

Satya ka Avahan

Invoking the Divine

सत्य का
आवाहन

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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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Front cover & plates: Various anusthanas in Ganga Darshan and Paduka Darshan, 2016



SATYAM SPEAKS – सत्यम् वाणी

Sannyasa is not for perfect people. It is for those who want to make their life spiritually dynamic.

—Swami Satyananda Saraswati

संन्यास उन लोगों के लिए नहीं है जो सिद्ध और पूर्ण हो चुके हैं। यह उनके लिए है जो अपने जीवन को आध्यात्मिक दृष्टि से गतिशील बनाना चाहते हैं।

—स्वामी सत्यानन्द सरस्वती

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Owned by Sannyasa Peeth **Editor:** Swami Yogamaya Saraswati

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

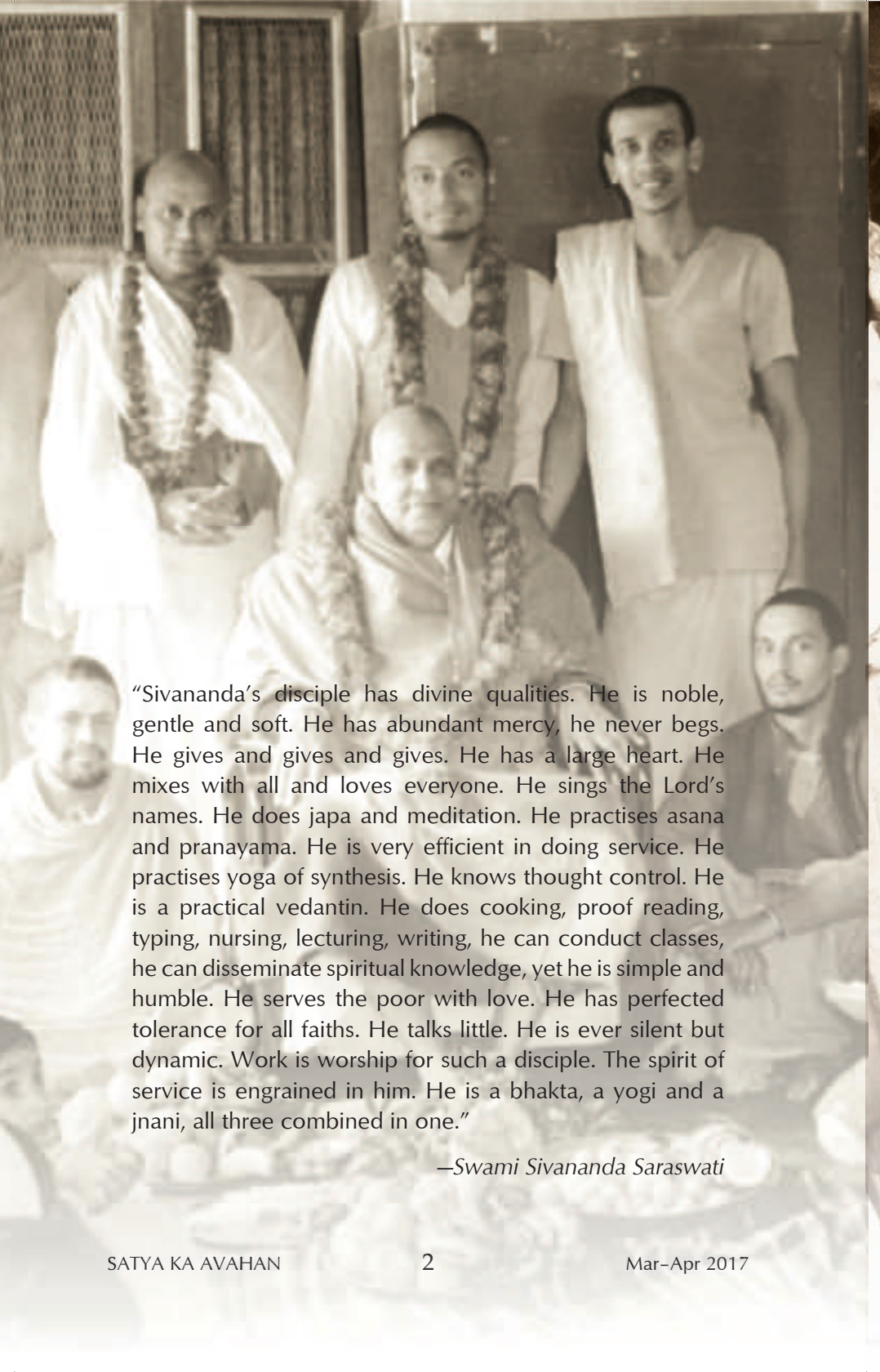
"I do not desire a kingdom or heaven or even liberation. My only desire is to alleviate the misery and affliction of others."

—Rantideva



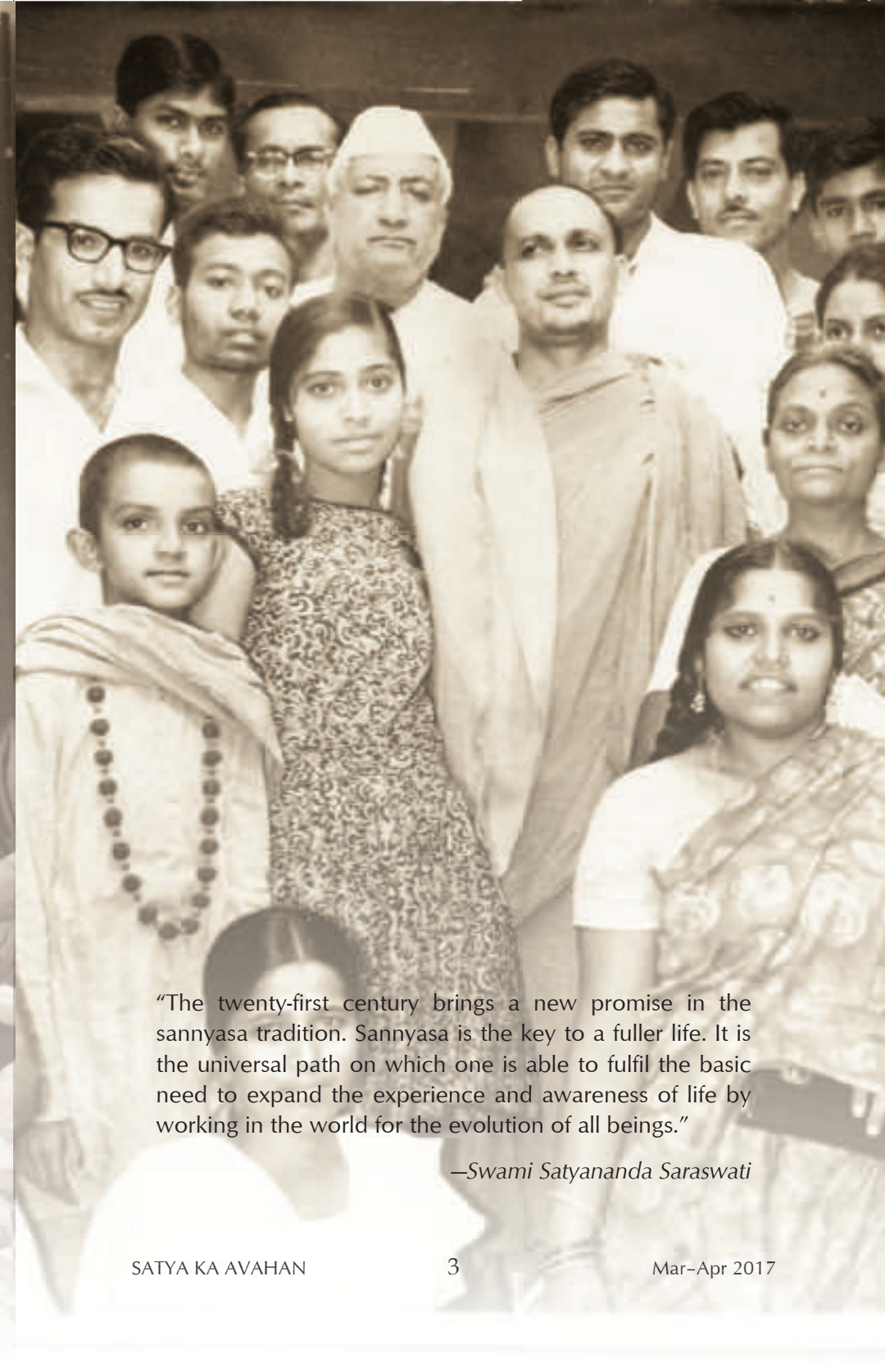
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This issue of Avahan is dedicated to the activities of Sannyasa Peeth during 2016



“Sivananda’s disciple has divine qualities. He is noble, gentle and soft. He has abundant mercy, he never begs. He gives and gives and gives. He has a large heart. He mixes with all and loves everyone. He sings the Lord’s names. He does japa and meditation. He practises asana and pranayama. He is very efficient in doing service. He practises yoga of synthesis. He knows thought control. He is a practical vedantin. He does cooking, proof reading, typing, nursing, lecturing, writing, he can conduct classes, he can disseminate spiritual knowledge, yet he is simple and humble. He serves the poor with love. He has perfected tolerance for all faiths. He talks little. He is ever silent but dynamic. Work is worship for such a disciple. The spirit of service is engrained in him. He is a bhakta, a yogi and a jnani, all three combined in one.”

