



PEACE

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CONTENTS

1. Upanishad	–	4
2. Meditation	–	5
3. Prayer	–	6
4. Christ is here	– Swami Omkarji Maharaj	9
5. Gandhiji is alive	– Swami Omkarji Maharaj	11
6. Give up desires	– Swami Omkarji Maharaj	16
7. Generators of Peace	– Swami Omkarji Maharaj	19
8. God all in all	– Swami Omkarji Maharaj	21
9. Penance in the Himalayas..	– Sri Sri Sri Siddheswarananda Bharati	24
10. Ribhu Gita - A preamble	– Sri Bishmaji	29
11. Omkar is the essential..	– Mata Chandra Kali Prasad	31
12. The way of self conquest	– Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj	34
13. Worship of the Divine Mother	– Swami Tattvaivananda Saraswati	39
14. The scheming Démoness..	– Swami Jyotirmayananda	45
15. Ashram News	–	49

Greetings

Blessed Immortal Atman ! My hearty Pranams.

Wish you all a Happy New Year, 2017.

Time advances according to the divine dispensation. Just as the rising Sun progresses towards dusk, time too marches on ceaselessly. The invaluable human birth befalls without anybody's prior invitation and the journey of life goes on without anyones permission. Time is fleeting. Neither great intellectuals nor enlightened beings can transgress time. It is like a serpent biding its time to attack,

Therefore, in this New Year, 2017 we do sadhana without wasting even a single second, to attain the goal of life viz., Supreme Peace. What is Supreme Peace? It is not the peace one experiences when all things around go well. Supreme Peace is that when one experiences Bliss, when one attains liberation in the ultimate fulfillment of life.

One cannot attain Supreme Peace through worldly objects. But it can be attained by total surrender of body, mind and intellect to God through pure Buddhi Yoga and by developing "Soham bhava" in every breath.

May Swami Omkarji Maharaj bless you all with mental and moral strength to attain Supreme Peace.

Om Shanti Shanti Shanti

Mata Jnaneswari

*Merry Christmas
&
Happy New Year 2017
and
Subha Sankranti*

*May the Grace of Almighty God Bless you, keep
you, protect you and give you Peace, Peace and
Peace. May God in His Infinite Love and
Mercy keep you and bless you to realise and
reach the heights of consciousness*

Swami Omkar

*Inhale and Exhale the Omkara to control the
mind from all worldly matters and reach the
inner self for the realisation of God.
Pujya Swami Omkar may bless you in
your efforts to achieve the goal*

Mata Jnaneswari

Kaivalyopanīṣat

स एव मायापरीमोहितात्मा शरीरमास्थाय करोति सर्वम् ।
स्त्र्यन्नपानादिविचित्रभोगैः स एव जाग्रत्परितृप्तिमेति ॥

sa eva maayaaparimohitaatmaa

sariramaasthaaya karoti sarvam |

stryannapaanaadivicitrabhogaih

sa eva jaagratparitriptimeti ||

12

Atman alone, identified with the mind, deluded by ignorance, identifies with the body and performs all. That Atman alone assumes the waking state and gets satiated with a variety of sense pleasures like food, drink etc.

This mantra deals with waking state of *jiva* identified with body-mind. The waking consciousness has its origin in sleep, because it arises from sleep and sinks in sleep. If the things of the waking state are so important, so real, how is it we get tired of them and want to sleep? We remove the coat that we wear all day before going to bed. Similarly, the entire content of the waking consciousness, including the personality, is set aside before going to sleep. We do not know whether we will come out of sleep or not; yet there is willingness to go into sleep. This proves the unreal nature of that content. The content of the waking state seems overwhelming only because we do not bother to question it or compare it with other states of experience. The felicity with which we go to sleep only proves that we are essentially *asanga*, not attached to anything.

Vedanta does not have a ready solution to overcome attachment. It tries to show, if you are willing to see, that you are not really attached. It places the lamp of wisdom in your hands. Use that light as you move forward in the journey called life.

(Tattva Prakaasika by Swami Tattvavidananda Saraswati)

MEDITATION

सदिव मनस्त्रिवृत्त्वयि विभात्यसदामनुजा
त्सदभिमृशन्त्यशेषमिदमात्मतयाऽऽत्मविदः ।

न हि विकृतिं त्यजन्ति कनकस्य तदात्मतया
स्वकृतमनुप्रविष्टमिदमात्मतयावसितम् ॥

*sadiva manastrivrittvyai vibhaatyasadaamanujaa
tsadabhimrisantyasasha midamaatmatayaatmavidah,
na hi vikritim tyajanti kanakasya tadaatmatayaa
svakritam-anupravishtam-idam-aatmatayaavasitam.*

This universe, which is made up of the three *gunas* including man placed at the apex, is a fabrication of the cosmic Mind, otherwise called the will of the Lord. The sages who have realized the *aatman* see the Lord in and through the manifest universe, that Lord being identified with the supreme *brahman* with which the universe seems to be inseparably united.

The sages perceive brahman as the unchanging Reality in the universe of name and form, like gold remaining the same gold, though as various ornaments, it appears differently.

- from Srutigita by Swami Gabhirananda,
Advaita Ashram Publication

Prayer

मेधां मे इंद्रो ददातु मेधां देवी सरस्वती ।

मेधां मे अश्विनावुभावाधत्तां पुष्करस्त्रजा ॥

medham me indro dadatu medhaam devi sarasvati,
medhaam me asvinavubhavadhattaam pushkarasraja. 3

इन्द्रः, *indrah* = Lord Indra; मे, *me* = for me; मेधां, *medham* = wisdom; ददातु, *dadatu* = may give; देवी, *devi* = Goddess; सरस्वती, *sarasvati* = Sarasvati; मेधाम, *medham* = the wisdom; उभै, *ubhau* = the twin gods; अश्विनौ, *asvinau* = Asvins; पुष्करस्त्रजा, *puskarasraja* = with a garland of lotuses; मे, *me* = for me; मेधाम, *medham* = the wisdom; आधत्ताम *adhattam* = may impart.

May the Lord *Indra* and Goddess *Sarasvati*, impart wisdom to me. May the twin gods, the *Asvins*, wearing garlands of lotuses, infuse me with wisdom.

In this prayer, we seek to receive intelligence and wisdom from the Lord of the heavens or the Lord (Indra also means the Lord), and from the Goddess of knowledge. In the vision of the Vedas, the seeker has to initially perform certain rituals, then gradually progress to meditation, and finally gain self-knowledge. In the rituals section of the Vedas, a number of deities are propitiated, each deity symbolizing a certain cosmic aspect of *Ishvara*. The presiding deity of physical strength and of the hands as an organ of action is *Indra*. There is a presiding deity for every faculty. For the eyes it is the Sun, while for the mind it is the Moon. In this manner, the individual is connected to the Whole.

'May Sarasvati, the Goddess of knowledge, bless me with medha, the capacity to retain and assimilate what I learn.' The twin gods, the Asvins, are the celestial physicians. In fact, there is an astro-physical symbolism connected to the Asvins. The Vishnu of the Vedas

is the Sun. The Bhagavad Gita (10-21) also says:

आदित्यानामहं विष्णुः ।

aadityaanaamahm Vishnuh.

I am Vishnu (the Sun) among the offspring of Aditi (the goddess representing the Cosmic Power of Life).

The Asvins correspond to the twin planets Mercury and Venus of the zodiac, which can be seen in the eastern sky before sunrise as the morning stars, or in the western sky after sunset as the evening stars [See: The Celestial Key to the Vedas, by B. G. Sidharth; published by Inner Traditions, Rochester, Vermont, 1999; pp. 18-19]. When we look at the planetary system as the manifestation of Isvara, the Sun obviously represents Isvara and the planets represent the gods. In the vision of the Vedas, praying to the Sun at sunrise and sunset is part of one's nitya-karma, a mandatory daily ritual, which bestows good health upon the devotee. Intellectual excellence is not possible without good physical health. This could be the symbolism associated with the Asvins being the divine physicians.

Puskarasraja - The Asvins are supposed to wear a garland of lotuses or lillies. Each devata, being the personification of a natural phenomenon, is visualized in distinctive attire. The agama-sastra describes the form and attire of the different gods and these descriptions are incorporated in temple sculptures and architecture. These forms and the attire of the gods could be very significant. For example, Goddess Sarasvati wears white, whereas Goddess Lakshmi wears red. White traditionally stands for knowledge and red for raaga, the fulfillment of desires, which is possible only through wealth. Indra, the god of strength and rains, is depicted as vajrahasta, holding a thunderbolt as a weapon.

