

Ananda Sangha News

Ananda Sacramento

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Excerpt of a talk Maria gave after Swami Kriyananda's visit

We live in very interesting times, as Sri Yukteswar said, "...a transition of the ages." A few hundred years into Dwapara yuga we have a lot still of the residual of Kali yuga. The residual of a cycle of time in which form and matter were predominant in the definition of our reality. In moving out of that there is a shake up that has and is still occurring. Within that we see - and its difficult to behold - the breakup of what we have known as the nuclear family. We see it very paramount in this country and even in those countries that have held fast to that family unit, like in Latin America, Italy, even now India we see it starting to crumble a little bit. And there's a part of it that's sad and we blame it for all of our troubles and woes in modern times. But there is another aspect of it that is indicative of the energy of Dwapara yuga and where we're trying to go on a consciousness level.



Children - beings that are coming into this time, into this age, perhaps without a father, perhaps without a mother, perhaps without either, have the opportunity to recognize themselves as children of the world. It's an opportunity to break out of one of many forms that we can't help but identify with in this material world. A form that might be comforting, might be loving, might be supportive, but can also be restrictive, can also hold us back. I don't know what the future holds, it's not that the nuclear family is splitting apart forever and ever. But its indicative of the change in our conscious that needs to take place. Even if we are in a family that is solid and whole, we must expand. Divine Mother is asking us to expand...to have a bigger heart, to have a greater love, to include more than just that family to which we were born, more than those people who are immediate friends, to think expansively, to think on a cosmic level and to try to be more and more in that consciousness.

Yogananda would describe people, for the most, as being little bundles of self-definition. Its...well, it says it all. Everyone is trying to define their community,

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The Ananda Sangha is a family of souls seeking Self-Realization through the scientific methods of raja yoga as taught by Paramhansa Yogananda. As divine friends, we seek to know, love and serve God in one another and in all life; we share a respect for the underlying spiritual essence of all religions. The Ananda Sangha is the heart, mind and hands for the work of Paramhansa Yogananda through Ananda with the inspiration, example and guidance of its founder, Swami Kriyananda.

Would you like to join Ananda Sacramento's first Pilgrimage to India?



The Ghosh family in Yogananda's
boyhood home in Calcutta

Imagine traveling in India with your Sacramento Gurubais! Next year, in addition to the scheduled Mahasamadhi event in Gurgaon, Ananda will also host the first ever India Kriyaban Retreat. This is a rare opportunity to make a pilgrimage to India that takes in these two very special events--the Mahasamadhi and the Kriyaban Retreat--while also adding in two other pilgrimage highlights: staying along the Ganges in Rishikesh and visiting Master's home in Calcutta. To top it off, the trip will be led by Maria and Matt!

This promises to be a deeply inspiring and unique opportunity for us. To make it happen, we need to know right away if you are interested in going. Space for hotels in Gurgaon and for the event is very limited and we will need to start booking rooms, flights, etc. over the next 30 days. For now, here are the basic

estimates to help you decide if you can join us:

The pilgrimage will be for an estimated 16 days, departing Feb. 24 and returning March 11.

The estimated cost per person, which includes all flights, Ananda program costs, estimated food, lodging and other travel costs is \$3,250. We can reduce this cost based on your willingness to "rough it" a bit more in the accommodations, but you should plan on around \$3,000 for the trip.

If you want to go, or are seriously thinking about going but would like more information before you decide, please contact Alice at the Center by July 15.



- 16 Days, Feb 24 - March 11
- Approximate cost \$3,000
- We must know immediately if there is enough interest to start planning

Two Tales of Living Discipleship

Pushpendra Sharma and Don Lord were part of a group who took the Living Discipleship Course at the Ananda Village Meditation Retreat recently. The following are their individual impressions of the experience.



