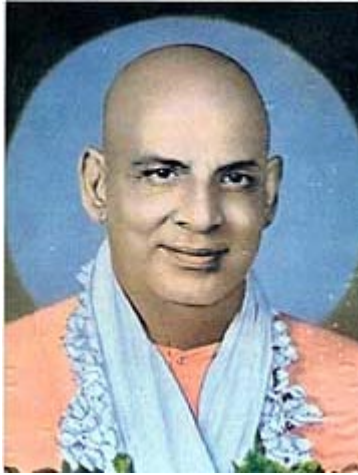


SOME REMINISCENCES OF GURUDEV SWAMI SIVANANDA

By

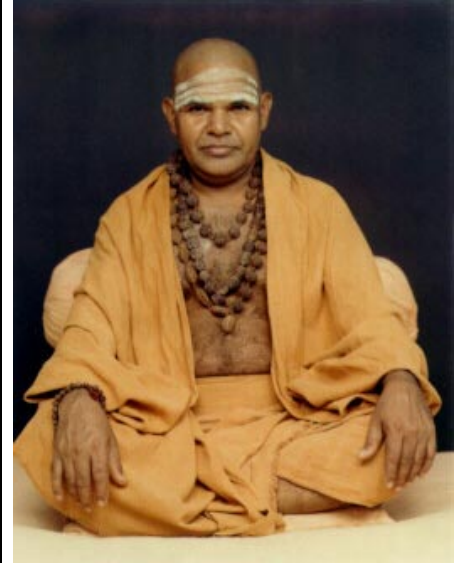
SRI SWAMI DEVANANDA



**Sri Swami Sivananda
Founder of
The Divine Life Society**



**SERVE, LOVE, GIVE,
PURIFY, MEDITATE,
REALIZE
So Says
Sri Swami Sivananda**



Sri Swami Devananda

A DIVINE LIFE SOCIETY PUBLICATION

THE UNIVERSAL PRAYER

O Adorable Lord of Mercy and Love!
Salutations and prostrations unto Thee.
Thou art Omnipresent, Omnipotent and Omniscient.
Thou art Satchidananda
(Existence-Consciousness-Bliss-Absolute.)
Thou art the Indweller of all beings.
Grant us an understanding heart,
Equal vision, balanced mind,
Faith, devotion and wisdom.
Grant us inner spiritual strength
To resist temptations and to control the mind.
Free us from egoism, lust, greed, hatred, anger and jealousy.
Fill our hearts with divine virtues.
Let us behold Thee in all these names and forms.
Let us serve Thee in all these names and forms.
Let us ever remember Thee.
Let us ever sing Thy glories.
Let Thy name be ever on our lips.
Let us abide in Thee for ever and ever.

—Swami Sivananda

SOME REMINISCENCES OF OUR HOLY MASTER SADGURUDEV SRI SWAMI SIVANANDAJI MAHARAJ

I feel, it is quite fitting time to remember our holy Master Sadguru Dev during this happy occasion of Diamond Jubilee Anniversary celebrations to express my deep felt gratitude, reverence and devotion to Gurudev in a humble way.

People are generally curious to know about the great saints and Mahapurushas and how they conducted their daily life during their life time. They like to emulate great person's good qualities. It is an everlasting fortune to me to be in the personal service of Gurudev at that time. Those days and incidents did not fade in my memory until now. I like to share those memories with the devotees, disciples, admirers and followers of our revered Gurudev be longing to present generation. Hence, this book-let before you as Jnana Yajna prasad.

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A DAY IN THE LIFE OF GURUDEV SWAMI SIVANANDAJI MAHARAJ

People are generally curious to know about a typical day in the life of a great man, sage or a saint: what kind of a discipline he followed, what he ate, how he behaved, etc. Such a curiosity is not at all uncommon, for even Arjuna was eager to know albeit in a general context about the *stita-prajna* or a liberated soul, as narrated in the Gita. Many devotees and Sadhakas of Gurudev Sivanandaji Maharaj also wish to know about his daily life.

Usually Gurudev would get up in the Brahma Muhurta—between 3-30 and 4-30 a.m. After completing his morning ablutions, he would do his Sadhana upto 6-30 a.m.