—Swami Sivananda Saraswati



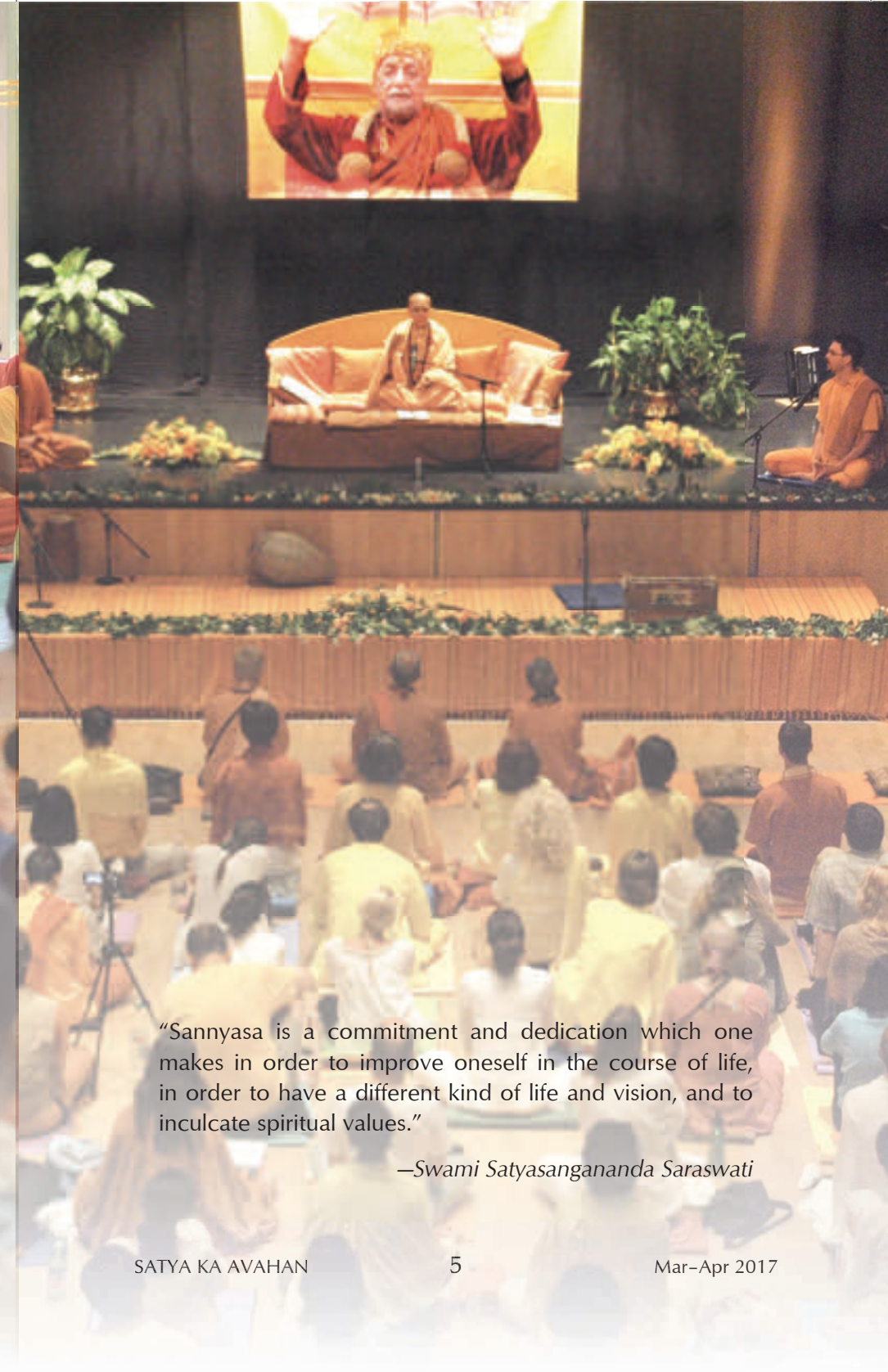
"The twenty-first century brings a new promise in the sannyasa tradition. Sannyasa is the key to a fuller life. It is the universal path on which one is able to fulfil the basic need to expand the experience and awareness of life by working in the world for the evolution of all beings."

—Swami Satyananda Saraswati



“To live and act according to the need of the moment, to respond appropriately to the trials and struggles of life, to think of others and strive to bring qualitative improvements in the lives of people, to imbue perfection in thought, word and deed – these are the ideals of the sannyasa way of life. These ideals have to be blended into society in a practical and realistic manner, so that every individual is able to experience samskriti in their life.”

—Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati



“Sannyasa is a commitment and dedication which one makes in order to improve oneself in the course of life, in order to have a different kind of life and vision, and to inculcate spiritual values.”

—Swami Satyasangananda Saraswati



Sannyasa Peeth 2016: A Report

The year 2016 continued to be a time of inspiration and consolidation. Commencing the year on a note of strength and resolve with invocation of Lord Hanuman, this theme was maintained through the year.

Swami Niranjan's panchagni sadhana intensified with four months of fires blazing around him. Parallel to this, it seemed his sankalpa to lead everyone into experiencing the truth of spiritual life also strengthened. The Pashupata Astra Yajna held at the conclusion of the panchagni revealed another level of granthi bhedan. The Chaturmas anusthana, held for the second year now, introduced varied facets of spiritual traditions of India to all, Munger residents included. During this period, a new sadhana was initiated for people entering the third phase of their life, called the *vanaprastha ashrama* in the tradition, a time when people retire from social commitments and duties. This was the Vanaprastha Sadhana Satra, to which many participants came with aching knees but left with a bounce in their step.

In the Adhyatma Samskara Sadhana Satras, two more yamas and their corresponding niyamas were introduced, and the map to walk this path of positivity in life was also provided. The celebrations, aradhanas, events and satsangs continued to inspire the determination to follow the path. Yet it became clearer and clearer that while many will join the caravan, only those with the mettle to face the inner fires and dive into the deep end will make it to the end of the journey.

JANUARY

New Year's Day: 1 January

The new year was ushered in with the chanting of the *Hanuman Chalisa* 108 times on the Main Lawn of Ganga Darshan Vishwa Yogapeeth before the Chhaya Samadhi of Sri Swami Satyananda Saraswati. Havan was conducted and Lord Hanuman was offered 108 laddus, one for each *Chalisa*. The sadhana invoked the strength and positivity that Lord Hanuman represents and Swamiji explained the symbolism of Hanuman, inspiring everyone for the year ahead:



Swami Niranjanananda: Invocation of Hanuman

Hanuman is a personality who represents the fulfilment of all the qualities of head, heart and hands. He represents the perfection of yoga. He is a siddha, yet he is the epitome of humility as well. He is extremely knowledgeable, yet he listens to everybody in the same way. He is all-powerful, yet he bends like a blade of grass in front of people. He is the apex of friendship and he is the apex of knowledge.

The invocation of Hanuman in the form of *Hanuman Chalisa* is a powerful practice as in it are contained mantras known as *shabar mantras*. These are special mantras that are very potent and effective. The knowledge of these mantras becomes revealed only to those who have awakened awareness; it is only siddhas who develop the ability to recognize what they are and their use. We only know that the *Hanuman Chalisa* has many of these shabar mantras, and therefore when we chant it, some form of assistance does come from some quarter. The power that is invoked with



the chanting of the shabar mantras helps you overcome obstacles and difficulties in life.

To begin the new year with the chanting of these mantras is indicative of the sankalpa to make this coming year trouble-free, or at least to reduce the intensity and frequency of obstacles, and to discover new paths in the form of inspiration, conviction and clarity.

May the grace of Sri Hanuman guide you to write the right thing on the blank board of your mind in 2016.

Write well on your white board

You can make this year what you want it to become. A new year always comes like a blank whiteboard, and it is you who writes on it. What you write and how you write is more important than thinking about what you will receive. As a spiritual aspirant, you have to rise beyond the idea of ‘what I’m going to receive’ and connect with the idea of ‘what I can be’. If you can ‘be’, that is your achievement; if you keep thinking about what you want to become, you will never be anything.



Therefore, begin this new year with a clean board and be aware of what you write and how you write. You can write, “I am nowhere”, or you can write, “I am now here.” The first is a negative statement, but you can change the negation into something positive by simply shifting one letter. This is the shift that has to take place. Only one thing has to shift in the mind: the attitude, towards yourself, your environment, your people, your place.

With that you will be connected with everything. In connection there is an experience of love; in disconnection there is an experience of separation and frustration.

Therefore, be aware of what you write: of what you think and what you do. With awareness you can reduce the number of times you fall into pits and traps. If you fell a hundred times last year, this

year, if you are aware, you can save yourself from fifty pitfalls. That is fifty percent less. You will still fall, yet there will be bigger spans of time when you are walking on solid ground, when you are more responsible and alert, and trying to achieve the best in life.

So, the effort this year is to be aware of what you write on the clean board which you receive today. Let your aspiration be to know what is being written, and ensure that you write the best story this year.

Satyameshwar Aradhana: 12–15 January

The three-day invocation of the Shivalingam dedicated to Sri Swamiji at Paduka Darshan ashram, Satyameshwar Mahadeva, heralded the commencement of Swamiji's panchagni sadhana. Pandits from Varanasi performed abhisheka and shringar of the mahalingam every afternoon. They also conducted Rudrabhisheka and havan in Satyam Udyan (Akhara) in the mornings.



Makar Sankranti: 15 January

On this auspicious day, when the sun begins its northward journey for the year, Swamiji commenced his panchagni sadhana. Peethadhishwari Swami Satyasangananda, who had arrived for the occasion from Rikhiapeeth, performed havan, signalling the commencement of her own panchagni sadhana as well.

On this occasion, the morning sadhana dedicated to Lord Hanuman commenced in the Akhara.

To welcome the new sun of Makar Sankranti and invoke surya shakti, all sannyasins, residents, students and children of BYMM practised twelve rounds of surya namaskara in Ganga Darshan Vishwa Yogapeeth under a sparkling morning sky.





Panchagni sadhana

The fourth year of Swamiji's panchagni sadhana continued for four months up to 15th May. Throughout this period, the entire ashram seemed to be imbued with a special sattvic energy, while Swamiji endured the steadily rising temperature with infinite grace and equipoise. In the last week of the sadhana, the mercury shot up to 72 degrees in the panchagni vedi.

