of society.

Fifty or seventy years ago, there were hardly any radio waves or electrical waves in the environment. Today we are living in an ocean of waves. We are practically swimming in it every moment. That has to have a subtle effect on the brain. Previously, the tribes used to play drums to convey messages. Now the phone drums electrical radiation right into the ear. Even if you don't get cancer or epilepsy, there is bound to be some effect from those waves continuously going into your ears. Fifty years ago, if you looked at a satellite image of Earth at night, you would see a dark place with only a few lit areas. Today if you see a picture of Earth at night, there are few dark areas except the oceans. The land is all lit up.

All these waves in the environment, electrical and others, do they contribute to human evolution or to regression? Is evolution possible or is regression imminent?

It seems that nature is telling us to be like fireflies. In space, the galaxies become visible only when there is light, whatever be the size, shape or colour, whether red, white or yellow. It is that light which brings life to the darkness. It is the same with dharma and adharma. Adharma cannot be eradicated and dharma cannot be established permanently, but we can beautify the night like fireflies, who represent dharma.

MARCH-APRIL

Navaratri: 28 March-5 April

Navaratri was observed with the invocation of Sri Rama and the Cosmic Mother through chants and havan in front of the Chhaya Samadhi in the evenings. It was an inspiring period of experiencing the transformative influence of these cosmic forces.

Sannyasins performed navan parayan of the *Ramacharitamanas* in the Akhara at brahmamuhurta, and the softness and positivity of the Rama energy was experienced by all.

On Rama Navami, the birth of Sri Rama was celebrated with chanting of the slokas of 'Balakand' of *Ramacharitamanas*, the episode describing the birth and childhood of Rama, at 12 noon - the time at which Rama was born. All other slokas of the *Ramacharitamanas*, the entire Sundarkand, as well as other stotrams and kirtans were part of this aradhana to honour the *maryada puroshottam*, the epitome of righteousness.

As Rama Navami fell on the 5th of the month, Guru Bhakti Yoga and the Rama Navami anusthana were observed together in the evening. The combined forces of Guru, Sri Rama and the Cosmic Mother seemed to create a definite shift in awareness.



Satsangs with residents: Fridays of March–April

As the temperature in the panchagni vedi rose steadily, Swamiji isolated himself more and more and focused completely on the task he had set out for. Yet, throughout the months of March and April, every Friday afternoon he met with the residents and shared his insights on varied subjects, from ecology to world trends to aspects of sadhana and much more. These warm gatherings were full of light and depth. It was a blessing for all present to witness a tapasvi's altered state of perception.

Swami Niranjanananda: There is a word in Sanskrit, *saptavadhana*, which is used to mean 'attention'. *Sapta* means seven and *avadhana* means things that you are aware of. Therefore, in Sanskrit, being attentive means being aware of seven things. You have to develop the mind in such a manner that from one thing you can do two things, then three, then four, and eventually reach the capacity to do seven things at the same time. With proper training, a sadhaka can focus in seven areas without experiencing any disturbance, that is the significance.

It requires training of the senses. If we place a circle in the distance and you are given a stone to hit it with, will you be able to do it? Your eyes may be looking at the bull's eye, but when you throw the stone, it may go here or there; it won't follow the eyes. That is because the two are mismatched. If the eyes and hands are merged, whenever you look at the target, everything merges at that point. That is *saptavadhana*.

It is by practising this that I do not have difficulty in panchagni. I am training myself to throw the ahuti in the fires with my eyes closed. I focus the awareness, visualize that the ahuti is falling right in the middle of the fire, and it happens. It makes sure that I can maintain one-pointed awareness even while doing many things at the same time. It is training for the mind.



APRIL

Hanuman Jayanti: 11 April

Lord Hanuman's birthday was celebrated with the chanting of the *Hanuman Chalisa* along with other stotras dedicated to him. The daily chanting of the *Sundarkand*, which depicts his most illustrious act of finding Sita in Lanka, also became part of the program.

Acharya Mahashraman's visit: 22 April

Acharya Mahashraman, the eleventh acharya and head of the Jain Shwetambar Terapanth Shraman Sangh, came to bless Swamiji along with a group of sadhus and sadhvis.

Acharya Mahashraman, renowned and revered for his work of spreading peace and goodwill, offered his greetings to Swamiji on being honoured with the Padma Bhushan award. The two visionaries delighted in each other's presence as they discussed various issues of common interest, and all present felt blessed by this confluence.



Akshaya Tritiya: 29 April

Akshaya Tritiya, the third day of the bright fortnight of the lunar month of Baisakh, was observed with havan, stotras and kirtan invoking the energy of Narayana. It is believed that if one takes a *sat sankalpa*, a resolve with a pure intention, on this day, it always fructifies. The Narayana energy helps in this process, as he represents the sustaining power of creation.

The significance of the day and of *sankalpa shakti* was explained by



sannyasins on the occasion. In the evening, pandits from Munger Shivalaya performed abhisheka of Satyameshwar Mahadeva at Paduka Darshan and also poornahuti of the three-day long anusthana that had been observed at the Akhara in Ganga Darshan during this period.

MAY



Buddha Jayanti: 10 May

This day on which Buddha attained enlightenment is celebrated at Ganga Darshan for a special reason: it is Swami Dharmashakti's birthday. To commemorate the event, stotras were chanted and havan was performed, dedicated to Sri Rama and Sri Swamiji, the two inspirers who were most dear to Ammaji. An inspiring energy was tangible throughout the program, sweet yet powerful, like

Ammaji herself, who was a symbol of outer softness and inner strength.

JUNE

Pashupata Astra Yajna: 10–14 June

To conclude Swamiji's panchagni sadhana, from 10th to 14th June the Pashupat Astra Yajna was held in the grounds of Akhara. This ancient yajna, revived from history and now held here for the fourth year, invokes ancient mantras meant to pierce through the granthis, the blocks that hold us back from realizing our true nature.

The yajna is an aspect of Pashupata vidya, the most ancient tradition of spiritual knowledge imparted by Shiva. It is complementary to the panchagni sadhana, as the panchagni is also a part of the same tradition. It has been revived by Swamiji as part of his sankalpa to bring the spiritual heritage of India and the



original teachings back to life for the wellbeing of all. The yajna has also become the medium to distribute the fruit of Swamiji's panchangi sadhana to all.

During the five-day event, the worship, havan and the extraordinary mantras of the yajna created a most auspicious and charged energy in the whole ashram. On the last day of the yajna, the temperature at the panchagni vedi rose to seventy-four degrees.

During the satsangs at the yajna, Swamiji explained how the important aspect of panchagni is not tolerating the heat but balancing the heat, and therefore it is not only a fire sadhana but also a water sadhana. He also spoke of the ultimate purpose of the sadhana as given in the *Kathopanishad*: attaining immortality. Swamiji explained that immortality is not the deluded idea of living forever but attaining the knowledge and understanding of the *atma*, the self which is immortal.