The beautiful lotus is very popular in Vedic and Puranic literature as the symbol of purity and prosperity. It is the national flower of India, and is, indeed, synonymous with the Hindu culture. In Ayurveda,

the traditional Indian system of medicine, there is a tonic, called *vasanta kusumakara*, which is recommended for general health. It is prepared from the juices of all kinds of spring flowers, including the lotus and the lily. This could be the connection between the lotus and the divine physicians, the Asvins. Interestingly, all gods and goddesses are associated with the lotus, either in holding it, or sitting, or standing in it. Lotuses are also offered in worship at the altar in addition to other flowers. The Bhagavad Gita (11-15), describes Brahma deva as *kamalasanastham*, seated in a lotus. Goddess Lakshmi is eulogized as *padmini*, the one who is among lotuses, *padmahasta*, the one with a lotus in Her hand, *padmaalayaa*, the one seated in the lotus, and *padmadalaayataakshi* the one whose eyes are shaped like the petals of a lotus. The lotus is a symbol of purity because it remains untainted by the murky waters in which it grows.

Om! Om! Om!

HINTS TO ASPIRANTS

Swami Ramdas

When you have tasted the bliss of immortality, naturally all your desires for the sense objects disappear. Till then the mind will ever be in pursuit of ephemeral pleasures. When you have found within yourself the fountain of immortal joy, the attraction for the external objects and the cravings to possess them no longer trouble you. This is real liberation- liberation from the bondage of the flesh and its desires. Therefore, to seek the Eternal, and enjoy the rare bliss and freedom which one gets by realizing It, are the *summum bonum* of life. All else is useless trash. To achieve this end, no sacrifice is too great. Then you become a light unto yourself and a light to others. God's power and glory will be revealed in you. Your union with Him is a constant experience, nay you are moulded into His very image.

CHRIST IS HERE

Swami Omkarji Maharaj

He is here. He is there also. He is everywhere for He is Omnipresent. Christ is here in me, he is there in you, he is everywhere and in everyone, for He is the Indwelling Light of every being.

It is wrong to say Christ was born on Christmas. That which is born dies too. That which as a beginning has an end also. It is true that Jesus was born on the Christmas Day, the 25th of December. But Christ is born neither on 25th nor on any other day for Christ is Eternal, Immortal and the ever-existing Presence. He is above birth, death and change because he is Eternal.

Christ is conceived in those rare souls who are pure and innocent. He is recognised in the selfless and the dedicated, BLESSED ARE THE PURE IN HEART FOR THEY SHALL SEE GOD! The kingdom of heaven belongs to the innocent, guileless and child-like hearts of LOVE.

In remembrance of this Christmas let us herald the glad tidings that he is here, there, everywhere and in everyone. Christ is the Heart of the heart, he is the Mind of the mind and He is the Breath of the breath.

Glory! Glory! Glory!

My dear Loving Reader! He is pervading and permeating the very cells of our beings. All that He needs is our awareness of his interpenetrating Presence NOW and HERE, for HE IS HERE IN ME AND HE IS THERE IN YOU.

Blessed is the one who is aware of His Indivisible Presence! Blessed is the one who is recognising the Indwelling Light in the stillness of his purified hearts! Blessed is the one who is beholding Him not only within, in himself but without in everyone, for everyone and everything is a living manifestation of the CHRIST-PRINCIPLE!

In memory of the BLESSED CHRISTMAS let us recognise Christ from the tiniest atom to the biggest planet. Let us behold Him in every face, ignoring the man-made differences in religions and nations, for CHRIST the living Truth is the Heart of every Religion and the Soul of every Nation.

Let our offering to the new born Christ, the Indwelling Christ, the Eternal Christ, the ever-present Christ, the Interpenetrating Christ; be annihilation of the little "I" or the dissolution of the tiny ego- the bubble, in the ocean of Light, Life and Love.

May there be rejoicing in East and West, North and South, may all the world be happy on the Christmas day of Christ-birth or the cosmic-consciousness! May PEACE, the Birthright of every man, woman and child, radiate from the individual, the Christ within, to the Universal to the Christ without and thus help us to establish PEACE OF HEART AND GOODWILL AMONG NATIONS!

May Glory be unto the Christ-Spirit everywhere and in everyone!

MAY PEACE BE UNTO ALL!

“God does not need an intermediary for carrying out His commands. If you think that God can speak through Ramdas, He can speak through you as well, because you cannot accuse God of partiality. Switch on your wire for a direct communication within. Why do you deny Him in your own heart?”

-- Swami Ramdas

GANDHIJI IS ALIVE

Swami Omkarji Maharaj

Those who think that Gandhiji is dead are wrong. Those who believe that Mahatmaji is dead are the really dead people. The meaning of MAHATMA is GREAT ATMA or PARAMATMA, the Great Soul. How can the Great Soul die? You and I may die in the world. All little forms and names may disintegrate and disappear from the world of existence, but how can the Great Spirit, the Immortal Soul die or disintegrate?

GITA'S MESSAGE OF IMMORTALITY

As Bhagavad Gita teaches, change is only for the body and never for the Soul. As man changes his clothes so are births changed by the soul. The man who weeps over the inevitable is a weakling. Gita teaches us also that the Soul cannot be burnt by fire, pierced by swords, shot by bullets or hurt. How can Gandhiji die? Who can kill the Great Soul, Sri Gandhiji?

When the whole Nation is mourning and when the greatest and biggest men are shedding tears of sorrow, I may be considered crazy with my thought that Sri Gandhiji is alive. But to me he is more alive now than ever before. I long to proclaim and shout this message to one and all, from the house-tops and market places, in fairs and gatherings, with all the strength of the mind, heart and soul, that

Gandhiji Is Alive!

Mahatmaji Cannot Be Killed,

He Is Eternally Alive!

I long to tell every man, woman, child and baby, nay, to each and every bird and insect, that our Mahatmaji is living and that he can never die. In this shocking and dreadful calamity and unbearable sorrow, this thought of deathlessness of Gandhiji, the immortality of

Sri Mahatmaji has been my only consolation and strength, although I too have been one of those silently and unconsciously shedding tears of sorrow and shame.

As I am writing this message, on my writing desk there is the sweet smiling photo of Sri Gandhiji, fixed in a celluloid frame looking at me. Even on the reverse of the frame there is the same photo. These two photos always represent to me Truth and Non-violence. Often I see Truth on one side and non-violence on the other side of the same picture, instead of the photo of Sri Gandhiji. In our deep sorrow and weakness if we admit that Mahatmaji is dead, we are to conclude that Truth and non-violence are also dead with him. What is a world devoid of Truth and non-violence? Imagine the world without the sun! Gandhiji lives eternally! Truth and non-violence live forever!

Sri Gandhiji worked, breathed and lived for the welfare of India and for the Peace of the world. He has been a friend of one and all, even those who have persecuted him. His love included all the dumb animals, cows, goats, birds and all other helpless creatures. Verily, Sri Gandhiji alone deserves to be called a real Mahatma, for a Mahatma is one who feels for all, in all the world.

HIS LIFE-BREATH IS IN US

Of course, it is madness to deny the dissolution of Sri Gandhiji's physical body, but what about his life-breath, the precious Prana? Where did it go and where is it now? Life is indestructible. Matter cannot be destroyed even though its form may change. Life-breath seeks its own, according to man's temperament and inclination. It is the greatest consolation to know, nay, to believe and to feel that Sri Gandhiji's Prana, the life-breath, has entered into its devoted, dearest and nearest ones who are striving to walk in his blessed foot-prints.

If we are really followers and the disciples of Sri Gandhiji, we should feel now stronger and wiser, for his Prana, the life-breath, has entered naturally into us alone. It is with us now to express Sri Gandhiji's Truth and Non-violence more than ever, in all our

thoughts, words and deeds, even in the face of persecution, crucifixion and death itself. Mahatmaji has set a noble example before us. He does not want our tears, sorrow or lip-sympathy; he expects only his Truth and Non-violence to be asserted and manifested even at the bayonet's point.

LINCOLN'S MEMORABLE WORDS

One cannot help but recall the martyrdom of the emancipator of slaves, the great Abraham Lincoln, who was murdered in cold blood at the height of his success and glory. We unfortunately witness now with remorse and shame, a similar tragedy enacted in the life of our Sri Gandhiji. Lincoln's memorable words are the hope, solution and salvation of our Mother India:

Out of the depths fresh strength.

Out of the darkness new light,

Even in the gloom we are on the way.

Who can say that Lord Christ is dead and lives no more? Can anyone say that Bhagavan Krishna is dead and exists no more? Is Lord Buddha or the Prophet Mohammed dead? What about the other world benefactors, the well-wishers of humanity in the East and West? Where are their life-forces? How can they die or disappear? Similarly, how can Gandhiji die? His great Spirit of love and Compassion lives and exists not only now, but for ever, Eternally, as the greatest blessing to all the followers of Truth and Non-violence in all the East and West.

OUR OFFERING

If we love Sri Gandhiji, if our sorrow is genuine and if our sympathy is sincere and real, here is a practical test for you, for me and for all the real followers and disciples of Sri Mahatmaji. It is an offering to be laid at the alter of Sri Gandhiji's great life of sacrifice, in memory of the most heart-sickening, detestable and horrible crime

ever committed since the days of the crucifixion of the blessed Lord Christ.