At some point on the road the new disciple feels committed to take the plunge full time into life at Ananda.....at this juncture the Living Discipleship program steps in as an incredible guide not only giving a full hands-on info-tainment on the Ananda way of life from its inceptions

through its ups and downs but also reviews and replenishes the hitherto understood and incorporated tools of spiritual advancement in the form of daily sadhana, classes, karma yoga and satsang with old time Gurubais. My own experience in the program was as much and in some ways uplifting beyond my own and the perhaps the conspicuous domain of common perception and understanding.

Set at the Ananda Meditation retreat way up in the hills, being in the midst of incessant confounding snowfall provided me the necessary isolation to focus all energies on the task at hand, resulting in an experiential education about the subtleness and efficacy of the various tools of sadhana. While daily sadhana repeatedly demonstrated the radical reversal in my consciousness.... often from depths of despair to peace, calmness and sometimes joy, the afternoon sadhana review classes awakened me to the concept of fine-tuning the techniques constantly towards making them my own during progressive unveiling of depths of awakening.

Being with a most harmonious group during this experience gave me tangible proof of the dynamism of group energy, as well as provided ample opportunities to share and learn from a vast array of different experiences, often in the midst of lighter moments of fun and laughter. Above all I felt the Divine blessing me not only tangibly through the Love and Caring of the Meditation Retreat and Living Discipleship staff but also during some personal moments and experiences when one hears the Voice unmistakably.



How was your month long Living Discipleship Program at the Meditation Retreat?

Absolutely life transforming. I can honestly say that it was the most joyful month of my life.

Pranaba, the coordinator, had lined up over a dozen of the best teachers in Ananda for classes (like Jyotish and Devi, Durga & Vidura, etc.), and a very full schedule of sadhana and service. With all that (and help from my friends at home) I was able to relax my focus on business and household matters. Immersion in spirit became more fluid. With an expanded heart, the difficult became easy. Resistance magically dissolved.

I can't speak highly enough of this time. There were seven of us (now lifetime friends), and we all had the chance to ask each presenter any questions. When I heard that the first week was review of the methods, my concept was that boredom might visit. Boy, was I wrong! Edge of chairdom ensued. I learned nuances and reasons for doing things that were fascinating and caused me to commit deeply to things I previously avoided. Now I even sing out during the chants! And the week in silence was heavenly.

What did you find being the highlight of your month?

Lalita talked about Swami's recommendation of three hours daily sadhana. She said that she experimented with one and a half hours and three hours, and found that it was only through the latter that she could remain in a more superconscious state during her day.

I took this to heart and spent most of the month plotting life changes to accommodate the necessary time. It could not be done before, but I am finding that the

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Swami Kriyananda visits Sacramento



There was much joy reflected on the faces of the visitors and guests who gathered to share sat-sang with Swami Kriyananda at the new Sacramento Mandir.

About 260 people came to see Swamiji. Since the mandir only seats 225, there were people on the floor in the aisles and standing in both the kitchen and the foyer.

Swami was energized, he was glowing, he was enchanting, he was inspiring. He spoke like a man half his age. He made us

want to read the Essence of the Gita, he made us want to know the people of India and understand the devotion that comes so naturally to them. He made us feel the presence of India and helped us understand that their hearts are open and waiting to be filled with this love and energy that we have to share. He was full of life and full of Master and he reminded us through his example of the energy it takes to know God and of the blessing of serving Him selflessly.



Bruce performs

See more pictures of Swami's visit on page 9



Sylvia, Yoko, Jayanti & Terri performing *Cherry Blossoms in Kyoto* for Swamiji.



The Essence of the Bhagavad Gita

The Perfect Satsang is Coming!

By Russ Reece



Sometimes I forget how blessed we are to have this Path, and then an event comes along that reminds me of this great gift called Ananda and the great souls serving this work. One such event is the annual, week-long class that Jyotish and Devi give at the Expanding Light each summer. Kathy and I have gone to this

class the last two years and have relished the time spent with Jyotish and Devi as they share their magnetism and spiritual wisdom on Patanjali's Yoga Sutras (2004) and the Bhagavad Gita (2005). Jyotish and Devi only give one class a year, so this class, in and of itself, is a unique opportunity to spend an entire week with the Directors of Ananda.