Swami Satsangi arrived from Rikhiapeth for the poornahuti of the yajna. In her satsang she spoke on the relationship between grace and effort. At the conclusion of the yajna, Swamiji shot the symbolic Pashupat arrow into the sky, indicating the successful completion of the aradhana.



The rituals of the yajna were conducted by the learned acharyas and pandits from Varanasi under the guidance of Sri Kailash Pandit and the host of the yajna was fourteen-year-old Saptarishi Goenka.



Swami Niranjanananda: Although the panchagni is a sadhana of fire, equally it is a sadhana of water. As the heat increases, the output of body-water increases correspondingly in the form of sweat. Water is the protection against heat, against fire. The hotter it becomes externally, the more sweat the body produces.

Fire represents the Shiva tattwa and water represents the Narayana tattwa. These two elements are continuously active within us. The energy of Shiva in the form of the sun, heats the environment and the body. As long as the body is able to tolerate the heat, you are comfortable. Once the heat level crosses the toleration point then, in order to protect and preserve the cells of the body, water production begins. Sweat comes out. First it is a thin film, enough to deal with the heat of that moment, but as the heat increases so do the size and frequency of the drops. This outflow of water from the body balances the external heat, and allows you to tolerate the heat according to your level of balance. Water is Narayana and fire is Shiva, and in panchagni, although surrounded by fire, the body is protected by water. It is a play of both water and fire.

Conclusion of panchagni sadhana: 15 June

This was certainly the most intense year of the panchagni. Even as early as March the temperature in the panchagni vedi had started going up to 50 degrees. Every day the residents of Ganga Darshan had looked up to the sky and prayed earnestly for the wellbeing and protection of their Swamiji. However, no one need have worried. For Swamiji's resolve and the grace that follows him proved to be stronger than the laws of nature.

Mother Prakriti cast a mantle of love, and the elements bowed before the tejas of the tapasvi. Possibly for the first time in the history of Munger, there was rain and cloud almost every day through May and June. The sadhana was completed on 15th June, as per tradition. It was a grand success and even as everyone felt grateful to simply know that Swamiji was safe and well, the auspiciousness that pervaded the spaces was tangible as the coolest water and the freshest air. In these times of strife and pain, an ancient tradition had been upheld. A balance had been created in the energy field of earth. Hope, joy and truth were still alive and would continue to be so. For those who wished to walk it, a path had once again been carved out in the ethers.

On the morning of 15th June, the moment that Swamiji completed the sadhana, the skies opened up and a torrential rain came down with a grand display of lightning and thunder. It was a fitting finale indeed. After putting the fires to rest, Swamiji spoke to everyone.

Swami Niranjanananda: After the heat comes the cool, after the storm comes the silence. Most certainly, this has been a most auspicious year for the panchagni sadhana. Of course there were difficulties, but behind everything there was a feeling of completeness, fulfilment, contentment and pleasantness. Pleasantness is important. If there is pleasantness, then everything becomes auspicious and good. If there is no pleasantness, even the best can become the worst. During this panchagni, the pleasantness came forth and the conclusion of the panchagni is also pleasant, full of grace from Guru, from Father, from Mother, and from all the invisible brothers and sisters who are up there.



JUNE-JULY



Adhyatma Samskara Sadhana Satra: 24 June-2 July

During the second Adhyatma Samskara Sadhana Satra of the year, exploring the pranic dimension was the focus in the morning asana-pranayama sessions. The participants were also guided to the practice of likhit japa in the evenings, besides participating in the mantra anusthana that was being conducted in the Akhara for the occasion. In satsangs to the group, Swamiji spoke of another pair of yama and niyama: *titiksha* and *bhava shuddhi*, endurance and purity of emotion.

Swami Niranjanananda: The term *bhava* does not only represent emotion; it reflects the whole state of one's being: physical, psychological, pranic, internal, and also transcendental. All the different koshas of the body experience the same *bhava* at a given moment.

A gross example: the experience of fear or anger. Are they limited only to the body, mind and prana? Or do these conditions influence the entire range of human expression? If there is fear, its effect is experienced in *annamaya*, *pranamaya*,



manomaya, *vijnanamaya*, at all levels. The fear becomes the *bhava*, the condition that you are living in. Similarly, if there is anger, it is physical, pranic, psychological: you are living the same *bhava* at all levels.

When you live the same *bhava* continuously, it becomes your *swabhava*. It becomes your innate nature in the course of time. It is not only one aspect of your life that becomes affected by a *bhava*, but the entire personality at all levels.

Therefore bhava shuddhi is purification of all these conditions. I am not using the word 'emotion' or 'sentiment'; I am using the word 'condition', which is overpowering the whole nature. Bhava shuddhi is the effort made to purify these conditions. After their purification, you attain *shuddha bhavana*, the pure condition. Thus, bhava shuddhi is the process and shuddha bhavana is the result.

JULY

Guru Poornima: 5-9 July

The auspicious occasion of Guru Poornima was celebrated at Paduka Darshan ashram from 5th to 9th July. The four days were full of light, joy and inspiration as the children of Bal Yoga Mitra Mandal sang kirtans, chanted mantras, presented dances, while Swamiji explained the significance of the occasion.

The children dedicated the day of the 6th to Swami Sivananda, conducted havan in his honour, spoke of his divine personality and read out his messages. An audio in Swami Sivananda's voice was played, and to hear the paramguru's own voice lifted everyone out of their little selves. The day of the 7th was dedicated to Swami Satyananda. After a havan dedicated to him, the elder children related their memories of Sri Swamiji while the younger children recited his poetry. The audio in Sri Swamiji's voice made his presence palpable in the gathering. The 8th was dedicated to Swami Niranjan. As the children spoke about him, the purity of love between them and their guru was deeply moving.

The 9th, Guru Poornima day, commenced with guru pooja by the children. Thereafter havan was performed by sannyasins, the *Sundarkand* was chanted by the ladies of Ramayan Mandali and the *Saundarya Lahari* chanted by sannyasins. Swamiji performed paduka poojan along with Sri Arun Goenka. Everyone in this



gathering of more than 5,000 had the chance to do parikrama of the guru mandap, and the five-hour long program concluded with a bhajan offering obeisance to all elements of creation, the sun, the earth, the moon, the stars: *Suraj ko pranam, dharti ko pranam, chanda ko pranam, taron ko pranam . . .*

Swami Niranjanananda: Let this Guru Poornima be the time when we can make the choice to change, and to have conviction, trust and faith in what we do, in ourselves and in the guidance that we have received from the masters in the past and the present. Let us work together to make our society a pleasant, harmonious and positive society by committing our efforts and our thoughts to that aim today.

Let us think about this and take an oath on Guru Poornima day to help ourselves, our society and our world. That will be the biggest tribute that we can offer, as novices, to this tradition of enlightened, luminous spiritual masters, who have come time and again to tell us: "Hey! Watch it, stay balanced and tread carefully for your own good." With positivity, positive convictions and positive attempts, we can honour those who have inspired us to achieve the best in our life. Let that be our Guru Poornima.



