Despite the rigorous sadhana, Swamiji made time to meet with residents every Tuesday and Thursday. During these gatherings, Swamiji's insights on various dimensions of yoga were full of light and sparkle. All present seemed to be transported to an ancient age when the rishis would emerge from their deep sadhanas and share the yogic vidya with their students.

FEBRUARY

Adhyatma Samskara Satra: 9–16 February

Even as Swamiji sat in panchagni, participants of the Adhyatma Samskara Sadhana Satra were allowed into the Akhara for a mantra anusthana conducted by pandits from Munger Sivalaya. The select participants were also given a sadhana and swadhyaya to practise during this period.

Swamiji gave satsangs in the afternoon and explained the purpose of sadhana:



preparing the *dridhabhoomi*, the firm foundation, of spiritual growth. At the end of the nine-day period, the participants were provided guidance by Swamiji on the sadhana to follow in their daily life.

Swami Dharmashakti's Samadhi Day: 12 February

Swami Dharmashakti's samadhi day was commemorated with an evening program held at the Akhara in which Swamiji performed havan dedicated to her pious memory at the yajna vedi along with sannyasins.



Arrival of Hari and Aryan: 27 February

Munger and Rikhia came together in a unique way: two puppies born to Jwala and Rudra of Rikhiapeeth arrived in Munger to become Swamiji's bhairavas. Over the year both revealed their own unique character just like all disciples: Aryan a picture of extroversion, eager to greet and play with everyone and everything; Hari, always by Swamiji's side, happy to just sit at his master's feet! The duo have also become perfect examples of yogic training under a master – always well-behaved and loving, yet extremely alert, disciplined and ready to act if the need arises.

Swami Niranjanananda: Who is walking who?

When I go for a walk with Aryan and Hari, they hold the leash in their mouth and they think they are walking me. They see me holding the leash so they catch the leash in their mouth and then they are happy. For the entire duration of the walk, the leash is in their mouth and they keep looking at me to see whether I am following or not. It is a funny mindset, I am the one who is taking them but they think they are taking me. Maybe they are! It is only due to my buddhi that I consider myself more



important than them. I believe that I am taking them, but if I lose my buddhi and have no knowledge of this, then who is taking who? In the same way, you do not know that Nature is holding you by the leash; you think you are in control.

MARCH



Sivaratri: 7 March

On the auspicious occasion of Sivaratri, the residents of the ashram were invited to the Sivalaya temple in Munger for a program dedicated to Lord Shiva, led by the children of Bal Yoga Mitra Mandal and the ladies of Ramayana Mitra Mandali. Not only did the children chant stotras and perform havan, they also enacted the Shiva-Parvati wedding, with one child playing the role of Shiva, another of Parvati, and the rest constituting the wedding party of ghouls and ghosts. To the delight of everyone, this charming troupe did a parikrama of the Sivalaya amid cheerful kirtans dedicated to Shiva.

On return to Ganga Darshan, everyone gathered at the beautifully-lit Akhara where Swamiji performed abhisheka of Yogishwar, the Shivalingam established in Shiva Peeth. In his satsang, Swamiji explained the origin of Sivaratri:

Swami Niranjanananda: Significance of Sivaratri

Sivaratri is a day that represents many aspects of the Shiva tattwa. According to the *Shiva Purana*, which tells stories of Shiva, when the universe was created, it was not inhabited by any life-form. Brahma and Vishnu met in this newly-created universe, and started to debate who was superior and senior between them. This is natural behaviour. When two people meet for the first time, the first impression or awareness is the other person's age, 'Who is senior?' Before you even greet a person, you try to ascertain their age. If the person is elder to you, you speak in a certain

manner, and if younger you speak in a different manner. The first awareness is gauging the seniority.

Now, Brahma and Vishnu were immortals, so they could not recall their birthdates. As they continued the debate, a pillar of fire appeared between them. The stories say that the place where this pillar of fire appeared is the mountain of Arunachalam in South India.

The pillar was so huge that Brahma and Vishnu decided to find its beginning and end. Brahma took the form of a swan and flew upwards. Vishnu took the form of a boar and went downwards. For eons, they searched, flying and digging, yet they could not find the beginning or the end of the pillar. When they were exhausted, they met again in the centre and expressed their inability to accomplish this mission. As they were wondering what the pillar of fire represented, they heard a sound: *Om*, and in the vibrations created by the sound of *Om*, they saw the image of Shiva.

This incident of the first appearance of Shiva at the beginning of time came to be known as *Sivaratri*, the night of Shiva: the emergence of Shiva from the dark as a luminous pillar of fire, representing the vital force. It was after his appearance as the pillar of fire that the creation of life-forms began to take place. He was the catalyst for the creation of life-forms in the empty universe. He was the first pranic force.

He appeared twelve more times, and each appearance coincided with the day of Sivaratri. On these occasions, he appeared as a self-effulgent lingam, a *dyotirlingam*, and therefore we have twelve



dyotirlingams in India. They represent the manifestation of Shiva in different ages to fulfil the purpose of dharma.

The next incident related to Sivaratri is the marriage of Shiva and Shakti, which is a paradox in itself, as Shiva was a renunciate. He lived in the *shmashana*, cremation ground; his ornaments were snakes, scorpions and the animals that live on the cremation ground; his embellishment was the ash of bodies



burnt in the cremation ground. He was an introverted person who had rejected the world and its attachments and associations. Such a one suddenly married a woman of great beauty, the Cosmic Mother Parvati, and was united with Her. This is a paradox in the Shaiva philosophy, but it is a symbolic idea, and its significance is understood through kundalini yoga.

When the kundalini travels up to sahasrara and unites with Shiva, it is known as the marriage of Shiva and Shakti. They become one, they are united. Just as the kundalini unites with Shiva in sahasrara, on Maha Sivaratri night the cosmic principle of energy unites with the cosmic principle of sentient consciousness. This event was the first Big Bang. When cosmic energy and cosmic consciousness came together and interacted, the first explosion took place. Therefore, the union of Shiva and Shakti is the cosmic Big Bang. That is the symbology of their marriage.

Energy has many forms, and spiritual energy is the force of faith, and what negates faith is doubt. In spiritual life, there is always a conflict between doubt and faith; they are always at loggerheads with each other. Disciples say they have faith in their guru and they also doubt the guru. They say, "I surrender myself to guru" and they also say, "Don't tell my misdeeds to the guru." There is a play of doubt and faith, acceptance and non-acceptance, and due to this game that goes on continuously, one is not able to connect with the true spirit of Shiva, which would allow the experience of openness, clarity, creativity and peace. Doubt takes one away from the spiritual force of faith that can help one move forward. The greater the faith, the closer one is to experiencing divinity, as it allows one to transcend one's limitations.

The story of the marriage of Shiva and Shakti also depicts this game of faith and doubt. It is a game that Shiva plays with Shakti by trying to create doubt in her mind, yet Shakti remains firm. It represents that when you are totally identified with faith and are unshakable in it, then Shiva comes to you.

This is the story of Sivaratri. Therefore, on this Sivaratri, realize that the biggest obstacle in spiritual life is doubt, so see if you can avoid it; the biggest strength of spiritual life is faith, so see if you can protect your faith.

Holi: 23 March

All residents received the blessings of Holi with colouring on the forehead during the morning havan at Akhara. Later in the morning, all students and residents gathered on the Kutir lawn and amid song and dance, the festival of colours was celebrated. All the deities in Akhara became part of the celebration as they received colours from flowers dipped in *abeer*, coloured powder. The children of BYMM joined in, adding their exuberance to the occasion, and also presented a dance performance during the evening in Swamiji's presence. In his satsang, Swamiji explained the significance of Holi:



Swami Niranjanananda: Significance of Holi

Holi was played for the first time during the time of Sri Krishna. It is a festival of friendship for children, initiated by Sri Krishna. Originally, throwing of flower petals, water and natural colours constituted the celebration. Krishna coloured faces and the clothes of everyone to bring smiles and happiness in the lives of all. It became a day to make the world, the society, the family and friends into colourful people.

There is a story, not of Holi but that when Krishna went to Mathura, he was walking around the city and came across a shop



where people dyed clothes. He saw the dyer receiving clothes from people, dipping them in a bucket, and giving the coloured clothes back. Impressed by this act, Krishna also wanted to colour clothes. He asked the dyer, "Can I have a bucket of colour?" The dyer, out of compassion and kindness, gave a bucket of dye-water to Krishna. Krishna took that bucket to the crossroads of the town, stood in the middle, and announced, "Anyone who wants to colour their clothes, come. I will do it for free." Out of curiosity, people started to come, first one or two, and gradually more. Somebody gave him a handkerchief, somebody a shirt, somebody an angavastra, and each person wanted their cloth dyed in a different colour: blue, red, yellow.

Krishna would receive each cloth, dip it in the bucket, and give it back in the colour the owner wanted. This process continued the whole day long, and none of the customers noticed that Krishna had only one bucket. One person, however, was standing quietly by the side, observing this. When Krishna was closing shop in the evening, this man went to Krishna and said, "I also want to dye one cloth." Krishna replied, "Well, I am closing shop. This will be the last job. What colour do you want?" The man said, "I have been watching you the whole day. You have only one bucket, but everybody who has come to you has gone back with a different colour. I don't know what colour is in the bucket, but I want you to dye my cloth in the colour that is in the bucket. I don't have a choice of colour."

Krishna looked at him, smiled and said, "The colour in this bucket is that of faith and belief. If you believe that your cloth is going to be red, then red cloth will come out. If you believe that the cloth is going to be blue, then blue cloth will come out."

If you believe that you can achieve, then definitely you will achieve. If you don't have belief and faith, no matter how much you try, you will never attain success. The prime ingredient in life is faith and belief, *shraddha*. With that you can have any colour you

want. People who are endowed with faith can extract any colour from the bucket of life. I am saying that is the significance of Holi.

