

# SANATAN JYOTI



*Samadhi Bedi of Gurumaharaj in Bajitpur, Bangladesh*

**Bharat Sevashram Sangha of North America**

**522 Garfield Avenue, Aurora, IL, 60506**

**Tel: 630-301-6039    [www.bsschicago.org](http://www.bsschicago.org)**

**2020**



### **Ten Messages**

**What is the goal of life?**

*Self-realization, Universal emancipation*

**What is religion?  
strength?**

*Self-sacrifice (self-abnegation), self-discipline, adherence to truth and continence*

**What is real death?**

*Forgetfulness of the Self*

**What is the right life?**

*Self-realization, self-remembrance and self-consciousness*

**What are real virtues?**

*Heroism, virility, manliness and aspiration for emancipation*

**What are real sins?**

*Weakness, fear (defeatism), cowardice, meanness, and selfishness*

**What are the real sources of**

*Patience, fortitude and endurance*

**What are real assets?**

*Self-confidence, self-reliance and self-respect*

**What are real enemies?**

*Indolence, slumber, procrastination, inertia, lustful senses and passions*

**What are real friends?**

*Energy, enthusiasm and perseverance*

# *Eternal Light*

Annual Magazine  
of  
**BHARAT SEVASHRAM SANGHA**  
of NORTH AMERICA



**CHICAGO**

25th Annual Foundation Day  
November 29, 2020

# *Sanatan Jyoti*



Yugacharya Srimat Swami Pranavananda Ji Maharaj, (29 January 1896 – 8 February 1941) was a Hindu yogi and saint who founded an organization known as the Bharat Sevashram Sangha.

Acharya Pranavananda Maharaj was born in 1896 on the auspicious full-moon day in the month of Maghi (February 28) in Bajitpur, in what is now Bangladesh.

Nicknamed Vinode, "source of joy," by his parents, the child grew into a strapping youth, fully six-foot, six-inches tall and renowned for his physical strength. His preferred exercise was swinging, weighing one maund for hundreds of repetitions at a time (a total of 5,000 a day), before settling back into meditation. He rejected his family's fish-eating diet and, despite their pleadings, became a vegetarian living mostly on milk and potatoes.

Early on, his ability to organize his fellow youth to help the poor attracted the attention of British authorities, who had to be convinced by the school that he was just a gentle 11-year-old doing nothing wrong. At 17 years of age, he

sought out Baba Gambhiranathji a great yogi of the Natha Sampradaya, and underwent five years of intense sadhana and tapas. Finally, in 1916, he had a tremendous vision of his life's mission and vowed to someday establish the Bharat Sevashram Sangha.

In January 1924, at age 28, he was initiated into sannyas, Hindu monasticism, by Swami Govindananandagiri and received the name Acharya Swami Pranavananadaji Maharaj. A month later, a group of his young followers also took sannyas. As part of the Dasanami orders of Adi Shankara, they formed the core group of the BSS. The monks are Saivites, though Acharya did not favor making such distinctions among Hindus.

Over time, Acharya set up a 12- to 14-year monastic training program. Aspirants to monastic life spend their first two years as a volunteer worker under the close guidance of a senior monk. Those who qualify are given the sacred thread ceremony, and undergo further training to prepare them for initiation as a sannyasin. The monks, strict about celibacy, strive to always do their work in groups.

As guru, he warned his monks to not hold personal agendas: "If each acts according to his own plans and ideas, then disunity, dissensions, divisions and disputes will step in. If, heedless of others' ideas and feelings, the monks go on with their individual ideas and desires, then the enormous strength of the Sangha will fall to pieces. The monks must relentlessly sink their own whims and

hobbies in the great will of the guru and must behave according to His commandments, teachings and injunctions. Then and only then will the will and power of the guru work smoothly through all."

In 1924 Acharya set up "mobile preaching units" . These are groups of ten or more sadhus that carry Acharya's teaching to the masses. They travel with a team of musicians who perform bhajan and kirtans. They are on the road for a year at a time, traveling by train to save money. They gather each year in Banaras for Durga Puja and to consult and coordinate the coming year.

In the morning from 6 to 9am, all the sadhus go door to door preaching and collecting funds for the BSS work. In the evenings, they conduct bhajan, kirtan and satsang. The collections are a main source of income for the organization. When calamity strikes, the preaching groups head up relief missions with other volunteers.

In 1927, Acharya officially formed the Bharat Sevashram Sangha, with the monks as the trustees, led by him. This compact chain of command allows the massive organization to shift focus easily in response to urgent situations. Bharat, of course, means India; seva means physical and spiritual service; ashram implies a system based on the ideals and practice of renunciation, self-control, truth, continence and honest labor; and sangha means a fellowship or brotherhood.

The BSS mission statement stresses service and education: perpetuation of the monastic community; moral and spiritual regeneration; service to humanity, irrespective of caste, creed or national origin; spread of moral, spiritual and physical education; reconstruction of Hindu society; teaching of yoga and related health science subjects; education through moral and spiritual publications; tribal welfare and uplifting of the weaker sections of society.