JULY-SEPTEMBER

Chaturmas: 10 July-6 September

This was the third year that Chaturmas was observed at Paduka Darshan ashram. An auspicious beginning was made with Satyanarayana Katha on the day after Guru Poornima and with this also commenced the first *masparayan*, daily recital, of the *Ramacharitamans* for one month, by the ladies of Ramayan Mandali. During this period, a special Shravan Sadhana dedicated to Lord Shiva was performed and all Munger residents were invited to be active participants.



Artistes from various parts of India who uphold the spiritual tradition of the country came to Paduka Darshan during Chaturmas. In the evenings, they presented their art-forms before a gathering comprising of the residents and guests of the ashram, the children of Bal Yoga Mitra Mandal, the youth of Yuva Yoga Mitra Mandal and Yoga Sevaks, and the citizens of Munger.

Raagi Shabad Kirtan (21-23 July):

The first program was presented by Raagis from Rajnandgaon, bhajan and kirtan singers of the Sikh tradition. Their soul-stirring voices and the refrain of *Vahe Guru* definitely transported everyone to guru loka.



Rama Katha by Sri Bal Vyas (26 July-28 July): Bal Vyasji of Surajgarha presented a captivating interpretation of the *Hanuman Chalisa*.

Sri Krishna Aradhana (4-7 August):

With immense love and joy, Sri Krishna was invoked as the girls of BYMM, the ladies of Ramayan Mandali, the female participants of the





Vanaprastha Satra and the residents of Ganga Darshan danced the dandiya and sang kirtans.

Kirtan Evenings by Oriya Kirtan Mandali (14–19 August): The Hari Kirtan Mandali from Odisha performed the traditional Mahamantra kirtan for six days, reliving the times of Chaitanya Mahaprabhu.



Swami Muktananda's satsang (15–19 August): Swami Muktananda Puri from Alwar, Rajasthan, gave a series of satsangs in which he described the significance of the spiritual dialogue between Rishi Yajnavalkya and his wife Maitreyi given in the *Brihadaranyaka Upanishad*.



Baul Geeti (19–20 August): Gautam Das Baul and his troupe immersed everyone in the river of bhakti as they sang their traditional songs calling upon the inner being.



Swami Girishananda's katha and satsang (21–24 August): Swami Girishananda from Saket Dham, Jabalpur, explained the purpose of the incarnation of God in human form, referencing the dialogue between Shiva and Parvati in the *Ramacharitamanas*.



Ramarchana (26 August): This extraordinary ritual, in which different aspects of creation are symbolically represented, was performed by the pandits from the Munger Shivalaya.

Srimati Krishna Devi's katha (29 August–6 September): In the concluding program of the Chaturmas, Srimati Krishna

Devi of Bhagalpur told the stories from the *Ramacharitamanas* to the accompaniment of music and bhajans.

Chaturmas Poornahuti (6 September):

The final worship of the two-month-long anusthana was held on Bhadrapad Poornima, the full moon of the lunar month of Bhadra, with an offering to Sri Rama and Satyameshwar Mahadeva. The last reading of the *Ramacharitamanas* was done by Ramayan Mitra Mandali, and then Swamiji performed havan to Sri Hanuman and Sri Rama. After arati, Sri Rama was bid farewell. This was followed by Satyanarayan Katha recited by the pandits of Shivalaya, Munger.



During the Chaturmas programs, Swamiji often explained the gist of the presentations in English, for the benefit of non-Hindi speakers. For example, after the Baul Geeti, he described their art in the following words:

Swami Niranjanananda: The singers who have come are called Bauls, and this tradition is from Bengal. It comes from a time when certain enlightened people were able to curb the material passions of people into spiritual passion. This was the essence of the bhakti movement in India.

The bhakti movement was not a devotional movement, as people tend to think. It was a process of curbing the materialistic vrittis of people and transforming them into the spiritual vritti. That job was performed by Chaitanya Mahaprabhu. *Chaitanya* means enlightened, *mahaprabhu* is great master or Overlord, so his name means the great master who is enlightened. There have been many other such saints in history who have used the path of bhakti to curb the materialistic tendencies. That is the actual purpose of bhakti. There are stories that people with destructive or criminal minds were converted to the path of righteousness by the bhakti movement. The term *baul* means intoxicated. These people are mystics from the bhakti perspective. They don't use their intellect or brain. They use their feelings. Through feelings



they reach bliss and piousness, and this is indicated in their songs. The entire spiritual philosophy is condensed in the verses of their songs.

The songs that the Bauls sing are not the usual devotional songs. Their songs indicate the journey of the soul from this dimension to the divine dimension. The spirit is like the bird that flies, and the flight of the spirit is described in these beautiful songs. They speak of ida and pingala, chakras and the ascent of shakti, as the flight of the inner being to merge with and realize the higher truth. This is the tradition of people who are intoxicated with spiritual experience.

The tradition represents the bhakti mysticism in which one connects with the higher self through emotion and feeling. If there is that connection, then the realization of that higher nature also flows through to the gross body. There was a troupe in the sixties or seventies in India called Mast. They would be on the streets, one person would start singing and within an hour there would be thousands behind him. Not out of curiosity but due to the shakti of the bhajans and kirtans.

Once you merge yourself in such an experience, the emotional transformation that takes place is the most powerful. Mind is nothing compared to that. You try to manage the mind, but it is not possible. You try to manage emotions, but you are not able to. When you cannot manage the mind, how can you manage the raw power of the self? In this tradition, it is that raw power of emotion that is harnessed so that a spiritual intoxication takes place. That intoxication is indescribable, unimaginable, yet experienceable and attainable. Those who can experience it are the intoxicated people. They are the Bauls, they are the Mast.

**Vanaprastha Sadhana Satra:
11 July–10 August & 15 August–13
September**

During the period of Chaturmas, two special courses of one-month each were held for vanaprasthis, the 50-plus age-group that, according to the vedic ashrama dharma, is now ready to retire from material aspirations and look for a different direction in life.

The first focus for this group is to make sure that the body, energy and mind remain as healthy as possible. With this aim in mind, every morning the participants were led through two hours of asana-pranayama and yoga nidra. Swamiji initiated the sessions and thereafter guidance was given by Swami Gorakhnath and Swami Kaivalyananda. On a physical level, during the first month the focus was on basic practices for overall health. In the second month, it was practices for specific health conditions.

The sessions were open to the Munger residents as well, and every morning one could see streams of people walking towards Paduka Darshan with their yoga mats and blankets.

In the afternoons, Swamiji gave satsangs to the group in Hindi and the theme was *Narada Bhakti Sutras*, which explains the path of bhakti as the way to detach oneself from the material aspirations and engage in spiritual life.



SEPTEMBER

Sri Lakshmi-Narayana Mahayajna: 8–12 September



The annual commemorative event of Sannyasa Peeth, Sri Lakshmi-Narayana Mahayajna was held from 8th to 12th September: beginning on the birthday of Swami Sivananda and concluding on the sannyasa day of Swami Satyananda.