During summer, soon after his Sadhana, he would have some fruit juice and go for office Seva after 6-30 a.m., to the Diamond Jubilee Hall. He would begin his work after Jaya Ganesha Kirtan. He generally spent about one and a half to two hours at the office. First he would sign outgoing letters, then he would oversee the mailing of free literature to various devotees. His way of okaying a particular address or parcel was by uttering OM TAT SAT. Now it would be time for him to tackle the purely official work; signing of papers brought to him by the secretary or other heads of departments of the Ashram or dealing with official letters. Official duties disposed of, Gurudev would talk to the devotees and visitors present and give them books, each according to his level of understanding and proficiency in a particular language. This would be followed by a short Satsanga. He would ask the devotees to sing Kirtans and Bhajans or himself would hold a few minutes of discourse. By this time someone would have brought the Prasad from Visvanatha Mandir and Gurudev would distribute it. The Satsanga would conclude with a prayer, keeping in with Gurudev's axiom, "Start the day with God, end the day with God and fill the day with God." For Gurudev prayer seemed to be the very breath of his life. No work would he start or end without prayer. He was always immersed in God-thought. When people around him indulged in idle talk and gossip, Gurudev would utter to himself, 'Ram, Ram, Ram' as if it were an admonition and immediately silence would prevail.

Guru was always accompanied by his devotees from his kutir to office and back: he would traverse this distance repeating the Lord's name. Just before he entered his kutir after office work, the devotees following him would take leave of him, saying "Sadguru Bhagavan ki Jai" to which he would respond with 'Sishya Bhagavan ki Jai'.

Entering his kutir, Gurudev was used to take a few minutes rest before having his breakfast, consisting usually of a little *upma* or a couple of *idlis*; a few fruits or a *dosa* and a cup of milk. Resting again for a while, he would get down to his writing.

His lunch was more varied. Very often devotees would offer Pada Puja to Gurudev, which would be followed by a feast. On these occasions Gurudev would call all other Ashramites to partake in the feast. He would keep the feast lively with his irrepressible humour and endearing buoyancy. On days other than the feast Gurudev's lunch would consist of two plain Chapatis, some vegetables, curds and few fruits.

After lunch, Gurudev would rest until four in the evening. Then he would come either to his writing room or to the verandah and see the incoming mail brought by one of the Ashramites

assigned with that work. Going through the letters, he would give necessary instructions to the assistants for reply. When this job was over, any devotee or visitor could seek his Darshan and hold talks with him.

It was also a practice of Gurudev, in the evenings, to sit for meditation facing Mother Ganga until around six. Then, he would get ready for his evening ablutions and supper. At 6-30 he would sit for his simple supper of a plain Roti or Dosa or a little Upma, one or two vegetables and a few fruits. Soon after supper he was ready for Satsanga. Before stepping out of his Kutir he would stop at the Puja room where the Lord Muralikrishna is installed, do *arati* and apply *vibhuti* and *kumkum* on his forehead. (This was his practice both in the morning and evening.) Since there would be time for the start of Satsanga, he would sit for a while on the verandah talking to devotees or giving instructions to the assistants and secretaries. At 7-00 p.m. Gurudev would be at the Satsanga in front of the Diamond Jubilee Hall. He it was who would begin the Satsanga by chanting 'OM' three times and reciting Jaya Ganesha Kirtana. This would be followed by recitation of Sri Suktam, etc., before the daily discourse, either in English or Hindi, started. On special occasions like Guru Purnima, Gurudev used to speak for 10 to 15 minutes and conclude the Satsanga with Mahamantra Kirtan and Maha Mrityunjaya Mantra followed by *arati* and Prasad distribution. After partaking the holy Prasad, he would return to his Kutir by 9-00 or 9-30 p.m. Then, he would have a cup of milk and retire to bed by ten.

This multifaceted sage had a peculiarity that exemplified his giving nature: he was always followed by his assistants carrying some three to four bags, containing clothes of Gurudev, first-aid material, literature for free distribution, Tulasi Maalas and money. Whoever came to him, Ashramite, visitor or devotee, would not return empty handed; Gurudev was never happy to see someone leaving him without receiving a gift. In the early days, 1954-1957, Gurudev himself would be carrying a bag containing cashew-nuts and distribute them to all he came across. While on his way anywhere if he saw any needy person or Sadhu, Gurudev would immediately stretch out his helping hand; often it would be financial help. GIVE, GIVE, GIVE was his motto. No wonder he came to be known as Givananda. In giving he rejoiced; in sharing he found happiness. Even in the act of giving, he could not repress his humour; as if to make light of his munificence, he used to employ some code words with his assistants. If he said "Give Ekamadvaitam", it meant one rupee. "Dvaitam" meant two rupees; "Pancha-Pandava", five rupees. One Ravana meant 10 rupees and ten Ravanans, a hundred rupees.