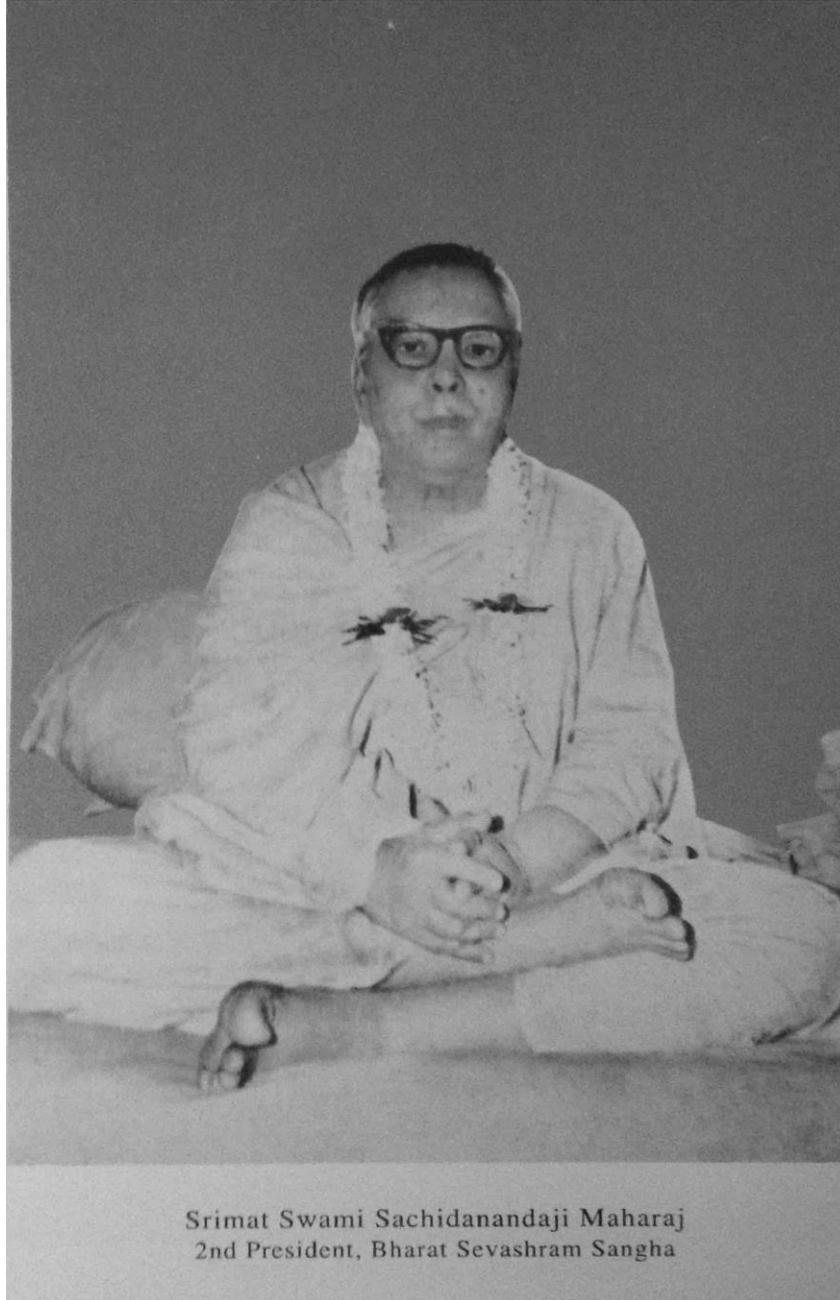
In the year of 1916, During Maghi Purnima, Yugacharya Srimat Swami Pranavananda Ji Maharaj, achieved salvation. The universal divine Mother got manifested in his divine body. After coming out of his MahaSamadhi , he uttered these words

**This era is the era of great awareness.**

**This era is the era of great synthesis.**

**This era is the era of great union with the eternal Self.**

**This era is the era of great salvation.**



Pranavananda ji Maharaj was born in 1896, he was the founder of Bharat Sevashram Sangha in India. Although he left this world at the mere age of forty-four in 1941, he was able to inspire countless individuals and guide them through his devotion, discipline, thoughts, and values. His hard work resulted in creating a community of monks who have ever since dedicated their lives to devotion and service of fellow humans. His work was continued by his chief disciple and first one who surrendered to the Sangha was , Srimat Swami Sachiadananda ji Maharaj, who led the sangha from 1941 to 1989.

Srimat Swami Sachiadananda ji Maharaj's devotees' journal about some of the events in the everyday life.

Kolkata

31-3-69

At night, as he sat accepting service, he said, “If there is a deficit in the cooking process, if there is too much salt or too much spices, the food becomes inedible. The same applies to seva. Even the slightest error will not lead to proper seva. It will be difficult to accept such seva. What is more important than seva? Seva leads to absolute welfare. Seva leads to self-release. You must be very careful. If you work without motivation, it will not work. You must question yourself – what do you want? Why are you doing this? You must understand, and you can only if you have the motivation of seva.

Kolkata

27-3-69

During Srimat Swami Sachidananda ji Maharaj’s breakfast of oats, Swamiji said, “Count the raisins, do not give more than 3 to 4. Although the taste buds long for them, the stomach cannot digest more. It urges me to stop eating and get going. Didn’t you notice, yesterday I ate so little at the Khetri residence. They offered so much, I looked at all the items but I only touched them. Self-control is the sadhu’s food. I can control myself, so I am alive. This gave me an opportunity to visit the samshan. I saw that Ved Maharaj and Vigyan Maharaj abide there. It would be good if I could join them.”

At 1:30 in the afternoon, swamiji returned from the festival held at the residence of Bhadua Saheb located opposite to the office of Anandabazar. Along with the rest of the people, the attendant also received five rupees and a bordered dhoti. On his return, when the attendant offered his rewards to Swamiji, he said, “Take the dhoti, you can use it”. The attendant noticed that it was heavily bordered and meekly said, “Yes, Baba. This is what we mean by dedication. Without it, everything is meaningless. This is a rough road. There is no place for desires. The minute you desire, you are lost. You become desire full of self-improvement, to feel the world selfishly with your five senses. Ved Maharaj fell on Swamiji’s feet and cried, “Take away my pride that I am a graduate. What can I achieve if I can't drown my pride?” One can absolve pride with Guru Kripa, as Swamiji Maharaj has instructed - ‘Guru Kripahi Kebalam’. Not only I but others like Ved Mharaj, Vigyan Maharaj, Advaityanando Maharaj,, Muktanando Maharaj, and Jogananda Swamiji have followed the same path.

## **BHARAT SEVASHRAM SANGHA OF NORTH AMERICA**

(A registered Non-Profit, Socio-culture, Educational & Philanthropic Organization)

Founder: Acharya Swami PranvanandaJi Maharaj F.I.D Tax-exempt:36-3867090

522 Garfield Ave, Aurora, IL 60506, Ph: 630-301-6039

Head Office; 211 Rashbehari Avenue, Kolkata-19, India, Ph: 91-33- 440-5178

Dear Devotees,

November 19, 2020

I appreciate the services rendered to the community by Bharat Sevashram Sangha, Chicago branch organized by all volunteers. It is a proud privilege to greet the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Bharat Sevashram Sangha, Chicago. I am happy that you all are taking care of all the activities of Chicago Ashram in the absence of monk in charge. Because of the pandemic, this year I could not attend the program. Guru Maharaj's blessing is always with you all. The community is happy to have all the selfless services you are providing to society. I was able to see the Facebook live streaming of the Durga puja you all have performed here by sitting in India. I have received many phone calls praising your service.

As India's leading monastic institution, Bharat Sevashram Sangha is dedicated to the service of humanity and is a source of comfort and strength for millions around the world. It is worth mentioning that this monastic order has contributed immensely to the spiritual regeneration of the masses, arranged numerous cultural missions, provided humanitarian services and offered educational programs to the rich heritage and spiritual values of India. I am proud of you for the services you are rendering to the community at Bharat Sevashram Sangha, Chicago branch. May Jagat Guru give undivided love and unity to the followers and well-wishers of our sangha, so they can continue rendering commendable philanthropic service for which they are known in different parts of the world. I convey my best wishes and would like to take this opportunity to congratulate all members, devotees, and well-wishers.



