



Ananda Sangha

Meditation • Yoga • Spiritual Community

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Monthly news — November, 2007



Paramhansa
Yogananda



Swami Kriyananda

Ananda Is....

Ananda is a place.

It is a group of people.

A way of life, of work, of worship.

Ananda is a community of friends.

More, it is an extended family;

Its family members live in many lands.

Ananda is reaching out

To embrace all with God's love,

Whatever their language, race, or religion.

Ananda is worshipping God everywhere,

In everything.

It believes in expanding human happiness

Into the infinity of Divine joy.

Ananda means Joy:

Ever expanding, life-changing Joy!

A Joy that comes when a person's life

Is lived in harmony with God.

[Written by Swamiji several decades ago
& recently discovered in an old storage file]

Dear Friends:

"Out of a thousand, *one* seeks God," Krishna says in the *Bhagavad-Gita*. And out of a thousand who seek, Krishna goes on to say, *one* finds God.

Krishna is not trying to discourage us. He is simply explaining that good intentions are not enough. Willpower is also needed. For between the first flush of enthusiasm when we discover the spiritual path anew in each incarnation, and the final letting go of the body in death, many days and nights must pass in which our dedication to God may be sorely tested.

It is reassuring to know that Master said of the followers of this path, "*Our percentage is higher!*"

Shadow and Light

Life is duality. "Pleasure is an interval between two pains," Master said. "Pain is an interval between two pleasures."

This isn't meant to be cynical. It is a simple statement of fact in this ever-changing world.

One beautiful quality that arises naturally in a devotee is *vairagya*. *Vairagya* is defined as a "disinclination for the things of this world." Don't misunderstand. *Vairagya* is not a justification for closing one's heart. Just the opposite.

Vairagya gives us the necessary detachment to see behind the ever-changing panorama of life to the unchanging presence of God. "Ever-living, ever-new joy," is how Master described it. This is the definition of *ananda* and why Swamiji chose that name for our community.

Joy is the thread to follow if we would find God. Not sorrow. Not suffering. *Joy*. We affirm this every week in the *Festival of Light*. "Whereas suffering and sorrow in the past were the coin of man's redemption, for us now that payment has been exchanged for calm acceptance and joy."

Follow the Bliss

Why deny the happiness potential of our human nature? It is God given. It is not, however, an end in itself. The happiness we find in ordinary human life is merely to whet our appetite. It is an invitation from God to take our seat at the banquet of infinite bliss that our Divine Mother has prepared for us.

"Ananda is worshipping God everywhere, in everything," Swamiji writes. "To expand human happiness into the infinity of Divine joy." Isn't that a lovely way to put it?

I have always loved a phrase in one of Master's *Whispers from Eternity*, where he encourages us to start with our own experience.

With devotion and concentration, he says, expand the little bubble of joy *whatever causes it*. Follow the bliss.

Don't turn away fearfully from life. Embrace everything and everyone in God. Live *in*, but not *for* the moment. Be in the *now*, but let that *now* be the doorway to *eternity*. That is the way to happiness. "Human love, perfectly expressed," Master said, "is *almost the same* as Divine love."

When Master's devoted disciple Sister Gyanamata passed away, Master saw her dissolve into light. She was fully liberated, he said, and would never again return to this earth plane.

Such a death is something to celebrate, not to mourn. Still, at her funeral, Master spoke not only of her spiritual freedom, but also of his love for her, and how much he would miss her. "Darling Sister," he called her, as tears streamed down his face.

"Give life your heart!" Swamiji writes in his song, *Go On Alone*. "Bless everything that's grown; Fear not the loving: All this world's your own."

Blessings and joy,
asha/david 

Events and happenings over the past month ...



Tyagini and Tusthi serving hor d'oeuvres



Students from the Middle School served the dinner

Gala Fundraising Dinner

Success in an event like this is determined by three elements: food, company, and giving. In all three areas we excelled!

First the food. Our "guest chefs" were the devotees from the Ananda Boulder Creek Center. Our experience with their potlucks gave us faith in their cooking. We were not disappointed. In fact, one of their members is a professional pastry chef!

Devotion is the prime quality needed for success on the spiritual path, but the ability to make delicious pastry should also rank high on the good karma scale.