Man is frail. To err is human. No one is all good, neither is anyone all bad. On this cruel day of the detestable tragedy, in the sacred memory of Sri Gandhiji's Universal Love and his greatest sacrifice for the welfare of humanity and for the Peace of all communities and religions, let us at least offer ourselves. Let us overcome one of our weaknesses, as a little token of our devotion and Love, before martyrdom.

In the loving memory of Sri Gandhiji's martyrdom, if we still have any form of communal differences, let us replace them with harmony and love. Let us give a death blow to all forms of communal frenzies and religions fanaticisms. If we are impure let us offer ourselves to be pure, with a resolution to be faithful to our promise and to Sri Gandhiji, until death itself. If we are selfish, let us make a promise to God and to Sri Gandhiji, to be Selfless.

Dear Friends, introspect your lives! Kindly observe the weak traits which are latent within you and which are in the way of your God-Realisation. False patriotism is the most subtle and dangerous trait. Promise to be free of its deathly poison. What is your weakness? Is it pride, envy, jealousy, lust or anger? Is it running after name and fame, madness after gold, the worship of Mammon, over-eating, laziness, speaking ill of others or any other hidden traits?

Whatever it may be, as we profess to love and adore Sri Gandhiji, it is with us now at least to be free from one of our weaknesses and to strive to be like him. He does not want our tears or our sorrow, he is not in need of our praises. He only longs to see us all living like him, as apostles of Truth and Non-violence, even in the face of ridicule, opposition, suffering and death itself.

THE HOLY MANTRAM

A mantram is a sacred affirmation that gives strength and inspiration to anyone who repeats it with belief in its potentiality. What

Ram Nam had been to Sri Gandhiji, so also the following Mantra should be to the followers of Mahatmaji:

"Gandhiji has no other body now on earth than mine, to function. Verily, he is working, moving and breathing in me. He is expressing Truth and Non-violence in each and every moment of my life, now and always."

Repeat the above affirmation in your daily prayers and meditations and even amidst your work and thus be a blessing to his dedicated life, work and sacrifice.

Friends, what need is there of all these words? Is not one word enough for you, the true children, the followers of Sri Gandhiji? While he was living physically we failed to follow him, we could not be united as one nation. At least in his death (of course, only the physical death), in memory of the greatest sacrifice, the living martyrdom, let us be united forgetting the man-made differences in communities, religions and nations!

Sri Gandhiji is living. His spirit is indestructible. He is more alive now because he is resurrected. May he be resurrected in all our hearts also now!

OM! OM! OM!

Every man should do his duties in accordance with his own Varna, Ashrama, caste and station in life. There is no benefit in abandoning one's own work in preference to another's work.

This is a commercial world. Everyone has 'give and take' policy. But the thirsty aspirant and the sage only give. Their motto is 'Give, give, give'. Never expect anything in return. Those who practise Karma Yoga should adopt this principle only.

Swami Sivananda

(from booklet, SO SAYS SIVANANDA - KARMA YOGA)

GIVE UP DESIRES

Swami Omkarji Maharaj

Do you want liberation? Then give up desires!

DESIRE has been considered as the root cause of all bondage, misery, suffering and finally death in ignorance, by men of realisation, in all religions of both East and West. Man in ignorance is trying to worship God clinging ever to desire. He wants to worship both God and Mammon. He wants to live both in Light and darkness.

Prayers and meditations will be in vain so long as man remains a slave of desire. In vain are all the long and weary pilgrimages and worships in the different shrines and churches, if man in ignorance clings to desire.

It is high time for man to know that both Light and darkness cannot be mixed, both God and Mammon cannot be worshipped and that where God exists, desire can never raise its appearance.

Can you expect any life or greenness in a tree which has been burnt away from the very root? Much less how can you expect any form of desire in any shape, in the Fire of God, in His millions of suns Splendour? Why waste precious time by beating around the bush? How can anyone deceive the Indwelling Presence? By trying to deceive the Indweller of his heart, man in deep ignorance is deceiving himself. He is digging his own grave, with his own hands.

Unconsciously, man in deep ignorance is trying to cover a pestering sore with the petals of flowers or golden leaves, without eradicating the root cause of the sore.

How pathetic it is to see man reciting chapter after chapter from Gita or the Bible for realising God, all the while running after the dark shadows of desire! The Quoran and Pitikas are also read, at the same time feeding the life-sucking desires within. How does all these outer worships help man in realising the goal of life? What

avail are all the different kinds of spiritual practices so long as man does not try to be free from the dark clouds of desire?

Pray! Look at all the different followers of all the various religions and denominations, worshipping God in their own way. All are busy with the outer worship in some form or the other, without paying real attention to the desire within, which is making a wreck of their lives. Man should make a retreat from his religion of outer worship, to within himself, strive to know what it is which is preventing him from the attainment of his Highest Happiness.

What is it which is standing on his way of realisation of Supreme Peace? With a little introspection or intuition, he will realise that it is the inordinate desires within himself which is the root cause of all his unhappiness and suffering. Instead of going to the root cause and conquering the desire, what is the use of wasting precious time with all kinds of outer worship?

Man is trying to find happiness according to his temperament and desire in the outer things of the world. Where is happiness in the first place? Is it in food or in the satisfaction of carnal desires of the senses or in earning a little fame and name? According to the evolution of man we see him either a slave to food, dressing, wandering, gossiping or lethargy. We are aware of the men who live only to eat. Their one happiness is in eating. There are others who want to dress in beautiful clothes. There are others who are always wandering like rolling stones who cannot be silent. There are others who are slaves of their senses running after their own shadows. How few are they who are satisfied with the Substance- the Indwelling Presence!

Strange as it may sound, if we realise the essence in all religions, it is that real happiness is only in complete desirelessness. What man needs for his Highest bliss is complete desirelessness. When you are desireless you are emancipated, you are already free. It is the desire which bounds you.

Your attempts should be not to get yourself more and more steeped and entangled with the various kinds of spiritual practices, but only to get rid of the life-sucking and inordinate desires. Let your energy and precious time be focused and concentrated not in elaborate ritualism and other outer forms of worship, but only in finding the ways and means of plucking from its very root the desire which is sapping your very vitality and making a wreck of your spiritual life. *GIVE UP DESIRE AND BE FREE!*

Dear friend, close your eyes for a while. Enter into your own heart. Analyse your life and its manifold desires. See which objects your mind is wandering towards. Draw a bigger line. Desire for God-for the Highest, the Light of lights. In that great Infinite Light all other desires, all the passing clouds of ignorance will be dispelled. Let your prayers, concentrations and meditations be only to conquer the weakness or ignorance of *DESIRES* by the strength and knowledge of *DESIRELESSNESS*.

May all homage be unto the embodiments of *desirelessness* which are the salt of the earth and Saviours of Humanity!

MAY PEACE BE UNTO ALL!

OM! OM! OM!

First rouse the inherent power of the Atman within you, then, rousing the faith of the general people in that power as much as you can, teach them first of all to make provision for food, and then teach them religion.

First, have faith in yourselves. Know that one may be a little bubble and another may be a mountain-high wave, yet behind both the bubble and the wave there is infinite ocean.

Swami Vivekananda - WORDS OF INSPIRATION

GENERATORS OF PEACE

Swami Omkarji Maharaj

1. **Rishi Konda**, Sri Nirvana Ashram.
2. **Mount Kailas**, Sri Kailas Ashram.
3. **Peace Mission**, Waltair.
4. **Shanti Ashram**, Totapalli Hills.

LOCATION: These four represent great concepts. Starting from the bottom, The Mother Ashram is situated in the Totapalli Hills in East Godavari District, near a perennial rivulet that is offering Abhishekam over a Siva Linga. The third one from the bottom is a branch, situated over the southern prong of the Lawson's Bay, North of Waltair and the Andhra University.

Rishi Konda has a hoary ancestry as its name implies, connected with the sacred shrine of Simhachalam and the Madhava Dhara. It forms the northern prong of the Bay. Over it lies Mount Kailas consisting of several masonry structures with a car road leading up from the dairy farm on the Bimili road. It is a war product which was once a radar station for watching air-crafts. It is one of the sweet destinies of the benevolent God-head, to convert this **War Post into a Generator of Peace** and as an asset to the Shanti Ashram.

These may well be described as beauty spots, bringing together the hill and the dale from the North and the West. The expanse of water in the East merges the blue sky with the oft invisible horizon in between, on account of the mist. These in turn achieve the noblest result of harmonising the five elements to sing the praises of the Lord eternally by chanting the sacred message '**OM**' in every wave, roll and ripple of the ocean, which is received and transmitted by the musical Casurina Grove in the Ashram and by every blade of grass and shrub over the Mount.