The program proceedings were conducted by the children of Bal Yoga Mitra Mandal and the organization was maintained by the youth of Yuva Yoga Mitra Mandal. Every day commenced with guru pooja by the children. On the 8th they spoke about the inspiration received from Swami Sivananda and recited a poem written by Swami Satyananda on his guru's birthday. On the subsequent three days, they narrated the life-story of Swami Satyananda, as it unfolded in different phases.



The yajna rituals were conducted by acharyas and pandits from Varanasi, led by Sri Kailash Pandit. They also performed the Narayanastra yajna. During the performance of *homa*, fire oblations, Swamiji instructed everyone to do japa of mantras dedicated to Lakshmi and Narayana.

In his satsangs, Swamiji spoke about how the vedic civilization maintained

itself by following the two precepts of *ritam* and *dharma*, cosmic order and individual appropriateness. This led into understanding and living the appropriate conduct for one's station in life and thus the life of an individual was seen as divided in four parts or *ashramas*: brahmacharya ashrama, grihastha ashrama, vanaprastha ashrama and sannyasa ashrama. Swamiji explained that the karma and dharma of each ashrama, as given in the scriptures, is still applicable in modern life.

Swami Satyasangananda arrived for the poornahuti of the yajna and said that the wall between us and Narayana is that of *ahamkara*, the ego. The ego cannot be destroyed but it can be made more sattwic, and the path for this was shown by Sri Swamiji: the path of serve, love and give. She said that the other way to make the ego sattwic is through mantra and homa, but the important factor here is to realize that what we pour into an oblation is what we receive back. She asked everyone to therefore think carefully about what bhava they were pouring into the yajna ahuti, and to refine that.

Swami Niranjanananda: There is a cosmic order known as *ritam* and there is individual appropriateness which is *dharma*, and both need to converge to give the experience of a beautiful life. If there is absence of *ritam* or absence of *dharma*, then life is nothing but a shambles of pain and suffering. It is only when there is *ritam* and *dharma* together that life becomes beautiful. For this to be known and realized, you have to become positive



and cosmic yourself, you have to become dharmic yourself and not adhere to the adharmic principles. The purpose of yajna is to make us aware of *ritam* and *dharma*. It is the means by which we can connect with the cosmic order and live it in our life.

Yajna is not just a ritual, rather it is a way defined by the vedic rishis for householders to connect with the aspect of *ritam*.



After all, if ritam and dharma are the mainstay of human life and one group of people live dharma and another group transgress dharma, how to bring about the awareness of overstepping the line? How to realign with that cosmic order? Yajna became a medium, a tool, by which people living in society could connect with a higher purpose, feel the higher powers, and direct their actions and thoughts to pleasant spiritual pursuits

rather than towards material stress-filled situations.

The word yajna was also defined in this context. *Yajna* does not mean a fire ceremony; the three Sanskrit letters, *ya*, *ja* and *na* which comprise the word yajna, indicate production, distribution and consumption. This is the whole concept of yajna: something is produced, something is distributed, and something is consumed.

What is that which is produced, distributed and consumed? Divine grace. Divine grace is palpable. Just as you can experience peace in a quiet place and distraction in a busy railway station, in the same manner you can also experience grace in a place where it is being invoked. It is that grace which brings auspiciousness into the lives of people and connects them with the cosmic order and their individual dharma.



Swami Satyasangananda: It is power that is being generated at the yajna vedi. That is the generating station of energy. Depending on how powerful and intense the mantras are, that energy has the power to travel to realms that are very subtle, very refined, whose existence we don't even know about. The mantras that are being chanted here are very potent. So when that energy is travelling to Narayana loka, because we

are invoking Narayana here, then you are also pouring your emotion, your feelings, your thoughts, your energy into it. What you are pouring in is what will go up. And what goes up comes down – multiplied.

Are you pouring in hatred, fear, anxiety, worry, disillusionment, bitterness, disappointment, or are you pouring in love, devotion, surrender, adoration? It depends entirely on you. So pour in that which you would like to receive in return. You don't want to receive fear magnified. You don't want to receive hatred magnified, but if that is what you are pouring in, you should be ready for it. When you are able to pour in the positive feelings, that is called refinement of ahamkara.

Refinement of ahamkara is where you begin to know that thread of Narayana within you. And the minute you know that, then you also know that Narayana is seated in everyone. And you say, "Namo Narayana. I salute the Narayana seated in you."

Swami Satyananda's birthday: 25 December

It was on 25th December 1923, on the full moon day of the lunar month of Margashirsha, that Sri Swami Satyananda was born in Almora. The day was commemorated with havan to the chanting of *Satyam Sahasranamavali*, followed by *Sundarkand*.





Swami Niranjanananda: In our knowledge, two luminaries were born on the day of Margashirsha Poornima: Lord Dattatreya, the son of Rishi Atri and Anusuya, who was an enlightened being of the highest order; and Swami Satyananda who was born on the full moon day of 1923 in the month of December.

The sign of this month is Sagittarius, and you know the nature of Sagittarians: they are true like the arrow. Once the arrow is let loose, it will go to the end of its journey and only then come to rest on the ground. It won't stop anywhere in the middle, it won't deviate from its path. The arrow is not whimsical, it is true to its conviction, path and goal. That is the nature of Sagittarians.

Bhagavan Dattatreya became a spiritual luminary and remained true to his path. We know the example and the life of Christ, who remained true to his path despite all the difficulties placed before him. He remained committed and truthful, and achieved the goal that he had set for himself. He hit the bullseye, despite crucifixion. Swami Satyananda also hit the bullseye. He was true and committed to his path, his guru, his life, his sannyasa, his yoga, what he was. Nobody influenced him; he lived his life and flew true towards the mark.



Year-end reflection: 31 December

On the last day of the year, Swamiji asked everyone to reflect on the year that had gone by, to be grateful for the opportunities and to learn from the mistakes made.

Swami Niranjanananda: For me, today is not 'New Year's Eve'. Rather, it is the last day of a beautiful year that I have lived. Tonight, it is time to be grateful for every event that has happened in this last year

that has helped me grow, mature, gain more wisdom, more experience, more stability, more light. I am thankful to every person who has encouraged me and given me the opportunity to walk the path of righteousness. Alone it would be difficult; with many it becomes possible. In this way, this year has been a year of gain. There was always something new to learn and aspire for. There were new connections, new friends, new perceptions, new visions: all these are gifts of this year.

I haven't received anything yet from the coming year, which all of you are waiting expectantly for. On the last day of the year, you have to be grateful for what you have received during the beautiful year that has gone by. You have to be thankful for what that year has given you for your growth and maturity, rather than expecting something to happen next year.