Despite the busy schedule he maintained from morning till evening. Gurudev never appeared tired, dull, irritated or angry. His calm, composed, serene countenance infused new life and enthusiasm in any one who approached him. Even those who came to him with their difficult problems would return all the better for having met him and sought his aid that was ably given. He was not only always cheerful himself, he would dispel the gloom of others with his infectious smile and irrepressible happiness.

Glory to Gurudev!

Loka Samastha Sukhino Bhavantu!

GURUDEV'S SADHANA

In early 1956-1957 Gurudev Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj used to go to Satsanga exactly at 7 p.m., and start with chanting of OM and Jaya Ganesha Kirtan. And before leaving for Satsanga from the inner resting room of his Kutir he would go to the Puja room, do Arati of Lord Krishna there personally. Then after smearing Vibhuti and Sindhur on the forehead he would come out and sit on the verandah for a few minutes to meet visitors or devotees, or to talk to his personal attendants or Ashram officials on any matter that needed urgent attention. This was his daily routine before going to Satsanga. Sometimes after returning from Satsanga also he used to sit in the same verandah to give instructions to his attendants or to the secretary.

During the year 1960 Sri Swami Krishnanandaji Maharaj started living in Gurudev's Kutir. Since then whenever Gurudev came to the Verandah he would call Swami Krishnanandaji Maharaj to speak to him on any important matter. Sometimes Sri Swami Krishnanandaji Maharaj would come and prostrate before Swamiji and tell him about Ashram affairs. This was almost everyday routine upto 1963. In 1963, exactly one month before Gurudev attaining Mahasamadhi, Gurudev one day came out to the verandah as usual and sat in the chair. At this time Sri Swami Krishnanandaji Maharaj, Dr. Hridayananda Mataji, Sri Swami Santanandaji Maharaj and myself were present there. Gurudev then casually called Sri Swami Krishnanandaji Maharaj and said to him, "Krishnanandaji, I do my Sadhana daily in the morning." Of course Guru Maharaj used to get up early in the morning between 3-30 and 4-00. After morning wash he would go to his inner room and until he called, no one could enter his room. So we did not know what Gurudev's Sadhana was. Now Gurudev himself told us about his daily Sadhana. It was indeed a revelation to us. Gurudev said, "I get up daily between 3-30 and 4-00. a.m. As soon as I get up I offer prayers to the Lord. Then I press the calling bell and two of my attendants come to my room to help me to go to the bathroom. When I see them I think they are two parts of Virat Purusha who has come to help me. First I mentally prostrate before them and then with their help go to the bathroom. After the bath I come back and sit in my room. Then I start my Sadhana like this. First I think of the omnipotent, omniscient Paramatman and meditate on Him for some time. Thereafter I pray mentally to the Trimurtis and all gods in all their names and forms. Then I mentally visit all Holy pilgrim centres and bathe in all the Holy Rivers and Seas, in each and every place. I prostrate before the presiding Deity and worship mentally all the Devas. Afterwards I do Japa of all Deities, one Maala each. Then I recite four Mahavakyas and some Vedic Hymns from the Vedas. Also I recite selected Mantras from the 10 Upanishads. I got by heart some slokas from the Epics of Mahabharata, Ramayana and Srimad Bhagavatam and I repeat them. I remember the saints and sages and mentally prostrate to them. Then I mentally think of the Acharyas—Sankaracharya, Ramanujacharya, Madhvacharya and all other great Acharyas. I prostrate to them mentally. Then I recite some of the Hymns and Stotras taught by them. After this I do Pranava Japa and meditate. After meditation I do a few exercises on the bed itself, followed by Pranayama. The entire routine of my Sadhana takes about 2-2 1/2 hours. After this I ring the bell for my attendants to bring my breakfast. Breakfast over, I go to office work. For the convenience of some devotees who wish to have a private Darshan to talk about their personal matters. I sit on the Verandah. Before they enter the main door I repeat Mahamrityunjaya Mantra three times and pray for their happiness and health, these devotees usually come to me to speak about their problems, spiritual or otherwise. I listen to them patiently and I pray to God mentally to give them courage and strength to overcome their problems and difficulties. Afterwards the visitors sit with me in silence. Then repeating Tryambaka

Mantra I distribute the Holy Prasad to them. This has been my Sadhana over the Years.” All four of us were thrilled to hear from Gurudev’s own words about his Sadhana and all of us felt elevated and prostrated to him in deep devotion. Some times Gurudev would say to the devotees at the end of their meeting. “*Sab accha ho Jayaga. Bhagavan ko yad rakho.*” This is like reminding us not to forget our Sadhana and God is always with us.