But this year's class, July 30 - Aug 5 at the Expanding Light, is an especially unique opportunity. Jyotish and Devi will give the Gita class based on Swamiji's new Gita book. Kathy and I registered for the class months ago, and I encourage you to do the same. This year's class promises to bring together the best of all things spiritual. You've heard of the "perfect storm," when a number of factors coincide to bring about a unique and powerful experience? Well, I think of this year's class as the "perfect Satsang!" We will have Jyotish and Devi inspiring us with Swamiji's book, which is from Master's teachings based on Krishna's divine teaching to Arjuna. To top it off, most of the weeks classes will be given at the Crystal Hermitage where, most of you already know, the vibration is heavenly.

We truly cannot say enough about this wonderful

experience with Jyotish, Devi and our Gurubais. The time spent together has been nothing short of amazing and deeply inspiring. Each year, we took away things that are still very much with us and continue to inspire us and deepen our spiritual practices as well as our connection with our Gurubais, Ananda, Master and God. Don't miss this "perfect satsang!"

If you can't get to the Village for the "perfect satsang," don't miss the class here at the Sacramento Mandir on Thursdays in October and November with Ananta & Maria.

"In the spiritual life, one becomes just like a little child – without resentment, without attachment, full of life and joy."

~ Paramhansa Yogananda

Living Discipleship

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2-3 hours I spend daily nowadays cause so much improved efficiency in my work and harmony in my relationships and attitude that I have gained, not lost. I can be closer to the vibration of the Living Discipleship month than my previous practices allowed. I truthfully believe that this one-month program cut 10-15 years off my spiritual development of this lifetime. I pray for seekers of self-realization to take this step for themselves as soon as they can.



Impressions of an old-timer

By Patty McCarley

Several of the new residents of our community have recently approached me with the same general question. How can we energize and magnetize various aspects of community life? Because I was the first resident of the Sacramento Community, I've looked back over the growth of our community with the goal of answering this question, and I've come to the conclusion that the answer is group sadhana.

The very first thing we did as new residents in what was then a somewhat hostile environment, was establish morning sadhana together. Getting our Community Temple established was an early priority, but even before that, we meditated together in various apartments. When the Community Temple finally opened, we had a regular group of 10 to 15 who came to 5 am sadhana and at 6 am it became difficult to find a space to sit or place a chair.

It was during that time that the Community was strongest. Meals at the Lotus Café were well attended, there were lots of Community activities such as pool parties, cookouts, talent shows, volleyball games, etc. It may seem quite a stretch to equate sadhana with volleyball, but when people meditate together, a bond forms that transcends friendship and draws people together.

Personalities become far less important. Maria said it best at a class once years ago, "If you make sadhana the hanger from which you suspend the garment of your life, it will hang perfectly."

I've heard it argued that we need to be free to follow our own rhythms of meditation and not be confined to a time that we can't easily accommodate. And it is true that following your own rhythms might strengthen your own sadhana and your personal relationship with God and Guru. But if it's all about you and your rhythms and your relationship to God, then why live in Community?

Our Community is facing an interesting time. We now have a big mortgage for our new Mandir and suddenly

we have empty apartments for the first time in our history. We need to come together as a group to magnetize disciples or harmonious souls to live with us. And if we want to energize the various aspects of living in community that make it more fun to live here, then morning sadhana is the place to start.

I'm suggesting that all of us take the next step toward making our morning sadhana more dynamic. If you come once a week, step up to twice. If you don't come at all, come once a week, maybe on Thursdays, Guru Day. I promise you that if we, as a group, make this commitment together, it will improve everything about our Community. I can make that promise because I have seen it happen before.



Etched Windows A Gift from Warren

Many of you remember our longtime friend and gurubai Dan Warren. He is now a glass artist living in San Francisco and he uses just the name Warren.