In society, for young people, it is a festival of friendship, when they can put colours on people and have a good laugh. For adults it is an excuse to party. In the ashram, however, we see the spiritual perspective. Why is this tradition alive till today? Is it only for entertainment? Is it only a festival of colours? There must be something deeper due to which the awareness of Holi has continued, generation after generation, century after century. This deeper reason is the real purpose of Holi: it is a tradition to endow one with friendship, to connect with openness, and to cultivate faith and belief in life.

APRIL

Navaratri: 8–15 April

Navaratri was observed with the invocation of Rama and the Cosmic Mother through chants and havan in front of the Chhaya Samadhi. It was an inspiring period of experiencing the transformative influence of these cosmic forces. A series of meditations to develop the various qualities required on the spiritual journey was conducted including invocation of various aspects of the Cosmic Shakti who can help cultivate these qualities.

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 noon – the hour when Rama was born. The chanting of the entire 'Sundarkand', as well as other stotrams and kirtans were





part of this aradhana to honour the *maryada puroshottam*, the epitome of righteousness.

Hanuman Jayanti: 22 April

Lord Hanuman, who is a familiar presence in the ashram, was wished 'happy birthday' with the chanting of the Hanuman Chalisa 11 times and other stotras. The 'Sundarkand' of *Ramacharitamanas*, which depicts his most illustrious act of finding Sita in Lanka, was also chanted during the program.

MAY

Pashupata Astra Yajna: 10–14 May

To conclude Swamiji's panchagni sadhana, from 10th to 14th May the Pashupata Astra Yajna was held in the grounds of Akhara. This ancient yajna, revived from history and held for the third year now, 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 panchagni sadhana to all.

During the five-day event, the invocations, havans and the extraordinary mantras of the yajna created a most auspicious and charged energy in the whole ashram, and transformation was experienced at various levels. On the first day of the yajna, the temperature at the panchagni vedi rose to seventy degrees

and yet there was not a flicker of unease in Swamiji's demeanour and he radiated only auspiciousness. Later he remarked, "Rudra announced his arrival with his teja."

During the satsangs at the yajna, Swamiji revealed a new facet of the panchagni sadhana, sourced from the *Taittiriya Brahmana*, in which the Yamaraja-Nachiketa dialogue indicates the three levels of panchagni sadhana – understanding one's environment and society, understanding oneself, and understanding the transcendental reality.

Swami Satsangi also arrived from Rikhiapeeth for the poorna-huti program. In her address she said that the panchagni is a sadhana that enhances one's endurance at every level, and it is only with this that the granthis are pierced. She also mentioned that Sri Swamiji used to say that it is a sadhana to 'connect earth with heaven'. At the conclusion of the yajna, Swamiji shot the symbolic Pashupata 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 thirteen-year-old Saptarishi Goenka.





Conclusion of panchagni sadhana: 15th May

On the morning of 15th May, the panchagni sadhana was concluded for the year. After the final *ahutis*, oblations, Swamiji put the four fires to rest, and offered his thanks to the cosmic forces for the grace received during the sadhana. The conclusion came with Swamiji's heartfelt chant:

*Sri Harim Sarva Lokanaam
Sri Gurum Sarva Lokanaam
Sri Shivam Sarva Lokanaam
Sri Harim paramanandam
Upadeshtrameeshwaram
Vyapakam Sarva Lokanaam
Kaaranam Tam Namamyaham
Om Shanti Shanti Shantih Hari Om*

In the afternoon, Swamiji revealed yet another dimension of the panchagni sadhana:

Swami Niranjanananda: Complementary roles of water and fire

During this panchagni, I understood the complementary actions of fire and water. Although the focus is on fire, it is the water you have to maintain, as in the absence of water, fire is going to burn you completely. Interestingly, in the *Apah Sukta*, the verses on water in the Vedas, it speaks of panchagni. It says, "Through you, may the fire in the body be balanced." There is a whole description of how water balances the fire. This led to another thought.

If a log is burning, how much water would be required to douse the fire? One glass? Not enough. One handful? Not enough. Potent cause and potent action, both have to be equal. If you put a few drops of water on a log, it will only create more smoke and sparks. Therefore the amount of water required has to be known. You can have either result: the positive or the negative; the fire may be doused, or the smoke and sparks can increase.

JULY

Adhyatma Samskara Sadhana Satra: 5–13 July

In the second Adhyatma Samskara Sadhana Satra of the year, Swamiji took the participants deeper into the experience of yamas and niyamas, the positive attributes of life. He explained two yamas and their corresponding niyamas: *danti* and *indriya nigraha*, mental restraint and sensorial restraint; and *adweshta* and *maitri*, being without hatred and having goodwill towards all.



Swamiji did not speak of these as mere concepts but laid out the map through which the qualities can be truly experienced and expressed in life. What he gave to all was the path for deep and lasting transformation leading to contentment at the individual level and harmony at the collective level. The participants were also given questionnaires and practice charts as tools to develop these qualities.

At the conclusion of the satra, summing up the subject, Swamiji said:

Swami Niranjanananda: Experiencing lightness and harmony

During this Adhyatma Samskara Sadhana, the main theme was how to make the mind light and how to make it still. Lightness of mind is achieved through the practice of *danti*, the yama,

and stillness of mind through the practice of indriya nigraha, the corresponding niyama. After discussing these two ideas, we came to understand another set of yama and niyama, which are also natural expressions of human behaviour. These are adweshta, being without hatred, and maitri, cultivating good relationships.

The concept, awareness and understanding of adweshta and maitri aid in the attainment of danti and indriya nigraha. It is difficult to practise danti if there is dwesha in the mind, whereas it is easy to practise danti if you are also working at removing your *dwesha*, hatred, and arrive at adweshta bhava. Adweshta bhava is complementary to what you are trying to achieve in danti. Similarly, maitri supports indriya nigraha. In maitri you are not contradicting the senses, instead you are guiding them to a place where they can experience stability and harmony.

In your practice, try to follow one idea per week. For instance, for one week focus on danti and ignore the remaining three yama and niyama. The second week focus on indriya nigraha and ignore the others. The third week focus on adweshta and the fourth week on maitri. Each week observe and analyze yourself. At the end of the first week come to a conclusion about danti in relation to yourself, what you are able to let go of, and be happy. Then the next week write down your observations about indriya nigraha, creating your own understanding, thoughts and ideas. Then, for one week in your life try to live adweshta bhavana: be without hatred. Think about it, write down your thoughts, analysis and understanding about it. The fourth week, do the same with maitri.





Guru Poornima: 16–19 July

For three days prior to Guru Poornima, Paduka Darshan ashram reverberated with chants and kirtans dedicated to the guru tattwa and Swamiji's inspirational satsangs. The program was conducted by the children of Bal Yoga Mitra Mandal (BYMM), whose excellence in organization, chanting, dance, poetry recital, anecdotal renderings of the significance of guru-disciple relationship, were all a living example of the positive transformation that the presence of guru can bring in one's life.



In the afternoons, Srimati Krishna Devi of Bhagalpur recited Rama Katha in a beautiful amalgam of story, song and music.



On 19th July, Guru Poornima day, the program commenced with guru pooja. Thereafter, havan was conducted and then Swamiji performed paduka poojan. More than 5,000 devotees were present on the occasion and everyone had the opportunity to do parikrama of the guru mandap and also Satyameshwar Peeth.



In his satsangs, Swamiji explained the significance of Guru Poornima and the guru tattwa. In the culminating satsang on Guru Poornima, he asked everyone to take a sankalpa:



Swami Niranjanananda: The disciple's sankalpa

The learning from this Guru Poornima should be to have a balance between accumulation and renunciation. People accumulate things all the time and never renounce anything. Every human being is a collector of items encountered in the life journey. Sometimes, rocks and stones are also kept in the treasury, as they represent memories of some event. However, those stones and rocks do not represent your wealth, so you have to assess what you are carrying.

Are you carrying stones and rocks in your life and in your mind? Or are you carrying jewels and gold in your life and in your mind? If you are carrying rocks and stones, leave them behind, renounce them. If you are carrying wealth, protect it and use it properly. This is the learning you have to apply. Peace and happiness are experienced when there is balance and harmony in both accumulation and renunciation. This balance has to be brought about in life, and that is the focus of this Guru Poornima.



Let us remove the impurities from our life, the negativities from our mind, the blockages from our path. Let us cultivate a beautiful garden and generate the wealth of happiness and peace. That should be the sankalpa taken today, and it must be applied for one year. Every day for five minutes, become aware of 'What things can I renounce today and what things can I accumulate today?' Accumulate

















the good, the benevolent and the beautiful, and renounce the negative, the destructive and the limiting.

Once you acquire the skills to do that, then the real Guru Poornima will manifest in your life, for the full moon of Guru Poornima represents the journey of a spiritual aspirant from the dark moon to the full moon. The guru has attained that fullness but the disciple is walking towards that fullness, trying to grow on the spiritual path, trying to move from darkness to light, from the dark moon to the full moon. This is achieved by becoming harmonious, peaceful and happy. The more you are able to do this, the closer you are to the fullness of your spirit, and it is the fullness of the spirit that has to be experienced in life.

Guru Poornima is a reminder that we have to walk the path to experience the fullness, completeness and wholeness of life. It is with this intention, this spirit and this sankalpa that we offer our worship to the gurus who have inspired humanity throughout the ages to discover the best within.

JULY–AUGUST–SEPTEMBER

Chaturmas anusthana: 20 July–16 September

The tradition started in 2015 continued this year, and for two months Paduka Darshan ashram became a melange of colour and joy as varied cultural traditions of India were celebrated here. An auspicious beginning was made with Satyanarayana Katha on the afternoon of Guru Poornima and with this also commenced the first *masparayan*, daily recital of the *Ramacharitamanas* for one month, by the ladies of Ramayana Mitra Mandali.