With Divine Love,

Swami Purnatmananda

**Bharat Sevashram Sangha,**

**Acting President of Bharat Sevashram Sangha**

Chairman, Director, Principal Co-coordinator & Chief Official Representative of all Overseas Branches



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522 Garfield Avenue. Aurora, IL. 60506 Ph/Fax: 630-301-6039

International Head Office: 211 R.B. Ave., Cal: 7000 19. India. Tel: 244-05178

November 20<sup>th</sup>, 2020

My Dear Sisters and Brothers,

Everyone around the globe is undergoing the brutal impact of the COVID-19. It has been a tough few month since last year due to the deadly Pandemic. Life has not been normal.

As India's leading monastic institution, Bharat Sevashram Sangha of North America (Chicago) has been no exception to experience the severity of this Pandemic. Since March 25 of last year, Bharat Sevashram Sangha has remained less accessible to the public. For instance, Diwali Festival and Navratri are usually celebrated grandly. This time all festivals especially Diwali and Navratri were celebrated remotely, where our devotees watched the pooja ceremony online. To spread the Hindu Religious Principles, the Ashram organizes summer and winter camps for children ages 6 to 16. Even during these harsh pandemic times, Ashram continues to organize these camps for children through google meet.



As the saying goes, "when the going gets tough, the tough get going"... We must not let this Pandemic hold us back. To sustain this commendable organization and its services, we need people to come forward and donate generously at this time. Bharat Sevashram Sangha has been a selfless giver to the community through its numerous services. Bharat Sevashram Sangha has been rendering its noble services to the community since 1917. It has never faltered its services to humanity through spiritual regeneration of the masses. It has been greatly helping and supporting communities around the world suffering from natural calamities, like floods, famine, and other disasters. It also offers educational programs of the rich heritage and spiritual values of India, to the children and families, who in turn benefit from this greatly.

Now it is our turn to give generously to this noble organization. I sincerely urge all my fellow people to please come forward and donate. Let us get through this Pandemic by lending a helping hand to each other. You can make your monetary donations by visiting the website <http://www.bsschicago.org>.

I sincerely Thank you all in advance for your support.

Sincerely,

Santosh Kumar  
President  
Bharat Sevashram Sangha of North America (Chicago)



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**November 24<sup>th</sup>, 2020**

The Bharat Sevashram Sangha (BSSNA), Chicago is a tax-exempt non-profit organization dedicated to the educational and spiritual enlightenment of its members. While writing about this past year, I reflected on BSS's mission and the foundation's guiding principles.

Now, more than ever before, it is important to unite in the name of spirituality and selfless service in such a tumultuous year. The BSS community and swami ji's have all been massive support systems for so many throughout the world, especially this year, and have touched countless thousands of lives. BSS is so proud of the efforts to continue these acts of service and spiritual education, and we are grateful for your continued support and engagement. Whenever we feel downtrodden or discouraged by the state of world affairs, may we continue to remember Swami Pranavanandaji's teachings about seva (or service) and helping the helpless or less fortunate.



This year, in addressing the COVID-19 pandemic, BSS has successfully distributed more than 20,000 masks, as well as sanitizer and many different types of disinfectants to about 40,000 people in remote areas. For 14 days after the shutdowns in March, BSS fed about 32,000 daily in Kolkata and sent dry food to almost 10,000 people. At our Aurora, IL location specifically, during the pandemic, we were so fortunate to have a safe, masked, socially distanced Durga puja and Kali puja.

In the coming year, I pray and hope that with the blessings of all the monks and Swami Purnatmananda ji Maharaj and their support, we will continue this spirituality and ongoing acts of kindness in the face of COVID-19. There have so many hardships in 2020, as many people have lost their jobs and lives due to the pandemic, but the dedicated work of our volunteers has been inspiring.

Thank you and best wishes for 2021.

Rajendra S Patel,

Vice- President, BSSNA



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## 2020 Winter Camp and Major Festivals

November 24<sup>th</sup>, 2020



Dear Devotees,

On behalf of Bharat Sevashram Sangha, I would like to thank you all for your continued support towards the Ashram. BSS Chicago greatly appreciates your faithful support to help poor people in India who are suffering from hunger due to COVID-19 lock down and Amphan storm in Kolkata. We depend on your generosity.

It was a different situation how Chicago Ashram managed performing Tarpan, five days Durga puja and Kali puja during pandemic and in the absence of the resident monk.

Durga murti was brought downstairs in the basement facing towards the parking lot side in front of the glass wall. The Durga murtis were arranged in a way that people can have a clear view of the whole murti and the worship. A speaker was placed outside so that people can hear the whole puja as well. A big screen was facing outside for devotees to read and chant the whole mantra along with the priest.

There was a live streaming through Facebook of all 5 days worship. People were able to offer pushpanjali even from India, Canada and other parts of the world. Devotees wore new clothes and sat in front of their laptops and on time, they offered their worship through Facebook live while sitting at home safely.

All volunteers working inside the building were COVID-19 tested two days before the puja and were wearing face shield and mask. Only those who were tested were allowed to be inside the building.

The organization's president, Mrs. Santosh Kumar, has sent more than 600 prepacked dry snacks and sweets for devotees. She has sent real flower garlands and saris for all murtis and the rest of the puja items as well.

There was a Durga picture kept under a decorated trellis and a few candles were lit outside too.

Worship started from October 21<sup>st</sup> Wednesday evening and continued until Sunday night. Friday was Ashtami day, the evening puja started with Chandi path by Monojendra Ghosh followed by Sandhi puja. According to the ritual, volunteers lit 108 candles which signifies that we are going from darkness towards light. Saturday was Navami puja, so the havan was performed in the afternoon. People visited the Ashram all day long and offered their worship at the Durga picture kept outside and

chanted pushpanjali mantras. After Bisarjan, on the last day which was Sunday, the Kalash was kept outside for all the devotees to put sindoor. Every devotee took one brown bag of dry prasada home.

The entire puja was done by our volunteer priest Dr. Bakul Banerjee, who performed all major festivals at the Ashram from 2014 to 2016, in the absence of the monks. She also conducted summer classes for children of various ages several times since the establishment of BSS Chicago.

We really appreciate Mr. Debabrata Sadhukhan, who took care of the technical side of the puja. He spent hours preparing for Facebook live streaming and scheduling rehearsals for the singers, who sang remotely every night after the puja.

We are very much thankful to all the singers who participated after the worship, they made the puja even more exciting.

Ashram runs only on volunteers' efforts. Thank you to Mr./Mrs. Jiten Roy, Ketaki Kar, Diya Senmazumdar, Shipra Agrawal, Oendrilla Roy Choudhury. Not only did the volunteers work during 5 days of Durga puja, Kali puja but they started working two months before. They worked hard cleaning the kitchen, the glass wall, dusting and organizing the whole ashram.