May we follow in his footprints of Sadhana and reach the Divine. May Sadgurudev bless us all to progress in our daily spiritual Sadhana. Sadgurubhagavan Ki Jai!

THE DAYS BEFORE GURUDEV’S MAHASAMADHI

Om Namō Bhagavate Sivanandaya! Great saints and Sadhus, Jnanis and Mahapurushas sometimes tell their devotees about their forthcoming departure from physical plane well ahead of time. But some of them, with a soft heart and in order not to cause any pain to any one, just hint about it indirectly. Sri Sadgurudev was one of them. He had a very, very soft heart. So even though he knew about his departure he did not inform his devotees or disciples directly, but he did give some indirect indications.

Just before Mahasivaratri in the year 1963 while Gurudev was in night Satsanga one of the inmates at the end of the Satsanga came to Gurudev and asked for Sannyasa Diksha. Gurudev told him no Sannyasa Diksha would be given that year. So the Ashramite went back to his Kutir. After few minutes Gurudev told us who were nearby. “Who knows about next year. Call him. I will give him Sannyasa Diksha.” The Ashramite was informed about it and that year three fortunate souls including him obtained Sannyas Diksha.

Gurudev was very particular about Ekadasi. He used to ask us when was Ekadasi and we would give him the day and date. One day in the month of April Gurudev asked for the calendar. We informed the date of Ekadasi but Gurudev insisted on looking up the calendar. We gave him the calendar. He turned two to three pages upto the month of July and saw the whole page and returned it to us. But we could not understand what he had seen and decided. One day in the month of March just before going for office seva Gurudev asked us to get Sandal Padukas and advised Swami Santanandaji to write to the Mysore devotees and obtain them. We wrote to Mrs. Gopalraj Urs and she sent them within a month with silver sheet covering. Gurudev saw them and he was happy. One day when the Pada Puja was about to start Gurudev said that he wanted the Padukas to be kept under his feet. So we did the Pada Puja on that day with Gurudev’s Holy Feet on the Padukas. Then Gurudev said that henceforth whenever Pada Puja was to be performed we must keep the Padukas also. However, when we did next Pada Puja we had completely forgotten about the Padukas. But Gurudev reminded us to bring them and place them in the Puja. So nearly three or four months in advance of his Samadhi Gurudev had Pada Puja with those Padukas on. Thus Gurudev hinted us about his intending Mahasamadhi but we could not grasp it.

Normally during summer days the Satsanga was held in front of the Diamond Jubilee Hall. On the 19th of June, Gurudev went to Satsanga as usual. After one hour, while the Satsanga was going on there was suddenly, a heavy downpour. All the devotees and disciples sitting there rushed into the Diamond Jubilee Hall. After a little while the rain lessened. We left the Diamond Jubilee Hall and came upto the gate near the Hospital and again there was heavy rain. We could not go back

to the Diamond Jubilee Hall. So we came to Gurudev Kutir all drenched in rain. There we changed into fresh robes. Similarly the same thing happened next day also. On the third day Gurudev had a little pain in the joints. Doctor Mataji (Hridayananda Mataji) gave some medicines for the pain. The pain did not subside and, on the contrary, day-by-day it increased. Then the doctors advised Gurudev not to strain by moving and take complete rest. So Gurudev did not go up for Satsanga but held it in his Kutir. On 23rd June morning Gurudev came out into the verandah and gave Darshan to my Purvashram parents who happened to come then. It was on that day Sri Swami Chidanandaji Maharaj who had gone for an year's Ekantavasa had returned. Then Gurudev and Sri Swami Chidanandaji Maharaj had a long talk for more than an hour. Gurudev was enquiring about his health and Ekantavasa Sadhana, etc. Then Chidanandaji Maharaj told Gurudev that he was intending to go to Kedarnath and wished to leave in a couple of days. Gurudev advised him not to travel too much and have some rest. Saying so, Gurudev gave some money for his Kedar Yatra. Then Swami Chidanandaji Maharaj left Gurudev Kutir. Next day as Swamiji was preparing for Kedar there was heavy rain and he could not go. He thought of leaving on the next day, i.e., 25th June. But seeing Gurudev's health condition, Dr. Kutty Mataji advised him not to go at that time and suggested that he should go after some days when Gurudev regained normal health. So Swami Chidanandaji Maharaj cancelled his pilgrimage to Kedarnath. During Gurudev's absence due to indisposition, Swami Chidanandaji Maharaj started conducting night Satsanga and other spiritual activities of the Ashram.