The other programs included:

Pandavani Katha (24–26 July):

Ritu Verma of Bhilai presented this unique tradition of telling the stories of the Pandavas, the heroes of the epic *Mahabharata*. The troupe accompanying her included members of an ethnic group that believes itself to be descendants of



the Pandavas, and who have carried this tradition with them for thousands of years.



Tribal dances of Madhya Pradesh (4–7 August): There are several indigenous tribes in Madhya Pradesh, central India, whose dances convey an ancient way of life and connection with nature. Each day performers from different tribes presented their dance forms.

Bundelkhandi music (6–7 August): Bundelkhand is a region in Madhya Pradesh replete with heroic folklore. Sri Hargovind and Pramila Jha rendered the stories of Alhaudal, a legendary hero, in a musical tradition unique to this region.



Sri Krishna Aradhana (16–18 August): The most beloved avatar of all, Sri Krishna,



was celebrated with performances of Odissi dance, martial arts and Sambalpuri dance by the students of Sambalpur University and Gopal Seva Niketan. In addition, the residents of Ganga Darshan and the ladies of Ramayana Mitra Mandali led everyone into the dandiya dance, creating waves of pure joy.

Bhajan evening by Munger residents (19 August): Sannyasi Shantidharma and Sannyasi Nirvikalpa presented bhajans and kirtans in the classical style.



Rama Katha by Sri Bal Vyas (22 August): Sri Vyas spoke on the ‘Sundarkand’ episode of the *Ramacharitamanas* and also sang a moving *Niranjan Chalisa*, composed by himself.

Sri Krishna Janmashtami (25 August): On the occasion of Sri Krishna’s birthday, an akhand kirtan of the Mahamantra was done

by an eighteen-member troupe of Bandhu Kirtan Mandali from Sambalpur, Orissa.

Swami Muktananda's satsang (25–28 August): Swami Muktananda from Alwar, Rajasthan, gave a series of satsangs in which he described the stories of Krishna and also provided an easy-to-comprehend explanation of the *Ishavasya Upanishad*.



Swami Girishananda's *Srimad Bhagavat Katha* and satsang (29 August–4 September): Swami Girishananda from Saket Dham, Jabalpur, carried everyone into a different time and age with his recitation of the stories from *Srimad Bhagavat* and satsangs on their significance. An enchanting part of the kathas was the theatrical depictions of the different incidents related to Lord Vishnu, such as Dhruva's darshan of the Lord, the descent of Vaman avatar, Krishna's birth, and so on.



Satyameshwar abhisheka (29 August–4 September): Satyameshwar Mahadeva, the Shivalingam established in Paduka Darshan, was offered *abhisheka*, ceremonial bathing, over these six days followed by *shringara* and *alankara*, ornamentation. Each day he was dressed in a different form – as Somanatheshwar, Mahakaleshwar, Kirat, Sundareswar, Ardhanarishwar, and Sri Jagannath.



Ramarchana (6 September): This extraordinary ritual, in which different aspects of creation are symbolically represented, was held just before the commencement of Sri Lakshmi-Narayana Mahayajna. Invocation of more than seventy different deities signifying the universal energies that combine to manifest the creation as we know it, was conducted by pandits from Sivalaya, Munger. It is said that Lord Brahma was advised to perform this worship by



Lord Vishnu before commencing the act of creating the world in order to manifest everything in perfect balance and beauty.

Swami Anuragananda's satsang (13-15 September): Swami Anuragananda from Munger's Shiva Guru Mission gave satsangs on the Shiva tattwa.



Mangniyar music from Rajasthan (14-16 September): For three evenings, the artistes from the desertescapes of Rajasthan delighted everyone with their soulful songs suffused with Krishna bhakti.

Chaturmas Poornahuti (16 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 Ramayana 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 Sivalaya, Munger. In the evening, havan was performed in a culminating thanksgiving to all the auspicious energies that had been present during this period of sadhana.





Vanaprastha Sadhana Satra

A new sadhana was introduced by Swamiji during the period of Chaturmas for *vanaprasthis*, people in the age group of 50–75 who have entered the vanaprastha ashrama, the phase of life where the focus should be to disconnect from material life and its attachments, and instead immerse oneself in *sadhana* and *chintan*, regular practice and reflection. The sadhana included a daily asana-pranayama class in the morning, and in the afternoons Swamiji gave illuminating satsangs in which he provided a completely new perspective on Rishi Patanjali's *Yoga Sutras*, explaining their practical significance.

The citizens of Munger were also invited to participate in the satra for a month, and as the word spread, people streamed into Paduka Darshan to practise and understand the yoga that has placed this city on the international map.

Two Vanaprastha Sadhana Satras were held, for a month each. The first satra with 25 participants commenced on 12th July and concluded on 11th August. The second satra with over 60 participants commenced on 18th August and concluded on the poornahuti of Chaturmas, 16th September.





Sri Lakshmi-Narayana Mahayajna: 7-12 September

The annual anusthana of Sannyasa Peeth commenced on the 7th afternoon, with the kindling of the yajna fire and invocation of Lord Ganesha. On the 8th, Sri Swami Sivananda's birthday, the aradhana was dedicated to the paramguru of the tradition, with havan, stotra path and the telling of the first part of his life-story by the children of BYMM. Thereafter, every day, the children chronicled the inspiring life of Swami Sivananda. In his satsang on Swami Sivananda's birthday, Swamiji said:



"In the yogic tradition there is only one sadguru and the rest are gurus. The *sadguru* is one from whom the mission and the vision begins. In our tradition the mission of yoga and spiritual life began with Sri Swami Sivananda. It is his inspiration, his training, his teachings that his disciples and the subsequent generations of disciples are bringing to human society for growth, evolution and upliftment.

"Swami Satyananda, our guru, was a disciple of Swami Sivananda, and he propagated the vision and the mission given to him by Swami Sivananda. Therefore, what we see here today

is due to the grace of Swami Sivananda. It is his inspiration and his vision that we are all connected with, and our guru Swami Satyananda was the catalyst to bring us within the fold of Swami Sivananda's inspiration and vision. We are grateful to these two luminaries, who have shown us a path to integrate the material and the spiritual dimensions."



During the aradhana, another ancient yajna was performed, now for the second year: the Narayana Astra Yajna, invoking the power of Narayana, through whose grace the rigidity of the ego is reduced, and peace and contentment are experienced.

On the third, fourth and fifth days of the yajna, each day a thousand offerings were made to Lord Narayana and Mother Lakshmi by 108 men and women, with clothes, ornaments, sandalwood powder, flowers, vermilion, rice grains and tulsi leaves.



Every day, yajna prasad was given to different participants, with all men receiving a tulsi plant and all women receiving *akshat*, consecrated rice grains, and a Sri Yantra locket as special prasad.

Swami Satyasangananda arrived on the 11th and in her satsang she said that Sri Swamiji had a universal sankalpa for the peace, plenty and prosperity of all, and therefore we should all try to align ourselves with this sankalpa. "It is only when you think of others that God thinks of you and a higher force comes to your help," she said. On the 11th, another auspicious event was the arrival of Mahaprasad from Jagannath Puri, Orissa, the 'hometown' of Narayana.





The yajna concluded on the 12th, the sannyasa day of Sri Swami Satyananda, with havan and stotra path dedicated to Sri Swamiji. In the evening, pooja was performed by Swamiji and Swami Satsangi at the Chhaya Samadhi of Sri Swamiji in Ganga Darshan, and abhisheka of Shivalingam and Sri Yantra was conducted here. The Chhaya Samadhi had been dedicated on this day one year ago.



The entire proceedings of the yajna and the aradhanas were conducted by pandits from Varanasi, while the children of Bal Yoga Mitra Mandal led kirtans, told stories, recited poems, performed dances, and the youth of Yuva Yoga Mitra Mandal (YYMM) managed the organization with flawless discipline. Every day in his satsangs Swamiji explained different facets of the yajna and spiritual life.

Swami Niranjanananda: Three invocations

In this Lakshmi-Narayana Mahayajna, three different invocations are being conducted. One is of Lakshmi, who represents prosperity at both material and spiritual levels, as both are required to survive in life. Even to have a cup of coffee, one needs to have resources. Even to clothe the body, you need to have resources. Without resource, life cannot grow, evolve, or progress. Life and resource are two parts of the same coin. The material resources are required for surviving in the material world and spiritual resources are required for surviving and growing in the spiritual world. They both enhance the experience and beauty of life. Mother Lakshmi represents this prosperity, at all levels.

The second invocation is of Narayana, who represents the experience of life in the form of *sat*, *chit* and *ananda* – truth, awareness and bliss. These are the two powers that govern our life.

The third aspect of this yajna is the invocation of the consolidated shakti, which is the weapon of Narayana. Why is a weapon used? To remove, destroy or change something. Similarly, life also needs a weapon in order to succeed in its journey, and that weapon is known as *Narayanastra*, the weapon of Narayana.

There is a story of the Mahabharata war. The Kauravas, who were fighting the Pandavas, sent a missile – the Narayanastra – against the Pandavas. That missile was destroying everything on its path. The Pandavas had no countermeasure to stop it, so they went to Krishna for help. Krishna said, “That missile is attracted to those who wear armour and hold weapons in their hand. The missile is directed against those who, in their arrogant warrior nature, are willing to confront it. In order to not be affected by the missile, drop your weapons. Throw them away. Remove your armour. There should be nothing between the missile and you, no barrier, no protection. Become naked and it will not hurt you.” The Pandavas followed Krishna’s advice, removed everything metallic from their body and thus rendered the missile useless, as it was attacking the metal: the armour, the helmet, the weapons made out of iron and other metals. Once they dropped every weapon used for protection, the missile was rendered useless. Thus Krishna saved the Pandavas and their army.