A date simply indicates the time or an age of life; however, it is your inspiration that has to keep you going, not a date. It is your commitment to discovering the better you that has to keep you going, and not a particular date or year. Nevertheless, you can use the opportunity of the last day of the year to be thankful to everything that has happened during the year, which has allowed you to look at the good and the bad, both, and which today makes you more committed to the good side. It is an opportunity to discover your shortcomings and ask how you can improve so that the coming year can become a better year. It is an opportunity to be thankful that you have more experience and maturity to face the challenges of life.



ACROSS THE YEAR

Guru Bhakti Yoga



The tradition of Guru Bhakti Yoga was upheld with Rudrabhisheka and Sri Yantra abhisheka performed on the 5th and 6th of every month, commemorating Sri Swami Satyananda's mahasamadhi. Swamiji continued to inspire everyone with his satsangs describing in ever-new ways the unique relationship between guru and disciple.

Swami Niranjanananda: Sri Swamiji was a person who was there at the time of my birth and whose face I saw first. He was a person with whom I came to live at the age of four. I don't know who and what father and mother are. I had them, but I lived with my guru. I learned from him. I was given opportunities by him to excel in life. I worked for him, and I had the last darshan on the day of his mahasamadhi.



The time I spent with him in this life, from my birth to his samadhi, was fifty years. Fifty years of intimate association and connection with my guru. If I look at the fifty years that I have spent with him, they have been the best years of my life. For he was always there in form of inspiration, zeal,

commitment, sincerity, which allowed me to explore creativity in life, discover my own strengths and weaknesses, discover my own ambitions and needs and fulfil them. He provided every opportunity.

He also gave the understanding of *dharma*, one's inherent duty towards oneself, towards God, towards guru and towards humanity. He gave the understanding of how to bring forth creativity and positivity, how to clean the filth of the mind and mouth. All is contained in his teachings.

In the past, in the present and also in the future, he will be an inspiration. The path which we are walking today, which I am walking today, is his path. I don't have anything in my mind for myself or my life. People can come, people can go. Hundreds can live here or I can be here all alone. Everybody can leave or everybody can come; that is irrelevant for me. My commitment is to walk the path which he has given to me. It is that inspiration which is alive. It is that inspiration which holds the spirit, the mind and karmas together. His inspiration, his teachings and his directions continue to guide each one of us who are connected with him, in one way or the other.



संन्यास पीठ की गतिविधियाँ-2017

जनवरी

नव वर्ष दिवस (1 जनवरी)

गंगा दर्शन में नव वर्ष का स्वागत गणेश, सीता, राम और हनुमान को समर्पित हवन, सुन्दरकाण्ड के पाठ और श्री हनुमान चालीसा के अखण्ड पाठ के साथ किया गया। सन् 2008 से शुरू हुई यह साधना गंगा दर्शन की वार्षिक परम्परा है, जिसमें हजारों भक्त और श्रद्धालु भाग लेते हैं।

सत्यमेश्वर आराधना (12-15 जनवरी)

हर वर्ष की तरह स्वामीजी की पंचाग्नि साधना का प्रारम्भ पादुका दर्शन स्थित सत्यमेश्वर महादेव को समर्पित अनुष्ठान से हुआ। वाराणसी से आए आचार्यों ने प्रातःकाल गंगा दर्शन के सत्यम् उद्यान में और दोपहर के समय सत्यमेश्वर पीठ में अभिषेक और हवन सम्पन्न किया।

15 जनवरी, मकर संक्रान्ति के शुभ दिन, स्वामीजी ने अपनी पंचाग्नि साधना का पाँचवा और सबसे कठिन वर्ष प्रारम्भ किया। पाँचवे वर्ष में पंचाग्नि साधक को अनेक नियमों एवं अनुशासनों का पालन करना पड़ता है, जिनमें 'स्वपाकी' होना अर्थात् स्वयं अपना भोजन पकाना सम्मिलित है। इस अवसर पर अखाड़ा में माँ काली को समर्पित एक नया हवनात्मक अनुष्ठान भी प्रारम्भ हुआ।



स्वामीजी को पद्म भूषण सम्मान (26 जनवरी)

पंचाग्नि साधना के दौरान, 26 जनवरी 2017 को भारत सरकार ने योग के क्षेत्र में उत्कृष्ट सेवाओं के लिए स्वामीजी को पद्मभूषण सम्मान से अलंकृत किया। इस समाचार को सुनकर जहाँ आश्रम के संन्यासियों और अंतेवासियों के हर्ष का पारावार न रहा, वहीं स्वामीजी ने स्थितप्रज्ञ की तरह इस सम्मान को ग्रहण किया। सम्मान समारोह 30 मार्च 2017 को राजधानी दिल्ली के राष्ट्रपति भवन में आयोजित हुआ, लेकिन अपनी साधना को निर्विघ्न रूप से सम्पन्न करने के उद्देश्य से स्वामीजी ने



इस सार्वजनिक सम्मान का परित्याग उचित समझा। भारत सरकार ने तपस्या की महान् परम्परा का आदर करते हुए यह सम्मान मुंगेर भेजा जहाँ वह स्वामीजी की सुविधानुसार उन्हें प्रदान किया जा सके। न केवल सरकार, बल्कि मीडिया और जनता ने भी स्वामीजी के तप के संकल्प की सराहना की, जिससे यह संकेत मिलता है कि समाज ऋषियों की गौरवशाली परम्परा के प्रति पुनः जागरूक हो रहा है।

जनवरी-फरवरी

अध्यात्म संस्कार साधना सत्र (28 जनवरी-5 फरवरी)

वर्ष के पहले अध्यात्म संस्कार साधना सत्र के प्रतिभागियों को प्रातःकालीन आसन-प्राणायाम कक्षा और अपराह्नकालीन योगनिद्रा, लिखित जप एवं स्वाध्याय कक्षा में साधना के सूक्ष्म आयामों की ओर निर्देशित किया गया। इस अवधि में स्थानीय शिवालय मंदिर के पंडितों द्वारा अखाड़ा में मंत्रपाठ एवं हवन के साथ एक विशेष अनुष्ठान भी संचालित हुआ। पंचाग्नि साधना में संलग्न रहते हुए भी स्वामीजी ने प्रतिभागियों का मार्गदर्शन करने और साधना के गहन पक्ष समझाने के लिए समय निकाला।

फरवरी

स्वामी धर्मशक्ति का महासमाधि दिवस (12 फरवरी)

स्वामी धर्मशक्ति के महासमाधि दिवस के उपलक्ष्य में अखाड़ा में संध्या के समय एक विशेष कार्यक्रम आयोजित किया गया, जिसमें स्वामीजी की उपस्थिति में संन्यासियों ने स्तोत्र एवं मंत्रपाठ के साथ हवन सम्पन्न किया। इस अवसर पर अम्माजी के जीवन के कुछ प्रेरक अंश भी साझा किए गए।



शिवरात्रि (24 फरवरी)