Soon after Swami Chidanandaji Maharaj left Gurudev's Kutir, Swami Dayanandaji Maharaj came with some new book from the Press. Gurudev was very happy to see that book and started leafing through the pages. While Gurudev was turning the pages of the book, we noticed that Gurudev's left hand was shaking a bit. At the same time a devotee from Lucknow came with his family and only son to have his Annaprasana done through Gurudev's hands. Gurudev immediately called for milk, etc., and did the Annaprasana. Afterwards Gurudev went inside his Kutir. That night he didn't come out for Satsanga but remained in his Kutir only.

Normally Gurudev used to get up at night between twelve and two and ring the bell for his attendants. That night also he rang the bell. We went in to take him to the bathroom. While Gurudev was on the way to the bathroom we noticed that his left leg failed in its normal functioning and Gurudev had to drag it. He had great difficulty to walk and we brought him to the bed. In the morning Doctor Mataji came and saw Gurudev and called for Dr. Kutty Mataji who also happened to be here in the Ashram at that time. She also examined Gurudev and prescribed some treatment. Gurudev's condition became a little serious on the 24th night. So they decided to call a specialist from Delhi. They sent one of the Ashramites to Mrs. Vanibai Ram. She approached Dr. S. Radhakrishnanji, the then President of India, and requested him to send a physician. Dr. Radhakrishnanji sent his personal physician immediately to see Gurudev. He came and examined Gurudev and prescribed a treatment and went away. On 25th night Swamiji became unconscious and went into a coma. After four days Gurudev slowly and gradually came to consciousness. But the doctors told us not to disturb him in any way but keep constant vigil. Gurudev needed complete rest. So we, (Doctor Mataji, Swami Shantanandaji, Swami Kalyanandaji, Bhimsenji and myself) used to watch without disturbing Swamiji. Like this some days passed. Gurudev improved little by little every day. On the 6th of July, which happened to be the Day of Gurupurnima in that year, we had Paduka Puja but all the devotees felt very sorry and some of them even cried because they could not get Gurudev's Darshan on that day. Although Gurudev was in an unconscious state for about

four days and he was still very much in a serious condition, he recited the Brahmasutras at 4 a.m., on that Day.

अथाऽतो ब्रह्मजिज्ञासा
शास्त्रयोनित्वात्
तत्तु समन्वयात् —ब्रह्मसूत्राः
सतुदीर्घकाल नैरन्तर्यं सत्कारासेवितो द्वदभूमिः ।

प.यो.

athā.ato brahmajijñāsā
śāstrayonitvāt
tattu samanvayāt —brahmasūtrāḥ
satudīrghakāla nairantarya satkārasevito dva.Dhabhūmiḥ |
pa.yo.

On 7th morning, after breakfast Gurudev wanted to come to the verandah and sit there. So we brought him and gently made him sit in the big sofa. Facing the Ganga Gurudev sat in the verandah. He was very fond of seeing the Ganga and always used to Say: “Ah! Ganga is my mother.” It was nearly after two weeks Gurudev had Ganga Darshan and so he felt extremely happy to see the Mother Ganga. While he was sitting in the verandah some devotees came for Darshan. He saw them, talked with them and gave prasad to all of them. The devotees felt very happy. From that day onwards Gurudev used to come everyday in the morning to the verandah and sit facing Mother Ganga for about half an hour. If devotees intimately known to him came, he used to talk with them, playfully crack jokes as usual. Sometimes he used to inquire of inmates how the whole Ashram was going on, whether they were getting everything they needed or whether they had any difficulty, etc. He was more than a mother to all Ashramites. On the 13th of July Gurudev as usual came out to the verandah but could not sit for a long time as before. After about 15-20 minutes, he said he wanted to go inside. After lunch he had little rest. At night he had some motions and until past midnight could not sleep properly. Gurudev had a habit of writing “OM” on his thigh during all leisure times and on the 13th night between 2-3 a.m., we observed Gurudev went on writing “OM” on his thigh and had a little sleep after 3-00 a.m. On 14th July, 1963, he got up at about 6 a.m. and had a wash, we had prepared his breakfast as usual and he also was ready to take it. But suddenly the senses started failing and Gurudev could not take his breakfast with his hand. So we tried to feed him by putting a little quantity in his mouth but even that Gurudev could not swallow. We called Dr. Kutty Mataji and upon her advice we gave Gurudev some fruit juice which he took a little with great difficulty. After seeing Gurudev, Dr. Kutty Mataji rang-up one of the doctors known to her working in the Military Hospital in Dehra Dun. The doctor came at about 11 a.m., and started examining Gurudev. He did not speak with any one throughout that morning but when the doctor started examining and enquiring, Gurudev himself began replying. He playfully cracked jokes also with the doctor. The doctor was surprised and he also started laughing.