The weapon that was launched against the Pandavas was the Narayanastra. What is the significance of this weapon? What is the armour in your life? The arrogance, the egotistical tendencies, the stiffness of mind and heart, the rigidity of mind and heart:





the ego. Ultimately, the ego is the barrier between the individual and the divine. One can transcend the mind yet not experience the divine. One can enter into samadhi yet not experience the divine.

The ego stands as a barrier even in the life of masters, as well in the life of common people and demonical people. All three groups are subject to the influence of ego. Those with demonical tendencies have tamasic ego, the dark ego. The common people, the masses, have the rajasic ego. They wish to attain self-esteem, self-prestige, self-identity. The positive and pious people, the yogis, have the sattvic ego: awareness that 'I exist'. Thus ego is there in each and every one, whether in a tamasic, rajasic or sattvic form, and that is the barrier between the individual and the divine.

The shakti of Narayana breaks that barrier, it kills the individuality. As Swami Sivananda used to say: "Kill this little i, die to live, live the divine life." This little 'i', which is the barrier in life, is destroyed by the power of life, by the shakti, the weapon, which enhances the experience of life, which nurtures the beauty of life: understanding, support and cooperation, positivity in life. That is the power invoked through the Narayanastra Yajna.

These are the three processes that will take place during this Lakshmi-Narayana Mahayajna: invocation of Lakshmi, who represents the material and spiritual prosperity, the goodness of life, the resourceful life; the invocation of Narayana to experience the expansiveness of life, the beauty and truth of life; and the invocation of the weapon of Narayana to help us overcome the last barrier of ego.

ACROSS THE YEAR



Swamiji's tirthas

With the focus on guiding the new developments in Munger, Swamiji went on two tirtha yatras. The first was to Sri Lalitha Mahila Samajam at Tirueengoimalai in South India in January to participate in the Sri Lalitha Mahayajna. The second was to the Golden Temple in Amritsar in November.



Sunday Satsangs

Swamiji interacted with guests, students and residents in satsangs throughout the year on Sundays, answering questions on a range of subjects and guiding and inspiring aspirants on their spiritual path. The 'Sunday Satsangs' continued to be a time of receiving spiritual wisdom and basking in the light of a master.



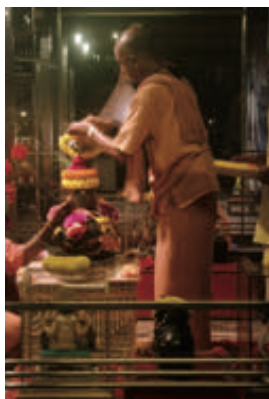


Guru Bhakti Yoga

The tradition of Guru Bhakti Yoga was maintained with Rudra-abhisheka and Sri Yantra abhisheka performed in the Akhara on the 5th and 6th of every month, commemorating Sri Swami Satyananda's mahasamadhi. Swamiji's poignant satsangs on these occasions touched everyone and were a reminder of the principles our gurus exemplify.

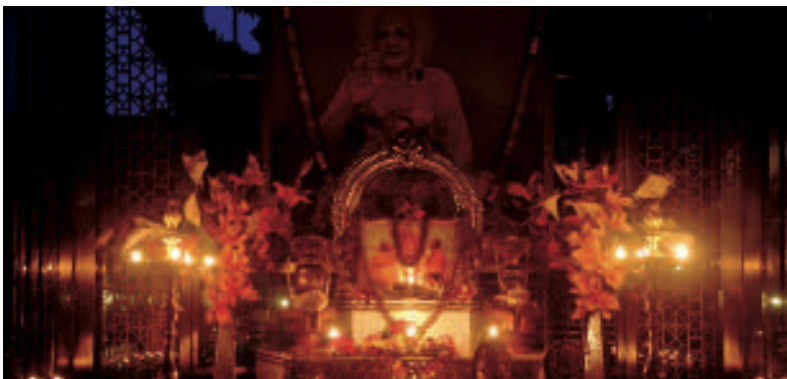
Swami Niranjanananda: Days of remembrance

Today and tomorrow are the two days that we dedicate to remember the teachings and the life of our inspirer. This is an opportunity to remember him and to connect with his teachings, and to know those moments of inspiration that guided him in his life.



On the 5th we conduct Shiva aradhana and abhisheka, as Shiva represents the highest consciousness, the awakened consciousness, the transcendental consciousness, not bound by the limitations of space, time or object. Shiva represents the free, unconditioned self, and is the aspiration of all spiritual-minded sannyasins.

People take sannyasa for different reasons; not everyone has a spiritual as-



piration. In the life of Sri Swamiji we see the spiritual aspiration come alive. His mahasamadhi was the attainment of Shiva hood. We read about samadhi, but the ultimate samadhi is the conscious departure of the soul from the body. On 5th December, he chose the time of his departure. He sat down in meditation, did his mala of mantra, thanked his guru for guiding him, joined the palms together and prayed to God, "I am ready, you can take me." He chanted the mantra *Om* three times, closed his eyes and his pranas ascended. That was it.

This was a real event that happened, and people are witness to it. When one is able to control matter and the departure of the spirit from the body, it is an indication of the state of Shiva hood, the Shiva tattwa. It indicates the final mastery over matter and spirit, and this was seen in the life of Sri Swamiji.

Our invocation here is to remember that moment of union. The moment of union is always a moment of celebration, and therefore this beautiful program has evolved by itself.

On the 6th he was placed in the lap of Mother Earth, after thousands had filed past to have his last darshan. That day, the disciples felt sad due to their physical loss, but the heavens and nature were most happy. Nature was receiving in her lap





a son who had worked tirelessly to fulfil the mandate of his guru and to wipe the tears of suffering from the eyes of people. So we can imagine how happy Mother Earth must have been. That moment when he was given the bhu samadhi is commemorated when we perform Sri Yantra aradhana, which is the highest symbol of Shakti.

These two days are special for Ganga Darshan, as we remember the teachings, we remember our connection with guru and the inspiration that brought us to guru. That moment when you first came to your guru, you had an inspiration, you had faith, devotion, belief and trust; you had the best in you bubbling over. That connection with the guru is the most memorable moment of every disciple's life. It is the true inspiration: not only the memory of the physical person, but also of what he said, what he taught, what he wanted us to be. We meet here on these two days to reawaken that memory and that inspiration.



संन्यास पीठ की गतिविधियाँ-2016

जनवरी

नव वर्ष दिवस (1 जनवरी)

गंगा दर्शन में नव वर्ष का स्वागत श्री स्वामी सत्यानन्द सरस्वती की छाया समाधि के सामने हवन और श्री हनुमान चालीसा के 108 बार अखण्ड पाठ के साथ किया गया। सन् 2008 से शुरू हुई यह साधना अब गंगा दर्शन की वार्षिक परम्परा बन गई है।

सत्यमेश्वर आराधना (12-15 जनवरी)

पादुका दर्शन में स्थापित सत्यमेश्वर शिवलिंग की आराधना वाराणसी से आए आचार्यों द्वारा सम्पन्न की गई। प्रातःकाल वे गंगा दर्शन के सत्यम् उद्यान में और दोपहर के समय सत्यमेश्वर पीठ में अभिषेक, शृंगार और हवन सम्पन्न करते।

मकर संक्रान्ति (15 जनवरी)

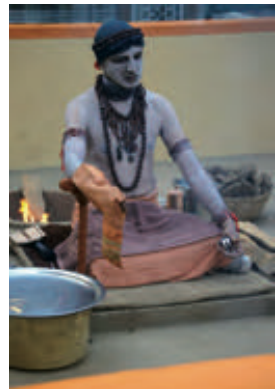
इस पावन दिन, जब सूर्यदेव उत्तरायण में प्रविष्ट होते हैं, स्वामीजी ने अपनी पंचाग्नि साधना प्रारम्भ की। रिखियापीठ की पीठाधीश्वरी, स्वामी सत्यसंगानंद भी इस अवसर पर पहुँचीं और स्वामीजी की पंचाग्नि साधना के शुभारंभ पर हवन सम्पन्न किया।

इस अवसर पर अखाड़ा में हनुमान जी को समर्पित एक नई प्रातःकालीन साधना भी प्रारम्भ हुई। साथ ही आश्रम के संन्यासियों और अंतेवासियों ने सूर्य नमस्कार के बारह चक्रों का अभ्यास करके सूर्यदेव का उत्तरायण में स्वागत किया और उनकी शक्ति का आवाहन किया।

पंचाग्नि साधना

इस वर्ष स्वामी निरंजनानन्द जी ने 15 जनवरी से 15 मई तक चार माह की कठिन पंचाग्नि साधना सम्पन्न की। जैसे-जैसे स्वामीजी बढ़ते तापमान को समभाव से झेलते गए, पूरा आश्रम मानो एक विशेष सात्विक ऊर्जा से आपूरित होने लगा। साधना के अंत तक पंचाग्नि वेदी का तापमान 72 डिग्री सेल्सियस तक पहुँच जाता था।

अपनी कठोर तपस्या के बावजूद स्वामीजी प्रत्येक मंगलवार और गुरुवार को आश्रम के संन्यासियों एवं



अंतेवासियों के लिए समय निकालते थे। इन सत्संगों में स्वामीजी योग एवं अध्यात्म के विभिन्न आयामों पर प्रकाश डालते तो सबको लगता मानो वे वैदिक युग में पहुँच चुके हैं जहाँ ऋषि-मुनि अपनी गहन साधनाओं के पश्चात् अपने शिष्यों को विद्या प्रदान किया करते थे।

फरवरी

अध्यात्म संस्कार साधना सत्र (9-16 फरवरी)

अध्यात्म संस्कार सत्र के प्रतिभागियों को स्थानीय शिवालय मंदिर के पंडितों द्वारा अखाड़ा में मंत्रपाठ एवं हवन के साथ संचालित एक विशेष अनुष्ठान में भाग लेने का सुअवसर मिला। साथ ही उन्हें इस अवधि में अभ्यास हेतु विशेष साधना और स्वाध्याय दिए गए।