He generously donated 3 pieces of beautifully etched glass to be mounted outside our Mandir; one over the door and two in the back where there are currently round windows with colored glass.

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their group, their nationality, their individuality, their definition. Everyone is trying to put it in a box. And most people are content to live in that self-defined ego. It's safe. It's clear. You know what's at hand. It's predictable. You are who you are. Very few people come out of that consciousness of self-definition, out of that consciousness of limitation. But that's what going to God is really about. Breaking those boundaries, expanding into that consciousness of the Aum, of that all-prevading Mother of the Universe.

Swamiji was talking, not long ago, to those of you who were here about the work in India and his dreams. One of the ideas he was talking about was that of an orphanage. Now orphanages have existed for all time. It's interesting that Ananda is 30 years into its existence and reality and that now we're talking about them, but like everything else at Ananda, we're to express on behalf of Master a new energy...an expanding energy. And so as he talked about these orphanages, he said these children will come here

and this will be their family. And what we will be providing for them is not just a roof, not just 3 meals a day, not just an education. What we'll be offering them is a consciousness; an awareness that they can be proud of their heritage. A consciousness that moves beyond a sense that I am without family, I am an orphan to a consciousness that is proud of being a child of God... a child of the infinite... a child of a world family... a child of a universal family.

What a gift that is. It's an opportunity to break free of this little circle we seem to run around within. We see the 4 walls and we never get out. Incarnation after incarnation we do that, we just run around the little track that we know, that is familiar and is by and large what everyone else is doing. Here we have a chance to expand and become that child of the infinite, that child



of the world. That's what Divine Mother represented to Yogananda. He would pray to her, naughty or good, whatever I do, I am a child of the infinite. I am a child of the divine mother. Release me from this nightmare of delusion, this delusion of limitation, this delusion of ego that says this is my reality. This is who I am and I can't be something more, I can't be greater.

One of the disciples came to Yogananda once and said, "In you I see my Divine Mother." And Yogananda said, "Well then, behave accordingly." What he was saying is that to truly honor what we see as Divine Mother we

have to become that ourselves. We have to be a vehicle for that ourselves or we cannot honor it. How else do we honor it? With our ego? With something outward? With some praise that is so insignificant compared to what that cosmic manifestation is? If it's Divine Mother, and we want to honor that and we want to love that, then we need to become that. We need to express that. To do what God has given us, but to do it in God and to do it for God. That way, whatever we are doing doesn't matter if you know, without a doubt, why you are doing it. Why

are you doing it? Do it for Divine Mother and you will bless those around you and you will bless all human kind.

Mamma



Ananda Seattle Invites the
Worldwide Sangha for Two
Weeks of Joyful Service

Dates: July 22 - August 5

Come for any length of time to help with some of the many tasks remaining to be done to complete the new Mandir. Share in satsang while we prepare and paint the entire lower Sangha level, build, install, plant, rake, clean and do whatever else is needed to ready and beautify the building and site. There will be tasks for everyone and for all skill levels.

So far we've heard from 16 of you from out of town, who plan to attend. We can house many more though, and would love to host any and all who'd like to come. We cast the invitation far and wide, fully understanding that this is a big commitment of time and energy in an already busy summer at all of Ananda's colonies. We know you're all with us in spirit.

Please contact Seattle directly if you would like to participate, 425-673-1888. They will provide lodging and meals, however, you must get there on your own.



FRONT ENTRY ELEVATION



We need your
help at the
Mandir

It takes many hours of volunteer service to make our Mandir run smoothly. Are you able to help in any way? These are the areas of special need right now, but if you would like to serve in another capacity, please let us know.

Boutique Sales after Sunday Service
Decorating the Altar
Purification Set-up
Bathroom Clean-up

Silently be of service to
him whenever he is in
need, for love is real
only when it is useful
and expresses itself
through action.

~Paramhansa Yogananda



Swami introduces *Essence of the Bhagavad Gita*



Saying Good-bye in the Community the next day



Sue directs the expanded Choir