शिवरात्रि के पावन दिन आश्रम के सभी अंतेवासियों को स्थानीय शिवालय में आमंत्रित किया गया था जहाँ बाल योग मित्र मंडल के बच्चों और रामायण मंडली की महिलाओं ने शिवजी को समर्पित भजन-कीर्तन का कार्यक्रम संचालित किया। गंगा दर्शन लौटने पर सभी अखाड़ा परिसर में एकत्र हुए जहाँ स्वामीजी की उपस्थिति में भगवान शिव को समर्पित हवन सम्पन्न किया गया।

मार्च

होलिका दहन तथा होली (12-13 मार्च)

12 मार्च को संध्या के समय कारपार्क में होलिका दहन सम्पन्न हुआ। इस अवसर पर कीर्तन-भजन के साथ संन्यासियों ने प्रह्लाद और होलिका की पौराणिक कथा



पर भी प्रकाश डाला। अगले दिन सभी विद्यार्थियों और अन्तेवासियों ने कुटीर के सामने गीत-संगीत के साथ होली के पर्व को बड़े हर्षोल्लास के साथ मनाया। दोपहर को अखाड़ा में संचालित दैनिक हवन के समापन पर आश्रम के अन्तेवासियों को स्वामीजी से अबीर रूपी आशीष प्राप्त हुआ।

मार्च-अप्रैल

नवरात्रि (28 मार्च-5 अप्रैल)

नवरात्रि के दौरान छाया समाधि के प्रांगण में हवन-स्तोत्रपाठ के साथ श्री राम और देवी माँ की ऊर्जा एवं कृपा का आवाहन किया गया। साथ ही संन्यासियों ने ब्रह्ममुहूर्त के समय अखाड़ा में रामचरितमानस का नवाहन पारायण सम्पन्न किया। रामनवमी के दिन मध्याह्न के समय भजन-कीर्तन के साथ श्रीराम का जन्मदिवस मनाया गया।

अप्रैल

हनुमान जयंती (11 अप्रैल)

इस शुभ अवसर पर हनुमान जी की ऊर्जा के आवाहन हेतु हनुमान चालीसा का पाठ किया गया। हनुमान जी को समर्पित अन्य स्तोत्रों के साथ-साथ कार्यक्रम में सम्पूर्ण सुन्दरकाण्ड का भी पाठ किया गया।

आचार्य महाश्रमण का आगमन (22 अप्रैल)

अपनी पदयात्रा के क्रम में मुंगेर से गुजरते हुए जैन श्वेताम्बर तेरापंथ श्रमण संघ के ग्यारहवें प्रमुख, आचार्य महाश्रमण अन्य जैन साधुओं और साध्वियों के साथ आश्रम



पधारे। समाज में शांति और सद्भाव के लिए अथक प्रयास करने वाले आचार्य महाश्रमण ने स्वामीजी के पद्मभूषण सम्मान पर अपनी शुभकामनाएँ व्यक्त कीं।

अक्षय तृतीया (29 अप्रैल)

अक्षय तृतीया के शुभ दिन हवन, स्तोत्रपाठ और कीर्तन के माध्यम से भगवान नारायण की शक्ति का आवाहन किया गया। ऐसी मान्यता है कि इस दिन लिया गया सत्संकल्प अवश्य फलीभूत होता है। इस दिवस के गूढ़ महत्व को संन्यासियों द्वारा उजागर किया गया। संध्या के समय स्थानीय शिवालय मंदिर के पण्डितों ने पादुका दर्शन में सत्यमेश्वर महादेव का अभिषेक किया और साथ ही इस अवसर पर अखाड़ा में संचालित त्रिदिवसीय अनुष्ठान की पूर्णाहुति भी सम्पन्न की।

मई

बुद्ध पूर्णिमा (10 मई)

बुद्ध पूर्णिमा का गंगा दर्शन में विशेष महत्व है, क्योंकि यह स्वामी धर्मशक्ति जी का जन्मदिवस है। इस अवसर पर अम्माजी के दोनों आराध्यों, श्री राम और श्री स्वामीजी को समर्पित स्तोत्रपाठ तथा हवन सम्पन्न किए गए।

जून

पाशुपतास्त्र यज्ञ (10-14 जून)

स्वामीजी की पंचाग्नि साधना की पूर्णाहुति के उपलक्ष्य में अखाड़ा में पाशुपतास्त्र यज्ञ संचालित हुआ। चौथी बार आयोजित इस पुरातन यज्ञ के प्राचीन मंत्र मनुष्य की ब्रह्म, विष्णु एवं रुद्र ग्रंथियों को भेदने की क्षमता रखते हैं। यज्ञ में उपस्थित सभी लोगों ने मंत्रों की इस प्रबल ऊर्जा का अनुभव किया, जिसमें स्वामीजी की पंचाग्नि साधना की शक्ति भी जुड़ गई थी।

यह यज्ञ पाशुपत विद्या का एक अंग है। पाशुपत विद्या भगवान शिव द्वारा प्रणीत आध्यात्मिक ज्ञान की सबसे प्राचीन परम्परा है। पाशुपत यज्ञ पंचाग्नि साधना का सम्पूरक है, क्योंकि दोनों एक ही परम्परा के अंग हैं। यह यज्ञ भारत की आध्यात्मिक परम्परा को पुनर्जीवित करने के स्वामीजी के संकल्प का ही एक अंग है। साथ ही यह यज्ञ स्वामीजी की पंचाग्नि साधना के सुफल को सब लोगों में वितरित करने का माध्यम भी बन गया है।

यज्ञ के दौरान हवन, आराधना और मंत्रपाठ ने पूरे आश्रम में एक अति शुभ और ऊर्जामय वातावरण निर्मित कर दिया। यज्ञ के अंतिम दिन पंचाग्नि वेदी का



तापमान 74 डिग्री तक पहुँच गया, लेकिन स्वामीजी के सौम्य स्वभाव में कोई अंतर नहीं आया। यज्ञ के दौरान अपने सत्संगों में स्वामीजी ने समझाया कि पंचाग्नि साधना में मुख्य उद्देश्य गर्मी को सहन करना नहीं, बल्कि उसे संतुलित करना है। इस तरह से यह न केवल अग्नि साधना है, बल्कि जल साधना भी है। उन्होंने कठोपनिषद् के मंत्रों को उद्धृत करते हुए यह भी कहा कि इस साधना का अंतिम लक्ष्य अमरत्व की प्राप्ति है। अमरत्व का तात्पर्य हमेशा जीने से नहीं, बल्कि अपने भीतर स्थित अमर आत्मा का ज्ञान और अनुभव प्राप्त करने से है।

यज्ञ की पूर्णाहुति पर रिखियापीठ से स्वामी सत्संगी जी भी पधारिं। अपने सत्संग में उन्होंने कृपा और पुरुषार्थ के संबंध पर प्रकाश डाला। यज्ञ के अंतिम दिन स्वामीजी ने पाशुपतास्त्र का प्रतीकात्मक बाण चलाकर यज्ञ सम्पन्न किया। यज्ञ का संचालन कैलाश पंडित और उनके साथ आए वाराणसी के अन्य विद्वान् आचार्यों ने किया। गोयनका परिवार का सबसे छोटा सदस्य, 14 वर्षीय सप्तऋषि इस यज्ञ का यजमान था।