अपनी पंचाग्नि साधना समाप्त करने के पश्चात् स्वामीजी अपराह्न में प्रतिभागियों को सत्संग देते थे। अपने सत्संगों में उन्होंने समझाया कि साधना का प्रयोजन आध्यात्मिक उत्थान हेतु दृढ़भूमि तैयार करना है। सत्र के अंत में स्वामीजी ने प्रतिभागियों को अपने दैनिक जीवन के लिए व्यावहारिक साधना पर मार्गदर्शन दिया।

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 स्तोत्र एवं मंत्रपाठ के साथ स्वामीजी ने हवन सम्पन्न किया।

मार्च

शिवरात्रि (7 मार्च)

इस अवसर पर 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 ने योगेश्वर महादेव का रुद्राभिषेक सम्पन्न किया और शिवरात्रि के महत्त्व पर प्रकाश डाला।

होली (23 मार्च)

अखाड़ा में संचालित प्रातःकालीन हवन में आश्रम के अन्तेवासियों को होली का अबीर रूपी आशीष प्राप्त हुआ। इसके पश्चात् सभी विद्यार्थियों और अन्तेवासियों

ने कुटीर के सामने गीत-संगीत के साथ होली के पर्व को बड़े हर्षोल्लास के साथ मनाया। इस अवसर पर बाल योग मित्र मण्डल के बच्चे भी शामिल थे और संध्या के समय उन्होंने स्वामीजी के समक्ष एक मनोहारी नृत्य कार्यक्रम प्रस्तुत किया।

अप्रैल

नवरात्रि (8-15 अप्रैल)

नवरात्रि के दौरान छाया समाधि के प्रांगण में हवन और स्तोत्रपाठ द्वारा श्री राम और देवी माँ का आवाहन किया गया। रामनवमी के दिन मध्याह्न के समय रामचरितमानस के बालकाण्ड से श्रीरामजन्म-प्रसंग का पाठ किया गया और साथ ही भजन-कीर्तन के साथ मर्यादा पुरुषोत्तम का जन्मदिवस मनाया गया।

हनुमान जयंती (22 अप्रैल)

इस शुभ दिन हनुमान जी की ऊर्जा के आवाहन हेतु 11 बार हनुमान चालीसा का पाठ किया गया। अन्य मंत्रों एवं स्तोत्रों के साथ-साथ कार्यक्रम में सम्पूर्ण सुन्दरकाण्ड का भी पाठ किया गया।

मई

पाशुपतास्त्र यज्ञ (10-14 मई)

स्वामीजी की पंचाग्नि साधना अखाड़ा में संचालित पाशुपतास्त्र यज्ञ के साथ सम्पन्न हुई। यहाँ तीसरी 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 मानो 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 प्रथम दिन पंचाग्नि वेदी का तापमान 70 डिग्री तक पहुँच गया, लेकिन स्वामीजी के सौम्य, समभावी स्वभाव में कोई अंतर नहीं आया।

यज्ञ के दौरान अपने सत्संगों में स्वामीजी ने तैत्तिरीय ब्राह्मण में वर्णित यमराज-नचिकेता संवाद को आधार बनाकर पंचाग्नि साधना के एक नवीन पहलू पर प्रकाश डाला। यज्ञ की पूर्णाहुति पर रिखियापीठ से स्वामी सत्संगी जी भी पधारीं। अपने सत्संग में उन्होंने कहा कि पंचाग्नि साधना हर स्तर पर सहनशीलता की वृद्धि करती है और तभी ग्रंथि-भेदन हो पाता है।

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, 13 वर्षीय सप्तऋषि यज्ञ का यजमान था।

पंचाग्नि साधना की पूर्णाहुति (15 मई)

15 मई को प्रातःकाल स्वामीजी की इस वर्ष की पंचाग्नि साधना सम्पन्न हुई। अंतिम आहुतियों के पश्चात् स्वामीजी ने चारों अग्नियों को शांत कर दिया और साधना की सफलता के लिए दैवी शक्तियों के प्रति अपना हार्दिक आभार व्यक्त किया—

*श्रीहरिं सर्वलोकानां, श्रीगुरुं सर्वलोकानां, श्रीशिवं सर्वलोकानाम्
श्रीहरिं परमानन्दं, उपदेष्टारमीश्वरम्
व्यापकं सर्वलोकानाम् कारणं तं नमाम्यहम् ।*

जुलाई

अध्यात्म संस्कार साधना सत्र (5-13 जुलाई)

इस वर्ष के दूसरे अध्यात्म संस्कार साधना सत्र में भाग ले रहे साधकों को स्वामीजी यम-नियम के अभ्यास में और गहराई से ले गए। उन्होंने साधकों को दो यमों— *दान्ति* एवं *इन्द्रिय-निग्रह*, और दो नियमों— *अद्वेष* और *मैत्री*, के बारे में बताया और इन यम-नियमों को एक व्यावहारिक साधना के रूप में अपनाने के लिए प्रेरित किया।

गुरु पूर्णिमा (16-19 जुलाई)

गुरु पूर्णिमा के तीन दिन पहले से ही पादुका दर्शन आश्रम गुरु तत्त्व को समर्पित स्तोत्रपाठ एवं भजन-कीर्तन और स्वामीजी के प्रेरक सत्संगों से गुंजायमान हो गया। सारा कार्यक्रम बाल योग मित्र मंडल के होनहार बच्चों द्वारा संचालित हुआ। उनके



गीत-संगीत, कविता, नृत्य, मंच संचालन आदि प्रतिभाओं के शानदार प्रदर्शन में गुरु-शिक्षा द्वारा जीवन में कायाकल्प होने का जीवंत उदाहरण देखने को मिला।

अपराह्न के समय भागलपुर की मानस कोकिला, श्रीमती कृष्णा देवी ने बड़ी रसमयी शैली में रामकथा प्रस्तुत की। अपने सत्संगों में स्वामीजी ने गुरु पूर्णिमा तथा गुरु तत्त्व के महत्त्व पर प्रकाश डाला।

19 जुलाई, गुरु पूर्णिमा के दिन, स्वामीजी ने हवन और पादुका पूजन सम्पन्न किया। इस अवसर पर उपस्थित 5,000 से अधिक भक्तों और श्रद्धालुओं को परिक्रमा और गुरु-पादुका-पूजन का अवसर मिला। इन चार दिनों के मुख्य आकर्षण निःसंदेह स्वामीजी की उपस्थिति और उनके सत्संग थे जिनमें उन्होंने गुरु और शिष्य के दायित्वों, शिष्यत्व की राह में आने वाली बाधाओं तथा अपने लक्ष्य के प्रति निष्ठावान् रहने के उपायों पर प्रकाश डाला।

जुलाई-अगस्त-सितम्बर

चातुर्मास अनुष्ठान

2015 में शुरू की गई परम्परा इस वर्ष भी जारी रही और दो महीनों के लिए पादुका दर्शन आश्रम में अनेक सांस्कृतिक एवं आध्यात्मिक कार्यक्रम संचालित हुए। गुरु पूर्णिमा के दिन अपराह्न के समय मंगलकारी सत्यनारायण कथा आयोजित हुई और उसके बाद रामायण मण्डली द्वारा रामचरितमानस का प्रथम मासपारायण भी प्रारम्भ हुआ। अन्य कार्यक्रम इस प्रकार थे-

पाण्डवानी कथा (24-26 जुलाई)—पाण्डवानी भारत की सांस्कृतिक परम्पराओं की धरोहर में शामिल एक प्राचीन कथावाचन कला है जो छत्तीसगढ़ राज्य



में विकसित हुई और इसके कलाकार स्वयं को पाण्डवों के वंशज मानते हैं। भिलाई, छत्तीसगढ़ से आए श्रीमती ऋतु वर्मा और उनके समूह ने पाण्डवों के जीवन से जुड़े विभिन्न प्रसंगों की प्रस्तुति देकर इस पारम्परिक कला को यहाँ जीवंत कर दिया।

मध्य प्रदेश के जनजातीय नृत्य (4-7 अगस्त)—मध्य प्रदेश में भील, गोंड, आदि अनेक जन-जातियाँ हैं जिनके पारम्परिक नृत्य एक प्राचीन जीवनशैली और प्रकृति के साथ घनिष्ठ सम्बन्ध को दर्शाते हैं। प्रतिदिन अलग-अलग जन-जातियों के प्रतिनिधियों ने अपनी-अपनी नृत्य शैली का प्रदर्शन किया।

बुन्देलखण्डी संगीत (6-7 अगस्त)—बुन्देलखण्ड के श्री हरगोविन्द एवं प्रमिला झा ने आल्हा-ऊदल की वीरगाथाओं को पारम्परिक बुन्देलखण्डी संगीत शैली में बड़े प्रभावी ढंग से प्रस्तुत किया।

श्रीकृष्ण आराधना (16-18 अगस्त)—श्रीकृष्ण को समर्पित इस उल्लासमय कार्यक्रम में सम्बलपुर विश्वविद्यालय एवं गोपाल सेवा निकेतन के विद्यार्थियों द्वारा ओडिशी नृत्य, मार्शल आर्ट्स और सम्बलपुरी नृत्य प्रस्तुत किया गया। साथ ही गंगा दर्शन के अंतेवासियों तथा रामायण मण्डली की महिलाओं ने बड़े आनन्द के साथ डांडिया भी खेला।

मुंगेर के नागरिकों द्वारा भजन संध्या (19 अगस्त)—संन्यासी शांतिधर्म तथा संन्यासी निर्विकल्प ने शास्त्रीय शैली में भजन-कीर्तन प्रस्तुत किए।

श्री बाल व्यास द्वारा राम कथा (19-21 अगस्त)—श्री बाल व्यास ने रामचरितमानस के सुन्दरकाण्ड पर प्रवचन दिया और इस अवसर पर बड़े मर्मस्पर्शी निरंजन चालीसा का गायन भी किया, जिसे उन्होंने स्वयं रचा था।