Once Swamiji said to Master, "Help me overcome attachment to good food." Master "smiled gaily," Swamiji said, then replied, "Don't worry about those little things. When ecstasy comes, everything goes!" Reassuring words, freeing us to say: more pastry!

Then the company. All of us go at such a fast pace in so many different directions, the opportunity just to be together, with no other agenda than to talk, eat, and give was in itself a great gift. Gentle hearts. Smiling faces. Pure souls. Pure delight.

And the giving. It will take \$347,520 to finish the school building. This night we raised \$71,000, with the possibility of \$50,000 more. We started with \$29,000 in hand. So only \$240,520 more is needed. If the \$50,000 comes through (it depends on the fate of certain investments), then we'll need less than \$200,000 more. Not much considering how far we've come.

Many hands make a miracle, especially when those hands reach so generously into purse, pocket, and check-book. Well done!



Cheryl and Susan chat with their table mate



Jeffrey and his daughter Lauren enjoying the "mocktail" hour before dinner

"Bubble Day" at Living Wisdom School

Do you like children? Do you have a general willingness, or a talent or interest to share? "Guest lecturers" and helping hands are always welcome at Living Wisdom School, occasionally or on a regular basis.

A "chip architect" who worked on the "X-Box" gave the Middle School students a fascinating look behind the scenes of one of their favorite entertainment items. An investor gave a lesson on the stock market. A retired banker comes in every day and helps with math. Another devotee teaches science to the littlest ones.

The school play is coming up and there is always a lot to do with costumes, props, lighting, set design, and general organizing. Call 650-462-8150 if you want to help out.



This is science class. Think how many scientific principles are illustrated by blowing bubbles.



Above: The motto of Living Wisdom School is: Where Learning and Joy Come Together. Here is a poster child for that motto!

Left: Cooking is a way of teaching principles of math.

News of Swami Kriyananda

After Swamiji returned to India in August, he felt utterly exhausted. No amount of rest eased his fatigue. At his age (81) his natural concern was that something fundamental in his body had gone awry and he would never recover his energy.

Happily, this was not the case. In September, the dentist removed an infected molar. Immediately, the fatigue vanished. The infection had been draining his energy.

Swamiji began to write a series of essays. Subjects range from “Why I Left College” to “Understanding People” to a profound essay about the disciple guru relationship. His intention, he said, is to choose topics not covered in other of his writings.

So far he has written seven. The plan is to publish these and others he may write in a small book. It will also include a long essay he wrote more than a decade ago called “Religion in the New Age,” which will be the title of the book.

The essay about disciple and guru is available now via e-mail. If you haven’t received it, please call the Sangha. It gives profound insights into attunement with Master that Swamiji has not shared before.

The rest of the essays are not available yet in printed form, but Swamiji has been reading them at satsangs in India. All of his satsangs are recorded and within hours can be downloaded from the internet at <http://www.anandaindia.org/inspiration/video/kriyananda.html>

Diwali - The Festival of Light in India

November 9 was Diwali in India, a holiday similar in spirit and importance to Christmas in the West. It is also known as “The Festival of Light,” so for his Diwali satsang, Swamiji also performed our expression of the Festival of Light.

For Diwali people give gifts, visit their families, decorate their homes with lights and flowers, and, in the evening, set off firecrackers.

The down side of the fireworks is days and days of intermittent explosions. (It is a benefit during Diwali, Swamiji says, to be hard of hearing!) The positive side is that after dark on Diwali the night sky is a festival of light.

Fireworks are not regulated in India. Any individual can put on a display. Kent White, Ananda’s fireworks diva in India, said he bought from street vendors things he would need a license to buy in America.

Most houses in India have roof terraces, and on Diwali everyone goes to the top of the house to watch the show.

Since childhood, Kent has had a passion for fireworks (and explosions of all kinds, but that is another story!) For years at Ananda Village was in charge of the 4th of July. His creativity in America was limited by California law. In India he was unleashed, and the result, according to all, was magnificent.



Fireworks in Guragon



Decorated for Diwali

Sightings at Halloween, back here in America...



Fair-haired Emma transformed into Moulon, an Asian superhero.



Sophia, a flower blooming in the garden of life.

Above: Kali the Beagle disguised as... something else!



Grace, a vision in green.