पंचाग्नि साधना की पूर्णाहुति (15 जून)

15 जून को प्रातःकाल स्वामीजी की इस वर्ष की पंचाग्नि साधना सम्पन्न हुई। निश्चित रूप से साधना का यह सबसे कठिन वर्ष था, लेकिन दैवी शक्तियों ने स्वामीजी का पूरा साथ दिया। साधना की पूरी अवधि में मौसम अनुकूल रहा और पूर्णाहुति के दिन अंतिम आहुतियों के पश्चात् जैसे ही स्वामीजी ने चारों अग्नि्यों को शांत किया, मूसलाधार बारिश शुरू हो गई, और वहाँ उपस्थित सभी लोग इस दिव्य कृपा-वृष्टि से सराबोर हो गए।

जून-जुलाई

अध्यात्म संस्कार साधना सत्र (24 जून-2 जुलाई)

इस वर्ष के दूसरे अध्यात्म संस्कार साधना सत्र में प्रातःकालीन आसन-प्राणायाम कक्षा का मुख्य ध्येय प्राणमय कोष का अनुभव था। साधकों को सबेरे अखाड़ा में संचालित मंत्र अनुष्ठान में भाग लेने और संध्या के समय लिखित जप करने का भी अवसर प्राप्त हुआ। अपने सत्संगों में स्वामीजी ने एक और यम-नियम— *तितिक्षा* एवं *भावशुद्धि* पर प्रकाश डाला और साधकों को इन यम-नियमों को एक व्यावहारिक साधना के रूप में अपनाने के लिए प्रेरित किया।

गुरु पूर्णिमा (5-9 जुलाई)

5 से 9 जुलाई तक पादुका दर्शन, संन्यास पीठ में गुरु पूर्णिमा कार्यक्रम संचालित किया गया। प्रतिदिन के कार्यक्रम में हवन, स्तोत्र पाठ, कीर्तन तथा बाल योग मित्र मण्डल के सदस्यों द्वारा प्रस्तुत नृत्य एवं कराते प्रदर्शन शामिल था। इस अवसर पर कई बच्चों ने स्वामी शिवानन्द जी एवं स्वामी सत्यानन्द जी की रचनाओं तथा साथ ही स्वरचित रचनाओं को पढ़कर सुनाया, जिनमें गुरु परम्परा के प्रति उनकी श्रद्धा एवं प्रीति स्पष्टतः परिलक्षित हो रही थी। उनके कोमल भावों और रचनात्मक प्रतिभा ने सभी को प्रभावित किया। युवा योग मित्र मण्डल के सदस्यों ने पूरे अनुशासन और उत्तरदायित्व के साथ कार्यक्रम का प्रबंधन संभाला।

स्वामी निरंजनानन्द जी ने प्रतिदिन उपस्थित जनसमूह को सत्संग दिए। प्रथम दिन उन्होंने आदिगुरु, भगवान शिव के अग्नि स्तम्भ के रूप में प्रादुर्भाव के बारे में बताया और फिर महर्षि वेद व्यास से स्वामी शिवानन्द जी एवं स्वामी सत्यानन्द जी तक चली आ रही गुरु-परम्परा पर प्रकाश डाला। अगले दो दिन उन्हीं के जीवन





और शिक्षाओं के प्रति समर्पित रहे। स्वामीजी ने इस बात पर जोर दिया कि यह उन्हीं की प्रेरणा और मार्गदर्शन है जिसकी वजह से आज तक साधकों के जीवन का उत्थान हो रहा है। शर्त केवल इतनी है कि साधक की गुरु-परम्परा में श्रद्धा और विश्वास हो, तथा गुरु-शिक्षाओं के प्रति पूर्ण समर्पण एवं निष्ठा हो।

गुरु पूर्णिमा के दिन हवन और पादुका पूजन सम्पन्न हुआ। इस अवसर पर हजारों भक्त, शिष्य और साधक गुरु तत्त्व के प्रति अपनी श्रद्धा निवेदित करने पहुँचे। अपने गुरु पूर्णिमा संदेश में स्वामीजी ने कहा कि इस शुभ दिन हमें गुरु और ईश्वर की कृपा का आवाहन करना चाहिए जिससे हमारे दिलों के द्वार खुल सकें। साथ ही हमें अपने राजसिक अहंकार और अभिमान का शमन करना चाहिए ताकि हम अपने तथा दूसरों के जीवन में अच्छाई और मंगलता ला सकें। उन्होंने यह भी बताया कि चन्द्रमा मन का प्रतीक है और गुरु पूर्णिमा का तात्पर्य मन के पूरी तरह आलोकित होने से है। इसलिए इस दिन हमें अपने आप को याद दिलाना चाहिए कि हम अंधकार से प्रकाश की ओर यात्रा तय कर रहे हैं और हमें यह यात्रा अवश्य पूरी करनी है।

जुलाई-सितम्बर

चातुर्मास अनुष्ठान (10 जुलाई-6 सितम्बर)

पादुका दर्शन आश्रम में चातुर्मास अनुष्ठान का यह तीसरा वर्ष था। गुरु पूर्णिमा के अगले दिन सत्यनारायण कथा के साथ अनुष्ठान का शुभारम्भ हुआ और अपराह्न के समय स्थानीय रामायण मण्डली की सदस्याओं द्वारा रामचरितमानस का मास पारायण भी शुरू हुआ। श्रावण मास में भगवान शिव को समर्पित एक विशेष श्रावणी मंत्र साधना भी संचालित की गई। इन दो महीनों में आयोजित अन्य सांस्कृतिक एवं आध्यात्मिक कार्यक्रम इस प्रकार थे—



रागी शब्द कीर्तन (21-23 जुलाई)—चातुर्मास अनुष्ठान का पहला कार्यक्रम राजनाँदगाँव से आए रागियों द्वारा प्रस्तुत किया गया। उनके हृदय-स्पर्शी शब्द कीर्तनों से, विशेषकर *वाहे गुरु* के जप से पूरा वातावरण गुरु-भक्ति से ओत-प्रोत हो गया।

श्री बाल व्यास द्वारा रामकथा (26-28 जुलाई)—सूर्यगढ़ा के प्रख्यात कथाकार, बाल व्यास जी ने हनुमान चालीसा पर प्रबोधक प्रवचन दिए।

श्रीकृष्ण आराधना (4-7 अगस्त)—श्रीकृष्ण को समर्पित इस उल्लासमय कार्यक्रम में हवन, स्तोत्रपाठ एवं कीर्तन शामिल थे। साथ ही बाल योग मित्र मण्डल के बच्चों, रामायण मण्डली की महिलाओं, वानप्रस्थ साधना सत्र के प्रतिभागियों तथा गंगा दर्शन के अंतेवासियों ने बड़े आनन्द के साथ डांडिया भी खेला।