Thanks to the devotees who prepared food and donated sari to offer to Ma Durga. Thanks to the devotees who donated face shields, gloves, Sanitizers.

We would like to pay our condolences to the family of the late Anup Deb who helped us many ways to the Ashram in past. We are sad that he is not here with us. We miss him.

Because of pandemic we missed many volunteers who work during Durga Puja and expecting the

Thank you and best wishes for 2021.

Sincerely,  
Sucheta Sadhukhan,  
Treasurer, BSSNA



**Tarpan (Prayer to the ancestors) performed during Pandemic at Chicago Ashram**

## ***2020 Activities at Bharat Sevashram Sangha of North America During Pandemic***

We are proud to inform you as prescribed by the Hindu religious calendar, most of the major Vedic rituals was performed throughout the year of 2020.

**The list of the major worships conducted is given below:**

- December 30<sup>th</sup> through Jan 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2020, Youth Camp
- January 1<sup>st</sup> 2020, Shanti Yagna performed by Swami Mukundananda
- February 9, Maghi Purnima, Birthday of Ashram's founder Sreemat Swami Pranavanandaji Maharaj
- February 21, Shiva Ratri
  
- August 11, Janmastami
- September 1st Tarpan (Prayer to the ancestors)
  
- October 21st, Shashthi (The autumn festival for Goddess Durga began)
- October 22th through October 24th Sri Sri Durga Puja
  
- October 30th Friday, Kojagari Lakshmi puja
- November 14, Kali (Goddess Kali) Puja and Diwali puja
- Youth Camp December 23rd through December 31st (Remotely)
- Ashram offers special prayer services (e.g. First rice eating ceremony for infants, first writing instructions for young children, blessings to new vehicles, Shradha, offered for deceased parents etc.) as requested by devotees, House warming rituals at people's new house.







Volunteers worked during Durga Puja



Devotees  
gathering  
outside the  
glass wall and  
watching the  
puja and  
listening the  
mantra right in  
front of Durga  
murti.





**Mr. Debabrata Sadhukhan, the technician working to show live streaming**



A puja area was created for devotees to worship outside. A Durga picture, flowers, candles, sindoor and brown bags with dry snacks to take home

 **Bharat Sevāshram Sanghā** of North America  
Chicago  
A spiritual brotherhood of monks and selfless workers devoted to the service of humanity.  
630-301-6039



Sarkar Family



Saurav Biswas



Singers Sang Remotely Every Night at the End of Durga Puja

**OCTOBER 21-24, 2020**  
Live: <https://www.facebook.com/BSSChicago/>  
**Durga Puja**  
*Music Program*  
   
www.bsschicago.org

## 2020 activities started with Youth Winter Camp in January



Bharat Sevashram Sangha, Chicago conducted 5 full day Youth Winter from December 30th through Jan 3rd. Purpose of the camp was teaching kids mantra and Ramayana. Camp taught kids many mantras with meaning under the supervision of Swami Mukundanandaji and Mrs. Sucheta Sadhukhan and they learnt Ramayana how they can apply its lessons even today in their daily life. In order to make sure kids are able to learn what it has

### Campers prepared craft during the camp

been taught, camp organizers provided a set of question answer sheet on the kanda taught on that day and kids practiced those to make sure all the kids are able to absorb what they learn in spite of various age differences. In addition to Mantra and Ramayana kids learned and practiced yoga, surya namaskar and meditation under the supervision. Apart from these kids practiced mantra, Swamiji taught them about vegetarianism, importance of drinking water and Sattvic food. Ashram provided freshly cooked vegetarian food to the kids in the afternoon campers enjoyed making different types of crafts. Apart from this kids got ample play time every day. All kids got small prizes to take home. Bharat Sevashram Sangha is very much thankful to all the volunteers and to all the people who sponsored food and other things. Without their help it would not have been so successful. God bless you all.





**Bharat Sevashram Sangha**  
522 Garfield Ave, Aurora, IL 60506  
Email: bssanghachicago@gmail.com



*Open invitation to all kids through Google Meet*

## Online Youth Winter Camp 2020

**Wed, Dec 23th - Thurs, Dec 31st**  
**Weekdays 2pm - 3pm | Ages 6-16 yrs.**  
(23rd, 24th, 25th, 28th, 29th, 30th and 31st December)

**The teachings of this camp will include:**

- Prayer
- Meditation (5 mins daily)
- Ramayana
- Religious Diet Structures (Sattwic, Rajasic, Tamsic)
- Significance of Hindu Festivals
- Brahma, Vishnu, and Shiva
- Religious story telling
- Mantra Chanting



<https://meet.google.com/tbr-kdyo-wfn>



**Cost: FREE**

**Bharat Sevashram Sangha is a leading monastic institution of Kolkata, India. It is a renowned spiritual brotherhood of monks and selfless workers dedicated to the service of humanity. It was founded by the illustrious patriot Saint Yugacharya Sreemat Swami Pranavanandaji Maharaj.**