The word '**OM**' is again implanted over several flag placards serving as banners everywhere in the Ashram and the hill, on stones

and walls, arresting the eye equally in all directions over and around. The oneness of God is the all-embracing Truth which is equally in view by combining the cross, the crescent and the lotus of the Christian, Mohammadan and the Buddhist, all in the four-fold emblem of '**OM**' decorating the premises everywhere. There are again innumerable universal Precepts such as:

1. Inhale and exhale peace.
2. Thou art that.
3. Seek, ye shall find.
4. Know thyself.
5. The kingdom of heaven is within.
6. Be ye perfect, even as your father is perfect.
7. Silence is God.
8. Prayer Generates Power.
9. Religion and life are not two but one.
10. Omnipotence is working, let the mortal retire.
11. Recognise God and be silent.
12. Feel God's presence, even in the Ashram.
13. Burn thy ego in the fire of selfless service.
14. Work kills none but worry kills multitudes.
15. He who does not work has no right to eat.
16. He who does not pray has no right to live.
17. He who wastes moments, wastes his whole life.
18. Today man is and tomorrow he is not, so do your good deed today.
19. Every man is a King.
20. Where love is, there is God.

OM! OM! OM!

GOD ALL IN ALL

Swami Omkarji Maharaj

(Let God be first, middle and last)

Blessed are the lives of those rare, precious and blessed souls in whose lives God comes first, middle and last, and unto whom God is all in all. Verily is not God the source as well as the goal of the existence of the world itself? Then, why deny Him in the name of anything in the world?

But alas, MAYA, the thick delusion is so deep that it makes even the learned to sell their souls for a mere pittance, 30 silver coins-even for broken pots, a mess of pottage.

Truth is exchanged for untruth.

Nectar is given up for poison.

Immortality is sold for mortality.

Man with all his vast learning and wide knowledge of the spheres of earth and Heaven, is busy running after the shadow, the fleeting senses of ignorance, forgetting the substance, the Divinity, the Infinite, the Eternal Light within. Unfortunately in many a life, God comes last, in the very end and in some lives it is sad to see that he does not come even in the end at all. God does not exist at all in such lives.

It is not enough to repeat that "I believe in God". What we need now is the practical expression on demonstration of our belief in his Omnipresence, Omnipotence and Omniscience in our daily lives, in big things as well as small things, even in all that we speak and think.

I believe the words of the wise seers who have said that it is a great help to know our weakness, the moments of forgetfulness, just to know when we are standing now on the solid rock of ages or on the quagmire of marshy delusions, with high sounding words of philosophy. Man, wake up from your long slumbers, wake up from your dark delusions of illusive life! It is not yet too late to wake up to your full Glory!

MAN KNOW THYSELF!

Coming back to our present theme now, let God be first, middle and last even in the future, in our lives. Let Him occupy the first place, the best place, the most prominent place in our dry and parched up hearts, that have been full of everything else except God! In the following wise words of the Saviour Christ, I too believe:

"If thy hand offend thee, cut it off; it is better for thee to enter into life maimed than have two hands to go into hell, into the fire that shall never be quenched.

And if thy foot offend thee, cut it off, for it is better for thee to enter life with one foot than having two feet to be cast into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched.

And if thy eye offend thee, pluck it out; it is better for thee to enter into the Kingdom of God with one eye, than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire...."

Let your first thought, as soon as you wake up at the hour of dawn, be of God. Live in God ceaselessly, throughout the whole day, feeling His Presence within and without, recognising Him in you and in others and in all the inevitable tests of life, until you reach your bed to retire in sleep for the night. Thus, try to sleep in God, to wake up again with the first thought of God, as the day begins to break or start, with Life, Light and Love.

Blessed is the one who is conscious of God's Presence from the first breath at the dawn of the birth, unto the last breath at the dissolution of the body, the physical sheath!

Let us remember, nay, memorise and repeat often, the soul-awakening words of seers of the East:

*Twameva Matha Cha Pitha Twameva
Twameva Bhanduscha Sakha Twameva
Twameva Vidya Dravinam Twameva
Twameva Sarvam Mama Deva Deva*

*O God! Thou art my Mother and Father,
Thou art my relative and friend
Thou art my education and wealth.
Thou art my all in all
Thou art my God of gods.*

Hence, my friends, let us take refuge in Him now and forever. What need is there for any more words? Let us speak only such words that express His Glory. Let us do only such deeds that manifest His Presence. Let us only think of such thoughts that express His Hearty Silence.

Anything which comes in the way between God and ourselves should be discarded. Anyone who stands in the way between ourselves and God should be renounced. If crowds hinder your progress going towards God then seek solitude, avoiding them. If words hurt you or others then try to be a Mouni-a silent Buddha.

If a book helps us to feel God's Presence, let us read it. If a letter helps to express God's Love, let us write it. If the body, mind or any of the senses or the ego comes in the way to God-Realisation, let them be discarded, mercilessly crushed and destroyed in the all-consuming Fire of God.

Let God be first, middle and last now and always, for the Peace of our souls as well as for the good of the world!

MAY PEACE BE UNTO ALL!

OM! OM! OM!

PENANCE IN THE HIMALAYAS – THE GREATNESS OF YOGIES

*Sri Sri Sri Sidheswarananda Bharati Yatindrulu,
Head of the Kurtalam Math*

*Narayanam namskritya shankaramcha Jagadgurum
Kurtalamatha Yogesham Maunaswamina masraye*

Shanti Ashram Centenary Celebrations are on in a big way. I consider it as my good fortune to participate in these celebrations.

Describing the serenity and holy atmosphere of the ashram Pujya Mataji invited me to the Ashram many a time. But I stalled the invitation as I did not want to travel so far. But it has happened now. The holy atmosphere filled with invisible vibrations of the chanting of Omkar, the visible birds, flowers and fruits – remind us the Ashrams of yore inhabited by great rishies. A lot of seva activities take place here- educational institutions, medical centre and the right atmosphere for the aspirants to do sadhana.

Swami Omkar is a Himalayan Yogi. He performed great penance in the holy atmosphere of the Himalayas and received the blessings and the grace of great Siddhas. For centuries Himalayas have been considered as the centres where one attained Siddhies (spiritual/supernatural powers).

*Astityurasyam disidevataatma Himalayo naama nagaadhi
rajaha*

*Purvaparau varinidhi vigaahya sthitaha pruthiviyam iva
maanadandaha.*

says the great poet Kalidasa. In India from the Himalayas down to Rameswaram there are many pilgrim centres. But the very mention of Himalayas thrills the heart of every devout Indian. That is why Swami Omkar performed penance in the enchanting atmosphere of Himalayas inhabited by great saints and sages since time immemorial. When one performs penance one has the divine

experience of the Brahman or the Truth. With what so ever motive one performs penance that goal will be fulfilled by the grace of siddhas and deities reciding in the region.

I read some of Swami Omkar's works and found that his ideas, his concept of the Brahman and his philosophy belong to the very high spiritual order. The story describing the relation between life and two birds illustrates his deep understanding of the Upanishads. Mundakopanishad's mantra.

*Dwaasuparnaa sayujaa sakhayaa samaanam vruksham
parishaswajaayate*

*Tayoranyaha pippalam swadwatte anasnananyo
abhichakaseeti*

Of the two birds on the tree one was eating Pippala fruit and the other was merely watching like a witness. This narrative reveals the relationship between the individual soul and the universal soul. The individual soul experiences both happiness as well as sorrow. But the Iswara is a witness bestowing the fruits of the actions. Similar stories abound in Swami Omkar's works. He was deeply concerned with the concept of love and compassion. Some perform penance amidst five fires during summer and amidst neck deep water in severe winter. Why do they do it? It is because they have not received the grace of God. One should reach a stage when the mere thought of God will enable them to concentrate their mind and enter Bhava Samadhi becoming oblivious of the external world. One sheds tears and cries when one is in difficulties. But nobody cries for God. But one should shed tears for God and surrender to Him with the thought he has nobody else to turn to except God. Swami Omkar was anxious that all of you should reach that stage of total dependence on God. Brindavan is a unique place. There almost everyone will be shedding tears. When asked why they shed tears the reply is that they do not know the reason, the tears just run down their cheeks. Such tears of love and devotion – everyone should shed.

I recited a few lines extempore.

If you are filled with devotion go to Brindavan.

If your heart overflows with love go to the bank of Yamuna

With matted locks, as if in a trance, in rain and shine, run.

Emaciated in a moonlight night, run.

If one has that intensity of divine love one need not do any harsh sadhana.

Swami omkar is one such great being who shared these divine thoughts of love.

In our daily life we all love. But the centres and focus points of love change. In childhood mother is the centre of love. She is everything to the child. As the child grows his love shifts from the mother to the objects of play. The next move is towards story reading, and to college studies and the next centre for love are girls, then marriage. Love shifts from wife to children when they arrive but true love never changes its targets. It is permanent and fixed. Have God as the centre of love and like Radha and Gopies express the anguish of separation from God and surrender to Him. This centre of love is permanent and primordial. Srimad Bhagavata describes this as unparalleled love. This love is sacred and eternal.