श्रीकृष्ण जन्माष्टमी एवं उड़िया कीर्तन मण्डली द्वारा संध्या कीर्तन (14-19 अगस्त)—ओडिशा से आई हरि ओम कीर्तन मण्डली ने श्रीकृष्ण जन्माष्टमी के साथ-साथ अन्य दिवसों पर भी पारम्परिक नाम-संकीर्तन प्रस्तुत करके सबको मंत्रमुग्ध कर दिया।

स्वामी मुक्तानंद द्वारा सत्संग (15-19 अगस्त)—अल्वर, राजस्थान से पधारे स्वामी मुक्तानंद पुरी ने पाँच दिनों तक बृहदारण्यक उपनिषद् में वर्णित याज्ञवल्क्य-मैत्रेयी संवाद की अनुपम ढंग से व्याख्या की। रोचक कथाओं और दृष्टान्तों का समावेश कर उन्होंने सभी श्रोताओं को बांधे रखा और इस गहन आध्यात्मिक विषय को सहजता से बोधगम्य बना दिया।

बाउल गीति (19-20 अगस्त)—बंगाल से आए गौतम दास बाउल और उनके साथियों ने अपने पारम्परिक, भावुक गीत-संगीत से गंगा तट पर बाउल भक्ति की सरिता प्रवाहित कर दी। उनके गीतों में अनेक गहन आध्यात्मिक सिद्धान्तों को बड़े सहज ढंग से अभिव्यक्त किया गया था।

स्वामी गिरीशानन्द द्वारा कथा एवं सत्संग (21-24 अगस्त)— साकेत धाम, जबलपुर के स्वामी गिरीशानन्द सरस्वती ने रामचरितमानस के शिव-पार्वती संवाद को आधार बनाकर ईश्वर के अवतार लेने के रहस्य को बड़े हृदयस्पर्शी ढंग से उजागर किया।

रामार्चन (26 अगस्त)—रामार्चन एक विशेष आराधना पद्धति है जिसमें अनेक देवी-देवताओं का आवाहन किया जाता है जो ब्रह्माण्ड की समस्त ऊर्जाओं का प्रतिनिधित्व करते हैं। यह अनुष्ठान शिवालय के पण्डितों द्वारा सम्पन्न किया गया।

श्रीमती कृष्णा देवी द्वारा रामकथा (29 अगस्त-6 सितम्बर)—चातुर्मास अनुष्ठान के अंतिम कार्यक्रम में भागलपुर की मानस कोकिला, श्रीमती कृष्णा देवी ने नौ दिनों तक रामचरितमानस के नवाहन पारायण के प्रसंगों को बड़ी सरस, संगीतमयी शैली में प्रस्तुत किया।

चातुर्मास पूर्णाहुति (6 सितम्बर)—दो माह तक चले चातुर्मास अनुष्ठान की अंतिम आराधना भाद्रपद पूर्णिमा के दिन श्रीराम और सत्यमेश्वर महादेव को समर्पित रही। रामायण मंडली ने रामचरितमानस का अंतिम पाठ समाप्त किया जिसके बाद स्वामीजी ने हनुमान और राम हवन सम्पन्न किए। आरती के बाद श्री रामजी को कीर्तन के साथ विदाई दी गई। इसके पश्चात् शिवालय के पण्डितों ने सत्यनारायण कथा सम्पन्न की।

वानप्रस्थ साधना सत्र (11 जुलाई-10 अगस्त एवं 15 अगस्त-13 सितम्बर)

चातुर्मास के दौरान वानप्रस्थियों के लिए दो साधना सत्र संचालित किए गए। प्रतिभागियों के शारीरिक एवं मानसिक स्वास्थ्य के लिए प्रतिदिन सबेरे दो घण्टे की योग कक्षा स्वामीजी के मार्गदर्शन में संचालित की गई। इन कक्षाओं में मुंगेरवासी भी बड़ी संख्या में शामिल होते थे। दोपहर में प्रतिभागी रामचरितमानस के पाठ में भाग लेते और स्वामीजी के नारद भक्ति सूत्रों पर सत्संगों का श्रवण करते।

सितम्बर

श्री लक्ष्मीनारायण महायज्ञ (8-12 सितम्बर)

8 से 12 सितम्बर तक संन्यास पीठ, पादुका दर्शन में कैलाश पण्डित के नेतृत्व में वाराणसी के विद्वान् आचार्यों के दल ने श्री लक्ष्मीनारायण महायज्ञ संचालित किया। यज्ञ के दौरान देश और दुनिया भर से आए 108 प्रतिभागियों द्वारा प्रतिदिन तुलसीदल, अक्षत, तिल, सिंदूर तथा पुष्पादि सामग्री से सहस्त्रार्चन सम्पन्न किया गया। यज्ञ के प्रतिभागियों ने स्वामीजी के मार्गदर्शन में प्रतिदिन यज्ञ के प्रधान देवताओं को मंत्रों का एक माला जप समर्पित किया। कार्यक्रम के दौरान बाल योग मित्र मण्डल के



बच्चों ने सुन्दर कीर्तनों व नृत्यों तथा राजस्थान के पारम्परिक मंगनियार गायकों ने मधुर भक्ति संगीत की प्रस्तुति की।

8 सितम्बर को स्वामी शिवानन्द जी के जन्मोत्सव के अवसर पर स्वामीजी ने उनके जीवन और शिक्षाओं पर प्रकाश डालते हुए उन्हें भावभीनी श्रद्धांजलि अर्पित की। यज्ञ के दौरान अपने सत्संगों में स्वामीजी ने मानव जीवन के चार आश्रमों—ब्रह्मचर्य, गृहस्थ, वानप्रस्थ एवं संन्यास आश्रम की व्याख्या की, और हर आश्रम में आदर्श जीवनशैली भी निरूपित की।

यज्ञ की पूर्णाहुति श्री स्वामी सत्यानन्द जी के संन्यास दिवस, 12 सितम्बर को हुई। इस अवसर पर रिखियापीठ की पीठाधीश्वरी, स्वामी सत्यसंगानन्द भी उपस्थित थीं और उन्होंने अपने प्रेरक उद्बोधन में कहा कि संन्यासी की पहली और सबसे अहम भूमिका शिष्य की है और एक शिष्य के जीवन में श्रवण, ग्रहण और समर्पण के गुण अवश्य होने चाहिए। स्वामी सत्यानन्द जी इन आदर्शों के जीवन्त उदाहरण थे और हम सबको इन्हें अपने जीवन में आत्मसात् करने का प्रयास करना चाहिए। ■

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I, Swami Yogamaya Saraswati, hereby declare that the particulars given above are true to the best of my knowledge and belief.

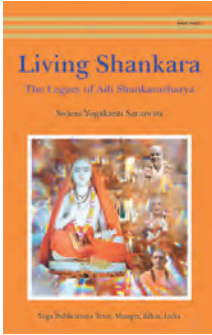
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