## Remote Youth Winter Camp in December 2020

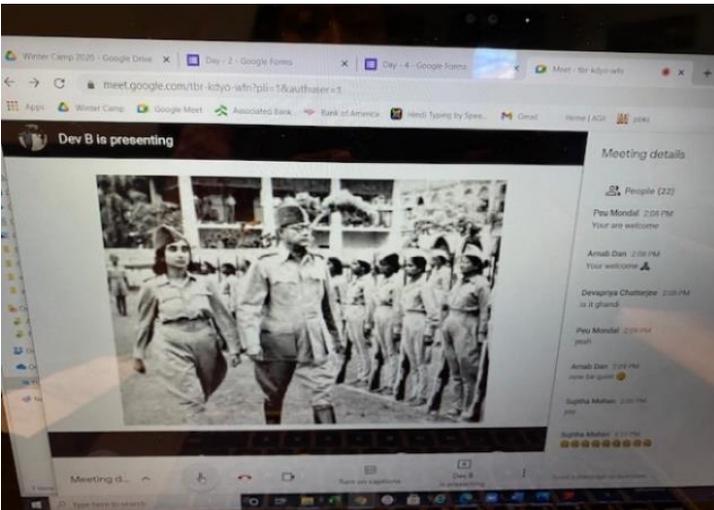
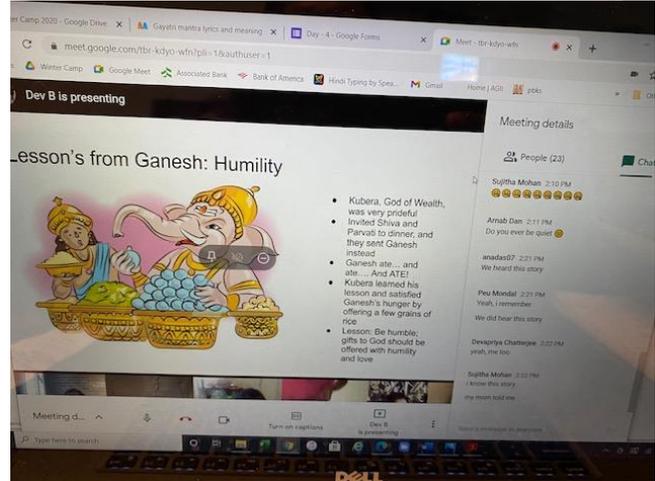
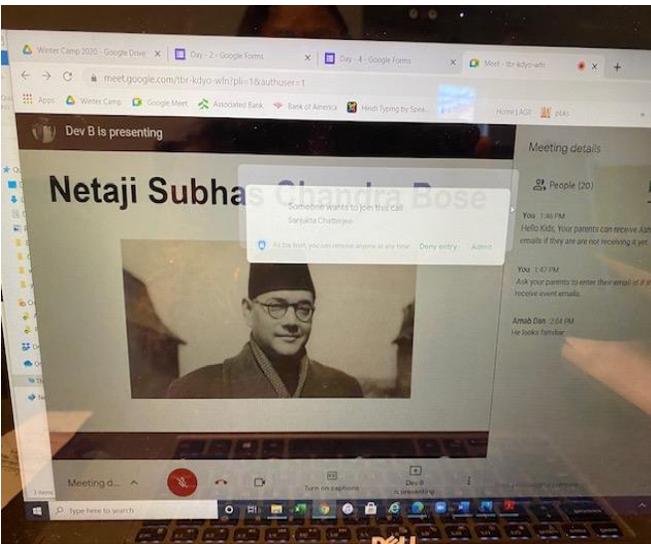
During the Winter Break time of this year, kids are stuck at home due to pandemic. BSS Chicago offered an opportunity for kids to learn the Living Values through Hindu religious stories. This year **Youth Winter Camp** was **Online** from Dec 23rd to Dec 31st (not including weekends) free of cost. Almost 20 to 30 kids joined the camp online. Kids used to do prayer at the beginning, then teachers taught them living values through story from Hindu Puranas while showing them pictures. Kids learned story about Respecting parents, story of unconditional love of Sabari, The holy trinity of Hinduism (Brahma, Vishnu, Shankar), Hanuman's devotion towards lord Rama. Kids learned 7 chapters of Ramayana in 7 days. Everyday kids answered question paper online. One of the day kids learned about India's most revered freedom fighters of India " Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose" and drew his picture. Every day at the end of the camp was a free online yoga class arranged for kids.



ETERNAL LIGHT ♦ SANATAN JYOTI ♦ 2020



**Pictures of Remote Winter Camp**



# BHARAT SEVASHRAM SANGHA

RURAL DEVELOPMENT CENTRE

VILL+P.O.-MAHENDRAGANJ

Relief Program (Corona Relief) in India



# BHARAT SEVASHRAM SANGHA

RURAL DEVELOPMENT CENTRE

VILL+P.O.-MAHENDRAGANJ

Amphan Relief Program



# **BHARAT SEVASHRAM SANGHA**

## **RURAL DEVELOPMENT CENTRE**

### **VILL+P.O.-MAHENDRAGANJ**

In order to commemorate the hundredth anniversary of Bharat Sevashram Sangha (1917-2016), a rural center was opened in Mahendraganj, the most developmentally challenged village in Sagardweep, on January 12, 2015. It was named – ‘Bharat Sevashram Sangha Grameen Bikash Kendra’. Currently, an area of 25 bighas of land has been allocated for Pranavananda Bidyamandir primary school and training centers for computer education, needle work and yoga. Efforts are in progress to help the members of independent communities avail adequate training and funds for projects. In recent years, Sagardweep has been hit hard cyclones such as Phoni, Bulbul, and Amphan, which has devastated and disrupted the livelihood of the island. Time and again, the sangha has had to make arrangements to provide food and shelter to the residents, and to help them to handle the after effects of the cyclones. Attempts have been made to develop organizations to explore alternate livelihoods for people in these communities. Earlier, the villagers had to purchase baby fish and poultry eggs from outside the island. Now, these are available at the rural center along with seeds. The training and guidance provided at the rural center has helped the villagers to regain their livelihood and income. Apart from providing help to the residents of the island, Bharat Sevashram has helped many unemployed young men and women throughout West Bengal by guiding them in fish harvesting, bioflock, and fish breeding. Almost all villagers have a herd of cows and goats, which help them supplement their income. To promote that, Sangha has created a dairy barn of ten cows, with a plan to increase it to fifty cows in the future. We also plan to engage women in opening a dairy cooperative to promote dairy based entrepreneurship among rural women.

Sagardweep is a place of pilgrimage. For centuries, people have travelled long and arduous distances to pay homage to the land of Kapil Muni. The forested lands were slowly cleared as people started settling on these lands. The ancestors of the current residents were mostly from Midnapur. Within two hundred years, the population has grown to 3,00,000 comprising of approximately 50,000 families. Despite primary and secondary schools, colleges, ITI College, the island remains in a challenging state with respect to surrounding areas. Ramkrishna Mission has established a school, which has benefitted the villagers. But on account of being located in the southern side of the island, students from the northern side find it difficult to avail the resources at the school because of a long distance of about 25 km. Additionally, students are flocking the school from areas outside the island. A primary school has been established under the supervision of Bharat Sevashram. The educators have expressed the need to open a secondary school, which will impart high quality academic and moral education to help in overall growth and development of children.

This plan requires a budget of Rs. 2,50,00,000 (two crores and fifty lakhs). We are hopeful that devotees will help donate and make this plan a success!

**BHARAT SEVASHRAM SANGHA**  
**RURAL DEVELOPMENT CENTRE**  
**VILL+P.O.-MAHENDRAGANJ**

**Poultry Hatchery Project, Training Hall and Park Funded by**

**Mr. Rabi Bhattacharya, Mr. Ashoke Chakraborty and Mrs. Basanti Chakraborty**

In 2016, Bharat Sevashram Sangha decided to commemorate its one-hundredth anniversary by helping set up a rural development center in the village of Mahendraganj, one of the least developed villages located in Sagardweep. Extending the initial project on 1 bigha of land to 25 bighas, there stands a primary school (Pranavananda Bidyamandir), along with Computer, Sewing and Yoga classes. With the help of independent organizations helping in training and financial inputs, it was possible to turn many projects into reality. Among many, Mr. Ashoke Chakraborty and Mrs. Basanti Chakraborty from New York are notable donors, who have donated a generous \$40,900, Mr. Rabi Bhattacharya, who have donated a generous \$25,000.