Some people worship many Gods. They worship Sun on Sunday, Siva on Monday etc, on each day of the week they worship different Gods. There is nothing wrong in this method of worship. But to surrender totally like the gopies is the sacred love. Sri Bhaskaraacharya in his commentary on Sri Lalitha Sahasranamam, describes how one should worship Iswara as the one and only God. He states that one should consider all other deities not different from the deity he/she worships. In our routine we begin the day with the verse "Lakshmi at the tip of the hand etc, then we do Surya namaskra, consider Siva as Surya, Siva as Vishnu thus considering every deity as his istadevata.

Many people do sadhana, but they all complain that they have not had any spiritual experience, one should take refuge at the feet of a Guru, must follow the path laid down by him. Have his photograph

in front of you and do sadhana. Then 'Z' rays from Guru's portrait will emerge. The guru though may not be present in the physical body; he can bless the disciple with his spiritual presence. Swami Omkar is such a Siddha Yogi who has been showering his grace so that all of you can have the divine experience.

There is a Siddhashrama in the Himalayas. During my wandering in the Himalayas I had the darshan of many siddha yogis. Sri Narayanadatta, master of mantras (mantra siddha) stated that he had the darshan of many siddhas. If we want to associate ourselves with siddha yogis we must tread the path they have prescribed.

As I was going round the ashram I came across a board 'Janakashram'. The name made me recall an incident. Kurtalam is in the Kerala border. Tenkasi is 150 km from Madhurai and Kurtalm is 5 km from Tenkasi. In 1999 a land lord of that area had a son. His astrologer saw the horoscope of the new born baby and predicted that the child would become a Sansyasi. As a young man he used to come to the ashram and meditate in Agastya cave. He had some wonderful experiences. He went to Pondichery and met Mother of Arabindo Ashram. The Mother advised him to go to Himalayas and perform penance and conquer old age and death and he did accordingly. A young French woman by name Sofia was initiated into "Gopala Sundari" mantra by a Hindu saint. Once when she was meditating she heard a voice calling her to Himalayas. She came from Paris and visited Siddhashrama in the Himalayas and met a yogi by name Janaka. She wrote all her experiences and brought them out in a book form.

Such a Himalayan Yogi is our Swami Omkar. I am extremely happy to be here. Be inspired by his divine life and get enlightened. Dedicate your lives for penance. Enquire who you are, whence you are and for what purpose you have come here.

Who are you? A Muslim?, a Christian? Or a Parsi? A Buddhist? Or a Jain? – who are you?

You have taken so many births and changed many bodies –
But who are you?

Jagadguru Adishankara asks “kastvam? Koham? Kuta
aayaataha?” find out who you are and from where you have come?

You are the real supreme Brahma and those who enlighten us
about the Brahman are the Sadgurus. I am extremely happy to come
to one such Sadgurus Ashram. May all of you become great yogis,
great devotees attaining the divine, indescribable Brahma Chaitanya.
This is my prayer. My blessings to you all.

Om! Om! Om!

THOUGHTS ARE THE RAYS OF THE SUN OF SUNS

*The waves remain with the Ocean,
The rays are not separate from the Sun,
And thoughts are the rays of Divinity
Pasya me yogam aisvaram.*

The Sun sheds his rays of light, everywhere - on all sides.
But where do they go, when he disappears? Do not they go
with him ? The ocean ceaselessly sends forth waves. Yet, is
one single wave separated from the ocean and lost ? No.
The waves remain with the ocean, yet they are sent out. So
too thoughts and deeds emanate from the Soul. But not one
thought or deed is separate and aloof from the Soul. Their
locus standi is the Soul. They are always in it. Yet they
are not the Soul, just as the rays are not the sun, and the
waves are not the ocean. The Soul is unmanifested and mani-
fested. Yet it is in neither. It transcends both. "*Pasya me
yogam aisvaram*".

OM TAT SAT OM !

Swami Omkar - Cosmic Flashes

RIBHU GITA – A PREAMBLE

(Gist of the speech delivered on 22nd May, by Sri Bhishtaji, Anbinkudli, Erode on the occasion of the centenary celebrations at Kotagiri centre)

Ribhu Gita was imparted to Rishi Ribhu by Lord Siva. It is also called “Siva Rahasyam”. It is a Sanskrit text containing fifty chapters. Rishi Ribhu attained self knowledge after listening to this Gita and remained in Samadhi. Once Brahmaji came down to earth to see how his manasa putra Ribhu was ruling the earth. But when he found that Ribhu was in Samadhi and neglected his duty Brhma was angry and threw the palm leaf text of “Siva Rahasyam” into the Arabian sea. When Ribhu came out of the Samadhi he realised what has happened to the holy text. He then appealed to the Lord of sea and could retrieve only forty four chapters containing the essence of Advaita. The rest of the six chapters which dealt with Bhakti were retained by the Lord of the Sea himself. Ribhu then moved away to Kedarnath as Lord Brahma could not step into Kedarnath because of a curse. Ribhu then propogate this pure Advaita. Prominent among the many disciples of Ribhu was Nidaga.

Ribhu tested his disciple Nidaga many times and in many ways to find out about his spiritual progress. Once he came as a wayfarer. Nidaga offered him fresh fruits, roots and vegetables as was wont in that age. After the meal Nidaga asked the guest “Oh! Holy master! Did you have sumptuous meal? Are you satisfied?”. Then the guest questioned “what did you give me? What fruits? What roots? What vegetables? I don’t remember anything.” Nidaga was surprised. After the dialogue for three long hours Nidaga realised that the guest was none other than his own guru who came to test him. The last test that he went through before his final realisation was in a place where a king was being taken in a procession on the back of an elephant. Ribhu who came in disguise, asked Nidaga what was happening? Nidaga described the whole scene in great detail. But the stranger asked Nidaga the same question again and again in many different

ways. Exasperated, Nidaga bent the man down, sat on his back and described the king's procession once again. He said "you are the elephant and I am the king and I was sitting on your back." The guest promptly asked "what elephant? What king? What is up and what is down? What is I? What is you? I don't see any difference. I see only one thing everywhere. It never changed. There is nothing like you and I." Suddenly it dawned on Nidaga that this wayfarer was no ordinary person. He was none other than his own Guru. Nidaga fell at the feet of Guru Ribhu and asked for forgiveness. Then Ribhu explained that it was because of '*agnana*' ignorance, he behaved in this manner. After the final instructions Nidaga was enlightened.

The purpose of avatar of a Guru, therefore, is to enlighten atleast one disciple. At first this knowledge was called "Siva Rahasya." But later it came to be known as Ribhugita.

In Sanskrit the text contains fifty chapters. But two hundred years ago Sri Bicchu Shastry who is also known as Ulganathan Swami translated it into Tamil language in fortyfour chapters. As it is sung to melodious tunes taking deep breath, pranayama takes place simultaneously. Even if one does not understand the language, by reciting the text one can meditate and practise nidhidhyasa. The divine vibrations enter our being and touch our heart. By reciting (parayana) or even listening (sravana) one is purified and is lead towards illumination.

Om! Om! Om!

OMKAR IS THE ESSENTIAL NATURE OF GURU

(Gist of the speech delivered by Mata Yogini Sri Chandra Kali Prasad, Sri Sri Sri Hanumat Kali Varaprasad Babu Trust, Namburu on 1-4-2016)

Had the Unmanifest not manifested itself as so many saints in different forms frequently within our reach, it would have been extremely difficult in this time and day, to recognise the nature of the self. In this world people get encouraged to gain knowledge about material world. But none urges us to go inward and find the truth about oneself. Those that encourage us to make this inward Journey are addressed as 'Incarnations.'

Shanti Ashram gives us shelter and makes us think of peace. The basis for Peace is Primordial energy which is infinite and unmanifest. Since we have been blessed with this precious powerful human birth, we have been given an opportunity to recognise great saints by means of name, form, quality/ attribute and action. We as individuals too are recognised by these five factors. With the name comes 'I'ness and 'mine'ness. But with Mahatmas it is different. They have universal love, a bond between two souls. To fathom the depth of this bond is beyond the power of intellect and mind. Just as the salt doll that has gone to measure the depth of the ocean does not return (as it has melted and become one with the ocean) so do the individuals who try to understand the Gurutatva. They too become one with the Mahatmas. Here swamiji is addressed as Omkar. He has hidden his infinite nature in his very name. Where there is empty space there one hears Om. When you keep any empty object near your ear you hear Om. When you go up the hill and loudly utter Om, Om gets reverberated. An empty pot, vessel, conch, keep any one of them near your ear you can hear Om. During meditation, when the mind is thought free and blank, you hear Om naturally.