श्रीकृष्ण जन्माष्टमी (25 अगस्त)—श्रीकृष्ण के जन्मदिवस के उपलक्ष्य में सम्बलपुर, ओडिशा से आई बंधु कीर्तन मण्डली ने महामंत्र का अखण्ड कीर्तन किया।



स्वामी मुक्तानंद द्वारा सत्संग (25-28 अगस्त)—अल्वर, राजस्थान से पधारे स्वामी मुक्तानंद पुरी ने चार दिनों तक ईशावास्य उपनिषद् की अनुपम ढंग से व्याख्या की। अपने सत्संगों में उन्होंने रोचक कथाओं और प्रसंगों का समावेश कर सभी को बांधे रखा और इस सूक्ष्म विषय को बहुत ही सहजता से बोधगम्य बना दिया।

स्वामी गिरीशानन्द द्वारा श्रीमद्भागवत कथा (29 अगस्त-4 सितम्बर)—साकेत धाम, जबलपुर के स्वामी गिरीशानन्द सरस्वती ने श्रीमद् भागवत की कथाओं को बड़े सरस ढंग से सुनाया और साथ ही उनके आध्यात्मिक महत्त्व पर प्रबोधक सत्संग दिए। कथा के दौरान बाल योग मित्र मण्डल के बच्चों ने भगवान के विभिन्न अवतारों की मनोहारी झांकियाँ भी प्रस्तुत कीं।

सत्यमेश्वर अभिषेक (29 अगस्त-4 सितम्बर)—पादुका दर्शन स्थित सत्यमेश्वर महादेव की इस अवधि में विशेष पूजा की गई जिसमें स्थानीय शिवालय मंदिर के पण्डितों द्वारा प्रतिदिन रुद्राभिषेक सम्पन्न किया गया। अभिषेक के पश्चात् प्रत्येक दिन सत्यमेश्वर महादेव का अलग-अलग स्वरूपों में शृंगार भी किया गया।

रामार्चन (6 सितम्बर)—शिवालय मंदिर, मुंगेर के पण्डितों द्वारा श्रीलक्ष्मीनारायण महायज्ञ से पूर्व रामार्चन अनुष्ठान सम्पन्न किया गया। यह आवाहन एवं आराधना की एक विशेष पद्धति है जिसमें सत्तर से अधिक देवी-देवताओं का आवाहन किया जाता है जो ब्रह्माण्ड की समस्त ऊर्जाओं का प्रतिनिधित्व करते हैं। ऐसा माना जाता है कि भगवान विष्णु ने ब्रह्मा जी को सृष्टि की रचना से पूर्व इस आराधना को करने का सुझाव दिया था ताकि सृष्टि के कार्य में पूर्ण सामंजस्य और सौंदर्य हो।

स्वामी अनुरागानन्द द्वारा सत्संग (13-15 सितम्बर)—शिव गुरु मिशन, मुंगेर के स्वामी अनुरागानन्द ने तीन दिनों तक शिव एवं गुरु तत्त्व पर सत्संग दिए।



राजस्थान का मंगनियार संगीत (14-16 सितम्बर)—तीन संध्याओं तक राजस्थान से आए मंगनियार शैली के गायकों ने कृष्ण भक्ति से ओतप्रोत गीतों से सबको मंत्रमुग्ध कर दिया।

चातुर्मास पूर्णाहूति (16 सितम्बर)—दो माह तक चले चातुर्मास अनुष्ठान की अंतिम आराधना 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। संध्या के समय स्वामीजी ने इस अनुष्ठान के दौरान उपस्थित रहें सभी दिव्य शक्तियों के प्रति आभार प्रकट करते हुए हवन सम्पन्न किया।

वानप्रस्थ साधना सत्र

चातुर्मास के दौरान स्वामीजी ने वानप्रस्थियों के लिए एक नया साधना सत्र प्रारम्भ किया, जिसमें प्रतिदिन सबेरे योगाभ्यास की कक्षा तथा दोपहर में रामचरितमानस का पाठ और पातंजल योगसूत्रों के व्यावहारिक पक्ष पर स्वामीजी के प्रबोधक सत्संग शामिल थे। इस अवधि में दो वानप्रस्थ साधना सत्र संचालित हुए। पहला 12 जुलाई से 11 अगस्त तक चला जिसमें 25 प्रतिभागी थे और दूसरा सत्र 18 अगस्त को शुरू होकर चातुर्मास की पूर्णाहूति, 16 सितम्बर को सम्पन्न हुआ। इसमें 60 प्रतिभागी थे।

श्री लक्ष्मीनारायण महायज्ञ (7-12 सितम्बर)

संन्यास पीठ का वार्षिक अनुष्ठान, श्री लक्ष्मीनारायण महायज्ञ का प्रारम्भ 7 सितम्बर को अरणि-मंथन और गणेश जी के आवाहन के साथ हुआ। 8 सितम्बर स्वामी

शिवानंद जी का जन्मदिवस होने के कारण उन्हें समर्पित रहा। स्तोत्रपाठ, हवन और कीर्तन के साथ-साथ बाल योग मित्र मण्डल के बच्चों ने उनकी जीवनगाथा का पहला भाग पढ़कर सुनाया। इसके बाद प्रतिदिन बच्चे स्वामी शिवानन्द जी के जीवन के प्रेरक प्रसंगों पर प्रकाश डालते रहे।

अनुष्ठान के दौरान एक अन्य प्राचीन यज्ञ भी सम्पन्न किया गया—नारायणास्त्र यज्ञ। इस यज्ञ का लक्ष्य भगवान नारायण की शक्ति के माध्यम से अहंकार की कठोरता को कम करके जीवन में सुख और शांति की अनुभूति है।

यज्ञ में प्रतिदिन सहस्रार्चन का कार्यक्रम भी आयोजित किया जाता था जिसमें 108 भक्तों द्वारा वस्त्र, अलंकार, पुष्प, चंदन, सिन्दूर, तुलसीदल, अष्टगंध और अक्षत जैसी सामग्रियाँ माता लक्ष्मी और भगवान नारायण को अर्पित की जाती थीं। प्रतिदिन यज्ञ प्रसाद भी वितरित होता था—सभी पुरुषों को तुलसी का पौधा और सभी महिलाओं को अक्षत-पात्र एवं श्री यंत्र लॉकेट दिया गया।

11 सितम्बर को स्वामी सत्यसंगानंद जी यज्ञ में पधारीं और अपने संबोधन में उन्होंने कहा कि श्री स्वामीजी का संकल्प सबके सुख, शांति और समृद्धि का था और हम सभी को उनके इस संकल्प से जुड़ने का प्रयास करना चाहिए। 11 सितम्बर को ही जगन्नाथ पुरी, ओडिशा से महाप्रसाद पहुँचा जिसका भावपूर्ण स्वागत और ग्रहण बड़े धूमधाम एवं श्रद्धा से किया गया।

यज्ञ स्वामी सत्यानन्द जी के संन्यास दिवस, 12 सितम्बर को सम्पन्न हुआ। संध्या के समय स्वामीजी एवं स्वामी सत्संगी जी ने गंगा दर्शन में श्री स्वामीजी की छाया समाधि पर पूजा अर्पित की। साथ ही रुद्राभिषेक और श्रीयंत्र-अभिषेक भी सम्पन्न हुआ। छाया समाधि का एक वर्ष पूर्व इसी दिन लोकार्पण किया गया था।

यज्ञ का संचालन वाराणसी के विद्वान् आचार्यों ने किया, जबकि बाल योग मित्र मंडल के बच्चों ने कीर्तन, लघु कथाओं, कविताओं और नृत्यों की प्रस्तुति से सबका मन मोह लिया, और युवा योग मित्र मंडल के सदस्यों ने पूरे अनुशासन और जिम्मेदारी के साथ कार्यक्रम का प्रबंधन संभाला। अपने सत्संगों में स्वामीजी ने प्रतिदिन यज्ञ और अध्यात्म के विभिन्न पहलुओं पर प्रकाश डाला।

अन्य गतिविधियाँ

तीर्थयात्राएँ

मुंगेर में विभिन्न नई परियोजनाओं और अपनी व्यक्तिगत साधनाओं में निरंतर व्यस्त रहने के कारण स्वामीजी की मुंगेर से बाहर तीर्थयात्राएँ कम हो गई हैं। इस वर्ष वे केवल दो तीर्थयात्राओं पर गए। पहली यात्रा जनवरी के महीने में तमिल नाडु के तिरुङ्गोडमलई नगर स्थित श्री ललिता महिला समाजम् की थी, जहाँ उन्होंने श्री



ललिता महायज्ञ में भाग लिया। दूसरी तीर्थयात्रा नवम्बर महीने में अमृतसर स्थित हरमंदिर साहिब की थी।

रविवार सत्संग

इस साल के रविवार सत्संग भी प्रेरणादायक शिक्षाओं से परिपूर्ण रहे। सत्संगों में जब स्वामीजी साधकों के प्रश्नों का समाधान और उनका मार्गदर्शन करते हैं तो जीवन के अनेक आयामों की समझ गहरी तथा आध्यात्मिक संकल्प सुदृढ़ हो जाया करता है।

गुरु भक्ति योग

श्री स्वामी सत्यानंद की महासमाधि के उपलक्ष्य में प्रतिमाह 5 और 6 तारीख को अखाड़ा में आयोजित रुद्राभिषेक और श्रीयंत्र अभिषेक अनुष्ठानों की परम्परा जारी रही। इन अवसरों पर स्वामीजी द्वारा दिए सत्संग विशेष रूप से प्रेरक एवं हृदयस्पर्शी रहते हैं। ■

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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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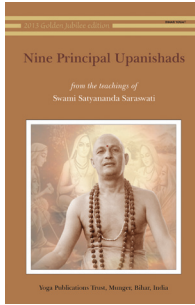
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