This development was suddenly halted due to the unfortunate and disastrous storm – Amphan. Due to the after-effects of the storm, it has affected the economy including fisheries, and other agricultural activities. In order to help the local people to continue with an alternate means of livelihood, Bharat Sevashram Sangha has launched Poultry Hatchery Project. According to the data available on Sagar Block's economy, it is clear that 80% of the households have reared poultry, and they have some amount of expertise in handling poultry. Eggs from the hens not only help in attaining protein consumption at home, but also helps to earn money by selling eggs in the market. Unfortunately, there is no hatchery in the island. The chickens have to be brought in from the mainland, which increases the cost. Also, some of the chickens die due to transportation issues.

According to official data, Sagardweep needs about 1,90,000 chickens annually. 10% of it is issued to farmers through government grants, 40% to independent organizations, 10% to at-home farms, and the remaining 40% goes to the market. The chickens in the market are expensive and are sometimes not of good quality. It is important to plan to develop a hatchery that will produce at least 10,000 chickens in a month.

**Hatchery Proposals**

1. An area of 2500 square feet enclosed area for egg-hatching hens. The area will be able to house 1500 hens to produce eggs which can be used to produce eggs that will hatch into chickens.
2. A second building with an area of 1200 square feet and a height of 14 feet to house a machine. This building needs to have a continuous electric supply. It will be functional to produce chickens in 21 days.

These two projects are estimated to cost Rs. 35 lakhs. It will result in production of 10,000 chickens in a period of 21 days. This will translate to 1,20,000 chickens annually. The projects will benefit 35,000 families in Sagardweep. Additionally, poultry feed will be available at the fish's food production unit.



## BHARAT SEVASHRAM SANGHA RURAL DEVELOPMENT CENTRE VILL+P.O.-MAHENDRAGANJ



**Training Hall**



After my wife Bithika (Gouri) Bhattacharya passed away two years ago, I took her ashes to give to the mother Ganges. At that time I made a sizeable donation in her memory to Bharat Sevashram Sangha to initiate a microfinance project in the Ganga Sagar area near Kolkata. There is no better philanthropic organization in India than Bharat Sevashram Sangha. Within a course of one year the microfinance project started running in full speed helping hundreds of poor women in the Mahendra Gange village in Ganga Sagar. This endeavor now focusses on a well thought out fishery project. So early this year I made another donation of \$25,000 to the Chicago (Aurora) unit of Bharat Sevashram Sangha toward the fishery project. BSS has now completed the infrastructure for the hatchery, providing microfinance loans (non-profit) to village women for raising fish in their ponds. Because of the huge demand for fish in West Bengal, this project will undoubtedly be a very successful one in helping economically a growing group of women and their families in Ganga Sagar. Its organization is in the hands of a cadre of selfless dedicated disciples of BSS led by Mr. Paresh Das. Here is a very brief biography of my departed wife in whose memory this project has been established. Bithika (Gouri) Banerjee was born on October 14, 1938, in Jaidebpur in East Bengal. Her father Binoy Bhushan Banerjee was a member of the extended family of the Bhawal Kings. . He was a lawyer, but practiced law only to defend freedom fighters. Bithika’s mother Leela Chakraborty also belonged to an eminent family whose genealogy traces back to the great Buddhist monk Atish Deepankar. At the time of partition the family fled to the Indian side of Bengal virtually penny less. At the time Bithika, nick name Gouri, was just eight years old. She had three younger brothers and two older sisters. After she received her BA degree Gouri took up a job as a high school teacher to support her family. On



August 11, 1967, Gouri was married to Rabindranath Bhattacharya, who was the best friend of a cousin of hers. Rabi had just returned to Kolkata after receiving a Ph.D. degree from the University of Chicago. After marriage the couple moved to Berkeley, where Rabi became an Assistant Professor at the university. Through the next fifty years the couple moved to various places in the US as Rabi's jobs demanded. In her 51 years of married life Gouri was Rabi's guide and "charm". While carrying out all household chores, and bringing up her two children single handedly, she pursued higher studies by taking one course every semester for twenty years, earning a degree at Indiana University in Bloomington, where Rabi was a professor of mathematics. Because of her graciousness, loving nature, serenity and innate sense of dignity, Gouri was loved and respected by everyone she came in contact with. While protecting her forgetful husband from harm's way, she led a remarkably disciplined life with good health and enormous energy. Unfortunately, in a cruel twist of fate she was diagnosed with the most advanced form of lung cancer two years ago, and took her last breath in a Tucson hospital on January 15, 2019, at 11:40 am, the exact time of the beginning of the auspicious Makar Sankranti in the Hindu calendar. Bithika left, as her final gift to her broken hearted husband, two children of exceptional character raised by her—a mathematician daughter Urmi and a biologist son Deepta. All her life Gouri supported relatives and made charitable contributions to the disadvantaged. The donation to Bharat Sevashram Sangha is established in that tradition.

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**BHARAT SEVASHRAM SANGHA**  
**RURAL DEVELOPMENT CENTRE**  
**VILL+P.O.-MAHENDRAGANJ**  
**Bio Flock Fishery Project Funded by**  
**Mr. Bishnu Datta**

Bio flock Fishery Project undertaken by Bharat Sevashram Sangha

Bio flock Method of Fish Farming,

Bio flock method is more profitable than the traditional method of fish farming. Numerous young people are interested in farming fish. Because of the nutritional value, consumption of fish is increasing globally. According to data, fish consumption has increased to little more than 20 kilograms per person on an average. In India, the supply of fish is less than the demand, resulting in an average consumption of 9 kilograms per person. The farmers often resort to farming in alternate artificial water bodies. Another new method is bio flock farming of fish.

In this method, the poisonous by-products produced in the trunk such as nitrite, nitrate, and ammonia are converted into food by using protein. With no or very little replacement of water, this process enables farmers to farm fish in higher densities. Without compromising on the quality of water, fish production can be increased significantly. The cost of fish food comprises to about 60% of cost of fish farming. Also, bio flock method requires less food.



Gram Bangla Unnayan Udyog Inc., located in the State of North Carolina, USA, have been working with Bharat Sevashram Sangha, Kolkata for the last 10 years planning, budgeting and implementing many rural development and educational projects in Sagardwip, Sunderban, West Bengal. Recently in the year 2020 we have made contributions to support the implementation of the following ongoing projects:

1. Active Education Lab and Library : \$2,660.00 ( Rs.2,00,000.00 )
2. Chicken Hatchery Project: \$5,322.00 ( Rs.4,00,000.00 )
3. Bio-Floc Fish Cultivation Project: \$2,700.00 (Rs.2,00,000.00)
4. Four Cows and Hay cutting machine for the Diary project
5. Two Sewing Machines for the Microfinancing program

( Note: GRABUU's contributions for project no. 4 and 5 together are \$1,960.00 (Rs.1,50,000). This contribution was handed over to BSS when I visited the BSS Mahendragunj site in early 2020. It may be noted that GRABUU initiated the Microfinancing program partnership with BSS with 4 beneficiary six years ago. When I checked with Paresh Das last week, he told me that the number of beneficiary served so far over the years is more than 600.)