*Om ityekaakshara midagum sarvam
tasyopavyakhyaanam bhootam bhavat*

*Bhavishyaditi sarvam omkara yeva
yaachaanvat trikaalaateetam tadapi omkara yeva,*

Maandukyopanishad

Sound emerged from silence and from sound emanated all names and forms. This world with all the names and forms is verily Omkar. Swamiji has taken birth to remind us all this truth. “*Upaasanenaam kaaryardham brahmano rupa kalpanaa.*” The unmanifest *Brahman* incarnates Himself as an *Avatar* to enable the *sadhkas*, *upasakas* to achieve their goals. Just as Dakshinamurty, Rama, Krishna were worshiped in *Kruta*, *Treta* and *Dwapara Yugas* so are our gurus being worshiped by us as incarnations. Swami Omkar has incarnated himself for us. He served ceaselessly. There is nothing called ignorance. Laziness is ignorance (*agnana*). One cannot rid oneself of ignorance by reading books or reciting religious texts. My Guru used to say, when one discharges one's ordained duties, then enlightenment takes place. Guru lives amidst us as an embodiment of ultimate truth. Guiding us according to a perfect plan, at every stage, they look forward to our spiritual progress,

Devotion or Bhakti is independent. Bhakti is not offering flowers or offering Prasad. Bhakti is surrender. When we follow the foot prints of saints, tread the path laid down by them, holding them as rolemodels, then our lives can become divine. We experience joy when we remember the name and form of the Mahatmas, when we recall their qualities, their miraculous actions, their austere life and the penance they performed, we feel their presence. Then Mataji sang a song describing the glory of the Guru. The burden of the song is the proximity of the Guru is the real treasure, it will be always with you and it is a priceless treasure. It is the focal point, the target of the disciple. And this should not be forgotten.

Everything in the world leaves us at one point of time or the other. But the presence of the Guru is fixed. Till we reach our goal Guru's presence follows us like our own shadow. It is like a temple in the heart. Who built this temple? Lord Krishna says “*Sarvasya*”

chaaham hridi sannivishto.”

God's creation is one, but appears as many. This truth has to be realised. Awake or asleep one has to be aware of this. It has to be constantly remembered. One has to withstand the test of time and come out triumphant, whether the problem is physical or mental. One should be strong like Prahalada or Sakkubai. In this *Kaliyuga* if we stick to the chanting of the Lord's name it is enough to take us to our destination. For those who follow the path of self enquiry the world is like a dream. But for the others the world is real. Through *Vichara* or analysis the falsehood of the world can be realised.

Dhyanamulam Gurormurthi

Pujamulam Guroh padam.

Mantramulam Guror Vakyam

Mokshamulam Guroh Kripa.

The grace of Guru is to be experienced. It is not a temporary emotional aberration. It is an experience, an awareness of the things as they are. Omkar is the world of names and forms. When you take refuge at the feet of the Guru he enables you to experience this truth very easily. The whole creation has emerged from Omkar and it will finally dissolve in Omkar. The concept of time of past, present and future is also Omkar. What is beyond these three aspects, the unmanifest, is also Omkar. The Guru makes you experience this through his infinite grace.

My pranams to all such Gurus.

Om! Om! Om1

THE WAY OF SELF-CONQUEST

Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj

JIVANMUKTI EXPLAINED

Sri R.R. Tiwari is a Jnana Yogi. He practises Japa of Om and regularly meditates on the Absolute *Brahman*.

He asked the Master to suggest the royal road to bliss.

"Control the mind, eradicate desires and become a God-realised sage," said the Master.

"Swamiji, please tell me how to eradicate desires."

"Meditate constantly on the all-pervading *Brahman*. Raise the *Brahmakara Vritti* constantly. Through intense practice you will be able to go beyond even this. The complete elimination of all mental modifications is the goal according to Patanjali Maharshi also. This is the road to *Jivanmukti*. By this practice you will very soon attain *Manonasa* (destruction of the mind)"

"What will be the condition after *Manonasa*, Swamiji?" queried Sri Tiwari.

"The whole world is a mere creation of your mind," said the Master. "After *Manonasa* this illusion vanishes. You are then able to realise your essential, divine nature. You become a fully realised sage if you get established in *Brahmic* Consciousness."

"Swamiji, I have a doubt. If the *Jivanmukta* has had *Manonasa*. then how does he work in the world?"

The Master said. "Some *Vedantins* hold the theory that there are two kinds of *Jnanis* - the *Samadhi Jnani* and the *Vyavahara Jnani*. When the *Jnani* is in *Samadhi*, he has absolutely no dualistic consciousness. However, when he comes down from that state and undertakes to serve humanity, he has *Vyavahara Jnana*. He is con-

scious of unity in diversity."

"Swamiji, if the mind is completely annihilated, how can thoughts arise in it again?"

"In a *Jivanmukta* there is *Swarupa Manonasa*. The *Rajasic* and *Tamasic* elements in it are destroyed. This lasts so long as *Prarabdha* lasts. *Prarabdha* has its play in his body. Heat and cold, hunger and thirst and diseases affect the body. But, as his *Antahkarana* is devoid of *Rajas* and *Tamas* and only pure *Sattva* is left, he is conscious of *Brahman* in this state. The pairs of opposites do not affect his inner blissful state. In *Videhamukti*, when the body falls as a result of the exhaustion of *Prarabdha*, there is *Arupa Manonasa*. The *Jnani* rests for ever in the nondual state till the body is decomposed. This is the supreme state. Attain this through vigilance and vigorous practice. Jai Ho, Tiwariji!"

WHOLE WORLD ATTRACTED

The friendly and cordial greetings extended by the Master to an old colleague, Swami Abhayananda, was a very moving scene.

Touching the feet of the newcomer, the Master greeted him, "*Om Namo Narayanaya!* Come, Maharaj!"

He made the Swami sit by his side and commenced a pleasant conversation.

"Swamiji, I admire the great work that you are doing. Everywhere people are singing your glory," began Swami Abhayananda.

"It is all the grace of saints like you that is enabling me to do a little service," said the Master.

"No, no, Maharaj. This is all the fruit of your intense austerities and devotion to Lord."

"I think we are meeting after about fifteen years," the Master reminded the Swami.

"Yes, you are right Swamiji, I can never forget your inspiring song, 'Agagda Bhum'. You have created here a big institution around you and attracted the whole world. Yet you are the same easily accessible, humble Swamiji of Kutir 111 of Swarg Ashram. Though many things have developed around you. I still see that you are the same living image of love "

The Master requested one of the disciples to bring some fruit.

"Maharaj, have this little offering. Please be gracious enough to honour the Ashram's dining hall today." Master invited Swami.

"As you command me."

Master then began reminiscing, "Maharaj, do you remember our trip to the Paraso hills, where we had good Kirtan?"

"Yes, I remember Pundit Krishna Chandra Sharma, the advocate, taking us to Gudgava near Delhi and thence to the Paraso hills. We had just attended the annual function of the Nawal Kishore Prem Sabha. "

"Yes, We had whole night Kirtan there."

"Your publicity work is really marvellous. In all the important journals, be it health, politics or religion, your article is there."

"Yes, the *My Magazine of India* is publishing my articles for a very long time, for nearly twenty years, since 1929."

"What? Twenty years? No author has written for so long a time and no publisher has been patient enough to publish the articles of any one individual contributor for so long. That clearly shows that you have a very tight grip over the reading public and you have simply captured their hearts. The spiritual lessons in *My Magazine* are like nectar drops."

THAT WHICH IS THERE IS HERE

A few of the Master's disciples from Madras had just returned

from Kedarnath and Badarinath. An Ashramite was also one of the party. Like a fond mother the Master enquired about their welfare and the comforts and discomforts they experienced on the way. The affectionate pair of eyes noticed that some of them had been thinned out.

"You are much reduced. It will perhaps take a month to recoup your health "

After thus comforting them. He asked, "Now, where is the next trip to? To Tirupathi? Ohji, do not run about here and there. Tirupathi is here only.

"Himalayan regions are worth seeing - the places where great Rishi's did austerities. Further, the walking exercise and inhalation of the pure Himalayan air, laden with the healing power of innumerable herbs, bestows good health on the pilgrims, but some people develop this pilgrimage into a craze wandering. All their lives are spent in wandering. Then they begin to extol certain places and criticise others. You have now visited some important places; other places are also like them. Henceforth you should stick to this place. There is a lot of work to be done here."

KIRTAN - A DIVINE TONIC

A disciple entered the office and prostrated to the Master in the morning. The Master at once recognized him as one who had missed the previous night's Divya Nama Kirtan.

"Divya Nama Kirtan has been held several times, but last night's Kirtan excelled all others. Sivaramakrishna, Murugadas, Venkateswara Iyer and many other experts participated. It was most wonderful."

"Even if you felt tired or were out of sorts, the Kirtan would have made you feel better. It is the most powerful tonic. I had just said so in my Swarg Ashram talk."

Shamefacedly the disciple sought the Master's feet.

The master continued, "I am always a student. Some people think; 'It is the same Divya Nama Sankirtan, I have already attended it a number of times.' I never feel so. I attend every function and carefully listen to all lectures. What wonderful points Sridharji brings forth! I am all attention to these. I then introspect and find out the subtle defects inside. I am eternally a student and a Sadhaka. Some people take the Bala Mantra, attain some Mantra Siddhi and then go to sleep. They do not think of the innumerable defects that still lurk inside. That is the most essential thing.