The doctor asked us from how long Gurudev was unwell. Gurudev himself replied saying that for the last 21 days he was unwell. Then Gurudev told us to give the doctor breakfast and coffee. After the doctor left, we arranged lunch and made Gurudev sit for his lunch. As we were serving the dishes, all of a sudden Gurudev had a shivering; he also started running a high temperature. So we made Gurudev lie down on his bed properly covered. Immediately we sent word to Dr. Kutty Mataji. She came and gave some injections. Slowly shivering and fever subsided and Gurudev started to sleep. After two hours he was feeling difficulty in breathing. Then we made him to sit with a back rest. While relaxing Gurudev signalled for water. When we asked whether Gurudev wanted hot water. Gurudev said "Ganga Jal" and that was his last word. We gave him one tumbler of Ganga Jal and Gurudev drank it fully and slowly closing his eyes he went to sleep. After 6 p.m., again breathing trouble started. Again some doctors from Dehra Dun Military Hospital came and advised to give oxygen. At about 9 p.m., Dr. Kutty Mataji asked us to inform Sri Swami Chidanandaji Maharaj and all senior Swamis of the Ashram about Gurudev's health condition. At 10 p.m., H.H. Sri Swami Chidanandaji Maharaj, H.H. Sri Swami Krishnanandaji Maharaj, H.H. Sri Swami Madhavanandaji Maharaj and other senior Swamis and inmates of the Ashram came to Gurudev's Kutir and had Darshan of Gurudev. At 11 p.m., the condition became serious and all of them stood surrounding Gurudev's bed. At 11-15 p.m., Gurudev took three deep breaths while Swami Chidanandaji Maharaj repeated "OMKAR" aloud in Gurudev's ears. Then Gurudev became calm, with his serene face glowing as ever. Though Gurudev left this physical plane he continues to live in spirit in the hearts of all his numerous devotees, and disciples. He stands as the torch bearer of "WISDOM LIGHT" to seekers of Truth.

॥ महा मृत्युञ्जयमन्त्रः ॥
॥ mahā mr̥tyuñjayamantraḥ ॥

ॐ त्र्यम्बकं यजामहे सुगन्धिं पुष्टिवर्धनम् ।
उर्वारुकमिव बन्धनान्मृत्योर्मुक्षीय मामृतात् ॥

OM tryambakam yajāmahe sugandhiṃ puṣṭivardhanam |
urvārukamiva bandhanānmṛtyormukṣīya mā.amṛtāt ॥

“We worship the three eyed One (Lord Siva) who is fragrant and who nourishes all beings: may He liberate me from death, for the sake of Immortality, even as the cucumber is severed from its bondage (of the creeper).”

1. This Maha-Mrityunjaya Mantra is a life-giving Mantra. In these days, when life is very complex, accidents are an everyday affair; this Mantra wards off deaths by snake-bites, lightning, motor-accidents, fire-accidents, cycle-accidents, water-accidents, air-accidents and accidents of all descriptions. Besides, it has a great curative effect. Again, diseases pronounced incurable by doctors are cured by this Mantra, when chanted with sincerity, faith and devotion. It is a weapon against all diseases. It is a Mantra to conquer death.

2. It is also a Moksha-Mantra. It is Lord Siva’s Mantra. It bestows health (Arogya), long life (Deerga-Ayus), peace (Santi), wealth (Aisvarya), prosperity (Pushti), satisfaction (Tushti) and Immortality (Moksha).

3. On your birthday, repeat this Mantra one lakh times, or at least 50,000 times, perform Havan and feed Sadhus, the poor and the sick. This will bestow on you health, long life, peace, prosperity and Moksha.

Swami Devanandaji is a dynamic spiritual personality who tirelessly works for spreading the Divine Life Message of Gurudev Sivanandaji Maharaj all over Bharatavarsha. He is truly Gurudev’s “CHINNA SWAMI” as he is a junior replica of Swami Sivanandaji in his jolly sociable nature, thrilling Sankirtana and enthusiastic spiritual lectures.

Sivanandashram
16-6-1997

Swami Chidananda