GRABUU intends to send a check of \$550.00 approx. to BSS of North America in about two weeks to cover the salary of a Math teacher of the Swami Pranabananda Primary School at the Mahendragunj site for 6 months and a computer for a beneficiary of the Microfinancing program.

## Conversion of Hindus

By Sucheta Sadhukhan



Most of us know that long ago those who lived in Hindustan were called Hindus. Later people of different religions ruled and started living in Hindustan. Those who lived near Sindu River were called Hindus. Why is it that Hindus form a majority of those who are converted? Perhaps the answer lies in the fact that Hindus are very much confused about the teachings of their own religion. Bhagavad Gita teaches about the knowledge of the soul, not about the teachings of any religion. It applies to every human soul. Bharat Sevashram

Sangha's founder Srimat Swami Pranavanandaji Maharaj's (Gurumaharaj) 10 messages are also all about the soul's strengths and weaknesses. The teaching of a religion which applies to all human souls must be the highest teachings. The true meaning of Hindu mantras is revealed when it is interpreted from the soul-conscious level. Guru Maharaj also said, the true objective is the realization of the Self.

Another interesting thing to note is that the most religions are named after the founder. For example, Buddhism is named after Buddha. Christianity is named after Christ. Then why is Hinduism named after a place? When the actual name of Hinduism is Sanatana Dharma? Having lost the name of their founder may be a reason of the lack of unity among Hindus. Hindus find it difficult who to meditate upon? They are told God is omnipresent. Instead of saying God is omnipresent we should say God's strength is omnipresent that makes more sense, just as King sits on a throne but his power is what is present throughout the country, Likewise, the soul sits in one place but its power works throughout the body. A tree comes out of a seed, seed's strength runs throughout the tree, but is the seed omnipresent throughout the tree? No. In Bhagavad Gita, God said (9/4), "Everything is within me, but I am not in everything". In Gita God says, I come on earth but if he is omnipresent, why does he need to come? So Hindus are very much confused about God, making them convert to other religions. Instead of blaming other religions for making us convert, it is the era when Hindus should learn their own scriptures at soul-conscious level and understand it and apply it in their lives. Hindus are lacking the urge of asking questions about their own religion - Shradhavan Lavate Ghyanam. First have the utmost respect towards wise people, serve them and then only, our heart will be pure and in pure heart, the ultimate knowledge will arise, then the highest knowledge about the soul can be understood. Instead of converting to the other religion, Hindus should study Bhagavad Gita, which is the religion of the soul. Because eventually, all religions will have to learn about the knowledge about the soul because it is for each human being. Then Soul's religion is the only religion that will be established which is Sanatang Dharma. Then we will call the whole world is one family **Basudhaeba Kutumbakam**.

Gurumaharaj said:

This era is the era of great awareness

This era is the era of great synthesis

This era is the era of great union with the eternal self

This era is the era of great salvation.

~ **Guru Kripa Hi Kebalam** ~



Like the illumination produced by Deepawali lamps and the resplendence of sparklers sweeps away all darkness, Swamiji's inspirational and now deeply revered and eternally established words brought a new clarity and perspective to the worship of divinity.

***Service to Mankind is Service to God***

***“Jibey prem karey jey jon Shey jon shebichhe Ishwar”***

This was an epiphany for the masses at a time when no mantra was known to the Indian society to rid itself of the debilitating evils and superstitions that denigrated human life and awakened the people to a new realm of consciousness and inspiration. This was the founding spirit of the Ramakrishna Mission which today straddles the length and breadth of our planet to fulfil the commitment of that spirit as laid out by Swami Vivekananda. An inspired nation and its people awoke to Thakur Ramakrishna Paramhansa's divide destroying magnanimity of the oneness of all faiths and service of mankind.

On the Maghi Purnima of 1896 another kindred spirit appeared on this planet to devote to the cause of upholding the banner of service to humanity – Swami Pranabananda Maharaj. On the Maghi Purnima of 1916 he attained enlightenment and on the Maghi Purnima of the following year Bharat Sevashram Sangha was established. Today the Sangha remains steadfastly committed to its mission of selfless service to humanity through its myriad locations across the globe.

Swami Pranavanandaji's vision for service was inclusive of the holistic and all-round progress and advancement of human life, public welfare, proliferation of education, banishment of social evils like untouchability, spread of Vedic culture, upliftment and emancipation of backward sections all of which was to be enabled through the growth and outreach of the Hindu Milan Mandir.

Investment of dedicated, honest action and effort to accomplish goals while being cognizant of not causing inconvenience or harm to the interests of others is one manifestation of Dharma. Swami Pranavanandaji's clarity of thought had led him to recognize that to inculcate a strong mind, steeped in conviction of thought, dedication and steadfastness there was a need focus its attention and train its concentration. This arouses the higher levels of human consciousness which helps humans commit to all tasks and bring them to fruitful conclusions.

As an organization, Bharat Sevashram is respectful of Vedic principles and perspectives which have over the ages provided people with fortitude and inspiration to effectively address obstacles and impediments in the journey of life. Swami Pranavanandaji Maharaj understood the relevance and importance of prayer and worship to effectively negotiate the complexities and intricacies of life and therefore espoused the practice of the same in daily life. He also recognized that the nonchalant incorporation of prayer and worship into daily existence would incline the human mind to be inspired to naturally commit to service of mankind and humanity. In keeping with this, Bharat Sevashram endorses all faiths and engages in various activities for the service of mankind such as providing assistance to pilgrims and being at the forefront of relief work for people and regions struck by disaster and distress. These aspects of this organization which along with its other moniker, Milan Mandir, are immensely mind pleasing and soul recharging.

In resonance with the spirit of the song,

***“Bharat amar Bharat borsho, Swadesh amar 33wapna go  
Tomate amra lohiya janma, Dhonnyo hoyechhi dhonnyo go”***

O India my India, Motherland of our dreams

To have been born on your soil, blessed have we been

Bharat Sevashram Sangha’s global network is ever engaged in the dissemination and dispersal of India’s expansive knowledge and wisdom contained in the Vedas and Upanishads and India’s contributions in the philosophical and cultural domains. This immeasurable breadth and magnanimity of the Indian ethos was poetically articulated by the great Rabindranath Tagore through “*Ei Bharat er mahamanab er sagar tire*” (On the shores of India, the ocean of humanity).