(from the Book "Sivananda's Gospel of Divine Life.)

From January 2002 DLS Magazine

PRAYER OF UNFOLDMENT

immortal vein whence life doth spring,

Teach us now our hearts to bring,

To that state which knows no fear

Where we shed ecstatic tears,

Grant that we that realm behold,

In our loving hearts unfolds,

Of which saints and sages sing,

"How stupendous is this Thing!"

Om Tat Sat Om!

Sister Sushila Devi- A santi Ashram Publication

WORSHIP OF THE DIVINE MOTHER

– Its Significance and Importance

-Swami Tattvavidananda

Significance of 'Deepavali'

Deepavali message: "Deepavali is a festival of lights. It is observed in commemoration of the triumph of the Divine Power over the force of darkness. Deepavali must be for us a transmutation of a life under the thralldom of the senses to a life liberated from all bondage born of ignorance" (Swami Ramdas).

Symbolically we light the lamps on this occasion. It's a festival, so people want to do something. They want to have something to do because people have lot more enthusiasm to do than to know. They are not very keen to know much but they are keen to do a lot. And therefore they go on lighting the lamps, which is fine. Aavali means 'series'. 'Deepavali' therefore means 'an array of lamps'. A 'lamp' stands for 'knowledge'. Even when they keep a lamp inside the temple to dispel darkness, it is symbolic – of knowledge dispelling the darkness of ignorance.

'Universal Mother' and the 'Ultimate Reality'

On this day, Maha Lakshmi, the Universal Mother, is worshipped. In the context of the Upanishads, or what we call Vedanta, the Reality, which is the origin of this entire universe, is called Brahman. This Brahman is understood to be Absolute Existence and It is entirely free from attributes or particularities. It is nirguna, and also entirely formless – nirakara. Even a mental form is not allowed in Brahman – it is nirupa. It doesn't have any particular features. People look for certain features because features define a thing; they keep a thing in contrast to other things. The Supreme Reality, Brahman, being one without a second, does not admit any features; that's why it is called *nirvishesha*. It is also free from any modification, and therefore it is *avikriya*. It is also free from any movement or action, and therefore *nishkriya*. Being *avikriya*, It does not undergo any modification

whatsoever, in Itself; that is how Brahman is understood. It is not possible to describe Brahman. You can only make an effort by way of negation; of what Brahman is not –‘this is not (in) Brahman’, etc. All the above terms are of negation only. If I have to give an example, I would say that it is like the shoreless ocean – in the middle the ocean is shoreless and waveless, in which there are no features – in whichever direction you see it is just the same. That is how Brahman is.

Manifest and the Unmanifest

But the same Brahman when viewed from a different standpoint, viz. the standpoint of this universe, such as – this universe has originated from Brahman, it is sustained by Brahman, as and when the universe ends which is called annihilation, the universe will resolve in Brahman – then you are looking at Brahman as the creator, sustainer and annihilator. Also, now you have given multiple attributes to Brahman – that It is the Originator, It is what sustains this universe, and into which the universe resolves. Therefore when you view the same Brahman from the standpoint of the universe, it is called Saguna Brahman; now It has acquired some attributes. Gunas could also be technical viz. creation is rajoguna, because a lot of activity is involved. Sustaining or maintaining is the *sattvaguna*. You need a lot of understanding and skill and you have to work hard even to maintain a family. Then, the annihilation is the *tamoguna*. Now Brahman is *sattva rajas tamo gunatmaka* – Saguna Brahman. Brahman in Itself is called the Absolute Existence – *Nirguna* Brahman, but from the standpoint of this universe, the same Brahman is called the *Saguna* Brahman.

Brahman Alone Appears as the Shakti

There is another name for that *Saguna* Brahman. It is ‘*Shakti*’. It is wrong to suppose that *Shakti* is something else other than Brahman. First you divide and then you struggle to unify. It is not some other Brahman. *Saguna* Brahman or *Shakti* is not some other entity. It is the same Brahman which, when viewed from the standpoint of the universe, apparently acquires the gunas in order to create and maintain the universe, and therefore the same Brahman that we called *Nirguna* Brahman, is now called *Saguna* Brahman. Recall the example

of shore-less ocean. Suppose suddenly an iceberg appears in the ocean. Now, the ocean has acquired a feature; now, you can say, the iceberg is in this direction but not in that direction. Already you are able to create a feature, an attribute, a particularity in the ocean. Between the earlier ocean, utterly featureless and totally free from any particularity, and the present ocean which is connected with the iceberg – what is the difference between that ocean and this ocean? It is the same ocean – it is not a different ocean. Therefore it is the same Brahman which is called *Shakti*. You should not be under the impression that Brahman is sitting on the right side and *Shakti* is sitting on the left side; it is merely symbolic representation. Brahman alone is *Shakti*. This is how Sri Ramakrishna used to explain in a unique way. The *Purana* stories could be at times misleading, unless the symbolism is properly understood.

Ishwara, the Father, is Also the Mother

Brahman being the Originator of this universe is called the Father. The Father idea is in the Middle-East but even before it came to the Middle-East, it was there in India. Brahman is called the Father of the entire universe. That is why in the Vedic mantras you see “*Prajapate na tvadetanyanyo vishvaa jataani pari taa babhuva.*” Prajapati is the father of all life forms; ‘*na tvad anyah*’ – other than You none else. You alone are’. ‘*Etani vishvaa jaataani pari taa*’ – ‘all these and those (unseen) life forms which are everywhere in the universe – they have arisen from you and they merge in you. You alone are’. This is how the Vedic mantras describe God as the Father (Krishna Yajurveda Samhita, 1-8-14-2). But God is also described as the Mother. We should not think that Father is different and Mother is different; the same *Ishwara* who is described as the Father is also described as the Mother, because the human mind wants to look at the originator of this universe as the Father, and also as the Mother.

All of us know we go to the mother with a lot more confidence and love than to the father. When it comes to the father we are a bit cautious and keep some safe distance. Whereas with the mother you can be free because a mother’s love is a forgiving love. Father’s love is a commanding love. There is a difference but it is the same love. So, now we talk of Mother “*yaa devi sarvabhuteshu matrurupena*”

samsthithaa” (Devi mahatmyam, 5-71, p. 75, Sri Ramakrishna Math, Madras). Therefore in every devotee’s heart *Ishwara* is worshipped as the Father, and the same *Ishwara* is worshipped as the Mother also. That is the specialty of Vedic *dharma*. The specialty of Hindu *dharma* is that *Ishwara* is worshipped not only as the Father but also as the Mother. You don’t see much of that character in other faiths. In other faiths *Ishwara* is worshipped predominantly as the Father. Of course, in Christianity there is the worship of the Mother Mary. It was not there to begin with but became popular later. It became a denomination within the Christianity and it has its own followers. I am not sure if Vatican approves it entirely. In Hinduism there is a full range of worship in the form of the Mother. That is how on the occasion of Deepavali we worship *Ishwara* as the Mother.

“Devi Stuti”: Adoring the Glory of the Universal Mother

Devi Mahatmyam (the glory of Mother) is from the ‘Markandeya Purana’. In the context of performing a ritual using those verses, it is also known as ‘*Chandi Saptashati*’, meaning 700 mantras of the Universal Mother. The verses are less than 600 but some verses get divided into two or more mantras thus making 700. Like, *ya devi sarvabhuteshu matrurupena samsthithaa, namastasyai* – that is one mantra. “*Namastasyai*” is the second mantra. “*Namastasyai namo namah*” is the third mantra. So, one verse splits into three mantras. Mostly Mother is very loving; but occasionally Mother punishes too; hence the name *Chandi*. “*Chanda*” is anger; therefore *Chandi* is the goddess of anger in the annihilation aspect. In *Chandi Yaga*, these mantras are used. In the *Saptashati* there is one section where all the devas like *Agni, Vayu, Varuna, Indra*, etc. worship the Universal Mother. As part of that worship they recite these verses. This is how they praised the glory of the Mother. That is why this is called ‘*Devi Stuti*’. In the beginning you find “*devaa ucuhu*”, the devas spoke this way; they are praising the Mother saying, “*namo devyai mahadevyai*” (5-9, p.69).

No Division Between the Father and the Mother

Father and Mother are not two separate entities; otherwise it becomes duality. Between the Father and the Mother there is no

division. The Father is the Mother, and the Mother is the Father, “*tvameva mata ca pita tvameva...*”. The word *Devi* means the brilliant one. Generally people worship a photo or a murti; they make it brilliant by decorating it with electric bulbs. But then you should not take that literally. You should always look for the significance of the word brilliance. Suppose you say a young student is brilliant; what does it mean? It doesn't mean some glow is coming from him. The 'brilliance' is 'knowledge'. 'Knowledge' is always 'brilliance'. *Ishwara* that we worship – is an embodiment of knowledge. Though you are worshipping in a piece of stone, you are not worshipping an insentient *Ishwara*. The piece of stone stands for a sentient *Ishwara* who is all-knowledge, *sarvajna*; that's why He is called *deva*. In feminine form the same *Ishwara* is called the *Devi*.