And in tune with the sentiments above, some anonymous poet has wished

*Janma jani*

*Janmantar dhoandhar kundal*

*Jal bashpo brishtir mato jodi*

*Ghurey firey ashtey hoy*

*Ei prithibir jal haawaay*

*Tabe,*

*Brishti hoey jeno jhori ami*

*Amar Bharat Shyamalimay*

Birth I know,

Rebirth is but a nebulous maze

If like water vapor and rain

Have I to this world return

Then,

May like rain I scatter

On my verdant Indian green



~~~~~

## Patanjali Yoga Sutras for Beginners

Ten Twinkling Stars of Yogic Galaxy

Scintillating Sutras of Patanjali

Aum Namō Bhagavate Shree Pranavaye



Yugacharya Shrimad Swami Pranavanandji Maharaj had compiled whole knowledge and wisdom required for the seeker in “SANGH VANI”. He was the prophet of the Age. Indian Hindu culture and religion had been producing such divine saints and yogic scientists from time unknown. Rishi PATANJALI was one of the great master, who is predicted to be lived before about 2000 years. After about 3200 years of the Gitaji. Rishi PATANJALI observed, critically analyzed and concluded yogic practices of his time. He narrated his conclusions in 195 sutras (equations) and divided in 4 chapters.

Our foresighted saints had abridged many scriptures to a few SHLOKAS, with a purpose to increase the conveniency of a SANSARI seeker for daily recitation and memorization. We can find such examples in the form of EK SHLOKI RAMAYANA, CHATU: SHLOKI BHAGAVATAM and SAPTA SHLOKI DURGA.

On the same lineage, I have done a polite effort to narrate 10 important sutras , which i have used to understand the basics of Yoga Science , since years and it paid me the highest result .The whole essence of multiple and complicated sutras will be unfolded by reading, understanding and meditating on this 10 sutras. The seeker will be flown with the divine fragrance of the essence .

1. Yogah Chitta Vrutti Nirodhah ( ch:1, s:2) = Yoga is subliming waves and whirls of the Chitta
2. Abhyas Vairaghyabhyam Tannirodhah ( 1/12) = This sublimation is only attained by practice and non-attachment .
3. Sa Tu Dirghkala Nairantarya Satkar Sevito Dradh bhumih(1/14) = This study is grounded firmly only when its practice is carried down for long duration, without any intervals and with great zeal, love and devotion.

4. Tasya Vachakah Pranavah (1/27) = HIS manifested vibrations are symbolized as Pranavah that is AUM

5. Tajjapas Tad-Artha Bhavanam(1/28) = The repetition, recitation and meditation of intrinsic, interwoven and omnipresent AUM is the mainstay of the journey of the seeker

6. Vyadhi Styana Sanshaya Pramada Alasya Avirati Bhranti-darshana Alabdha-bhumikatva Anavasthitatva Chittavikshepa Antarayayaha (1/30) = There are nine obstacles/ distracters in the study . Disease, Lack of willingness, Doubts, Lack of enthusiasm, Idleness, Involvement in sensuous pleasures, Wrong perceptions and concepts(hallucinations), Not gaining of higher stages of Yoga, Not maintaining the higher state of yoga persistently

7. Maitri Karuna Mudita Upekshanam Sukha Dukhaha Punya Apunya  
Vishyanam Bhavnat Citta-prasadanam (1/33)

The seeker should keep mercy towards the unhappy indifference towards the evils	Friendship towards the happy Gladness towards the good and
---	---

8. Yama Niyama Asana Pranayama Pratyahara Dharana Dhyana Samadhaha Ashtav Angani (2/29)

These are eight elements of yoga ,which should be studied, practiced and mastered.

9. Swadhyayat Ishta-devata-Samprayogaha(2/44)

Persistent study ( mantra etc) gets realization of the needed.

10. Janma Aushdhi Mantra Tapaha Samadhijaha Siddhayah (4/1)

The pleasant successes during the yogic study can be gained -- since birth-as result of KARMA of previous birth - ---- by use of divine medicines  
.....by recitation of mantra by physical and mental control -  
-- -- by achieving Samadhi level .

The seeker of the God should understand and then practice these short lists of equations. Each of the sutra can be explained in detail but let us analyze a few. The first is Yogah Chitta Vrutti Nirodhah. To understand this, we have to understand Chitta first.

According to Hindu philosophy, our mental existence is formed by Manas, Buddhi, Ahankar and Chitta. According to Bhagvad Gitaji chapter 7 verse 4, manas, Buddhi and Ahankar are three of the basic elements of the total eight. Chitta is formed by amalgamation of Mann, Budhi and Ahankar. The term Chitta should be so profoundly used and understood during the era of the Gitaji and Patanjali Yoga Sutra that, giving the definition was not needed. Like the word SUN, it is self-exclamatory. We understand the Chitta -not exactly- as a big vessel like a sea, filled with water of Mann, having sides and bottom made up of the ice (one form of water). Undercurrents, turbulences, whirls and waves are Buddhi. Dust, dust and debris are forms of Ahankar.

Chitta of a live human being is vibrations, It can't be without life. It cannot be totally calm. It should have synchronized vibrations with the universe. That is the aim of the seeker. To attain this he should keep the water of the vessel clean, control the waves, turbulences and whirls inside the water as well as those on the surface. Only pleasant small movements should be there.

Dr Prashant Mukadam (MS),

Consulting Surgeon & Professor of Surgery



**Bharat Sevāshram Sanghā** of North America  
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PRESENTS



# Durga Puja 2020



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**Maha Shasthi Oct 21 Puja at 6pm followed by Aroti**

**Maha Saptami Oct 22 Puja at 6pm, Pushpanjali at 7:30pm**

**Maha Ashtami Oct 23 Morning Puja at 10:30am, Puspanjali at 12:30pm,  
Chandi Path at 6:30pm, Sandhi Puja and Pushpanjali at 8pm**

**Maha Navami Oct 24 Morning Puja at 10:30am, Pushpanjali at 11:30am,  
Havan at 12:30pm, Evening Puja at 6pm**

**Dasami Oct 25 Bisarjan at 10:30am**

**For Puja Registration visit [www.bsschicago.org](http://www.bsschicago.org)**

Due to COVID-19 pandemic, puja will be held in the basement of the Ashram. However Ashram will be closed to all devotees for the safety of those performing puja. You will be able to offer pushpanjali and get darshan from outside through the glass windows from the parking lot side of the building. Limited quantity of pre-packaged dry prasad will be available for self-serve in the parking lot area.

For information email: [bssanghachicago@gmail.com](mailto:bssanghachicago@gmail.com) or call 630-301-6039

**BHARAT SEVASHRAM SANGHA**  
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