Everything Belongs to the Mother Alone

My prostration unto the Devi -- *namah*. '*Na me*' or '*na mama*' is *namah*; that is the etymology. When you offer flowers and say '*namah*', you mean, “O Mother, these flowers are not mine”. Maybe, hand is mine! How can it be? What is the power that makes the hand move? Is that life-force yours? No, it is Mother's life force only. “*Yaa devi sarvabhuteshu vruttirupena samsthithaa*” (5-59, p.74) – *vrutti* is activity. Suppose you take a flower and offer, it requires life force in the hand. Not just hand, the mind also, because all actions originate in the mind. Thought is also energy, power. Thought resolves to offer a flower and then the power of thought is conveyed to the life force in the hand which comes to operation and the flower is picked up and offered. The flower belongs to the Mother; the power, the life-force that offers the flower, also belongs to the Mother.

Mother is Shakti, the Universal Power

What about the knowledge which appears in the form of thought? That also belongs to Mother; “*yaa devi sarvabhuteshu shaktirupena samsthithaa.*” (5-32, p.72). Within us *Shakti* is manifesting in two forms – one is *pranashakti* – power of the vital force, also called *kriyashakti*, and power of knowledge called *vijnanashakti*. Therefore, the *shakti* which makes this offering possible is also the Mother.

‘Namah’: Surrendering Everything to the Mother

The flower belongs to the Mother; Mother created this entire *brahmanda*; we did not create the flowers. We make paper flowers – poor imitations of the real flowers. Suppose, we put a real flower and paper flower next to each other, the paper will remain as paper without changing for a week but the real flower withers away but still the real flower is supreme. Because it is a real one; the fake or imitation is not valuable. The original is important. Therefore it is the flower created by the Mother that you offer. In this creation and in this worship, everything is Mother’s. ‘*na mama*’ – nothing is mine. Even children are not our children; they are the Mother’s children. This way everything is surrendered to the Mother. That’s the meaning of ‘*namah*’.

‘Not mine, O Mother, but Thine’

Human mind wants to own and possess; it wants to say ‘my house’ etc. In the entire house there is not one thing we created – wood, steel, cement, water, none. Everything is created by the Mother. In fact we don’t have the right to say ‘my body’ even. The human mind always tries to say ‘my, my, my’. ‘My’ in English is same as ‘*me*’ in Sanskrit. ‘*Me me me*’ – who says ‘*me me me*’? The sheep bleats like that. The ‘sheep’ here stands for the ‘ignorance’, which is why the sheep has to be herded. One who herds the sheep is called shepherd. Shiva is called *Pashupati*, The Lord of animals. Who are the animals? The *jivas* are the animals. “*Chatushpadaamuta ca dvipadaam*” – *Ishwara* is the *pashupati*; he lords over two kinds of *pasus* – *pasus* which have four legs and those that have two legs. The same ideas prevalent in the Middle-East have come from the shores of India, via the silk route. This human weakness of saying ‘me, me, me’ is always there, because of which, in the Gita (1-1), Dhritarashtra says ‘*maamakaha*’.

to be continued.....

**THE SCHEMING DEMONESS MEETS HER MATCH!
AN EXCERPT FROM MYSTICISM OF THE
RAMAYANA**

Swami Jyotirmayananda

One day, the demoness Shurpanakha went to Panchavati and saw Rama, Sita and Lakshmana relaxing in the forest. Seeing the beauty of Rama, her mind was hopelessly overcome with the passionate desire to win Rama away from Sita and have him all to herself.

However, Shurpanakha realized that her natural demoniac form was far too hideous to appeal to some- one as handsome as Rama. Therefore, she used her demoniac powers to assume the form of a beautiful lady and then she approached Rama. Smiling alluringly, she said, "There isn't anyone in the world like you in beauty and in goodness. And there isn't anyone like me among women.

The Creator has planned very well in bringing us together. We are a perfect match and you should become my husband. What is Sita to you? Why do you want this deformed, unsightly, grim-faced woman when you can have me?"

Rama calmly replied that he was already married to Sita, and then suggested that Shurpanakha should go to Lakshmana, his younger brother, who was not married to anyone at the moment. The demoness followed his suggestion, and approached Lakshmana with a proposal of marriage.

Lakshmana responded with apparent gentleness, saying: "Oh beautiful one, I am just a servant of Rama. If you marry me you will become just another servant, and a life of dependence is not good at all. Rather, you should marry Rama, who can have as many wives as he wants and could easily give up his feeble wife for a beautiful woman like you."

Not realizing that she was being ridiculed, Shurpanaka believed his words and then proceeded back to Rama, who again sent her back to Lakshmana. This continued until, finally, Shurpanakha

understood what was happening and became enraged. With tremendous anger, she assumed her hideous demoniac form and rushed towards Rama, saying that she was going to devour Sita.

Seeing the fear in Sita's eyes, Rama signaled Lakshmana, who then lunged at Shurpanakha and swiftly cut off her nose and ears. Infuriated and in pain, the demoness ran off, swearing revenge. Thus began Rama's first direct challenge to Ravana, for that mutilated demoness was none other than the sister of that great demon King.

This dramatic encounter with Shurpanakha has profound mystical implications. In confronting all developments in life, an aspirant has two choices-*shreya* or *preya*. *Shreya* is that which is good or pure; *preya* is that which is pleasing, but impure. *Shreya* is represented by Sita, who is goodness and simplicity personified. *Preya* is represented by Shurpanakha, who assumes an alluring and beautiful form to entice Rama, while underneath that facade exists her natural demoniac form which is quite hideous. "Shurpanakha" literally means "on whose nails are like winnowing fans," and she was well-known for using those nails to scratch the heads of people while she was devouring them.

All the objects of the world that are pleasing to your mind and senses are like Shurpanakha-They stay pleasing until you begin to look at them more deeply. Then you discover a demon underneath their pleasing form; you find that hidden beneath their charm are the terrible claws of attachment and hatred and innumerable illusions.

That *preya* tries to lure Rama away from Sita. It tries to hinder one's aspiration for Self-realization by overpowering intellect and taking it away from the soul. However, when one possesses a highly advanced mind and spiritual maturity, he does not fall for the tricks of Shurpanakha. When your will is strong, you are able to look into the defects of sense enjoyments and strip them of their power and enchantment. Like Lakshmana, you clip their nose and ears right away.

This act symbolizes the development of *vairagya* (dispassion) and *viveka* (discrimination between the Self and the not-Self). With

the sharp sword of *viveka*, an aspirant chops off the ears and nose of worldly pleasures. The moment one looks at them through discriminative vision, they all seem disfigured and mutilated, rather than charming.

Once you have convinced your mind that the world of sense pleasures has no abiding meaning, you have as if challenged Ravana, and embarked upon a project of destroying ignorance. So be careful, for the fight becomes very intense!

The Battle with Khara and Dushana

Without nose and ears, the hideous visage of Shurpanakha became all the more terrible to behold. She rushed, shrieking and wailing, to her brothers Khara and Dushana, who were stationed in the Dandaka forest with their demoniac armies to impede the spiritual practices of sages there and eventually to fight Rama.

After hearing their sister's account of her mutilation, Khara and Dushana rushed with their sixty thousand demon soldiers to Panchavati, creating a tremendous dust storm of revenge as they ran. Seeing the approaching demons, Rama had Lakshmana take Sita into a cave and then he single handed fought with and destroyed the entire demon army by creating a special Divine illusion. By his Divine power, Rama caused every demon to appear as Rama to the others around him. So, since every demon was intent upon destroying Rama, they eagerly chopped off each others' heads and the sixty thousand demons destroyed one another in a very short time.

Khara and Dushana refer to *rajas* and *tamas* in the mind of an aspirant. With their vast army of sixty thousand demons, they represent what *Raja Yoga* calls *klishta vrittis* - all the thought waves of the mind that are dominated by egoism, attachment, hatred, fear and their ramifications - the thought waves based on ignorance.

These *klishta vrittis* try to subdue Rama, but there is a simple method to destroy them. The secret lies in recognizing that wherever your mind goes, the reality is Rama.

If you are practising meditation and become upset because your mind is running in so many directions, don't try to overpower your mind with force. Just let your mind go wherever it wants - but remind it that wherever it goes, God is the only reality. Behind every name and form there is nothing but Rama. Behind all thoughts of one's children, one's job, sweet pudding and the moon, there is nothing but Rama. When your mind recognizes Rama or God everywhere, all of its distractions stop and it becomes calm. That is the greatest secret of concentration of mind. Like Rama confronting the vast armies of Khara and Dushana, you will destroy all the forces of mental distraction and subdue all negative thought waves in a very short time.

-from International Yoga Guide may 2013

NO FORGETFULNESS IN GOD

Can I forget my God, my Soul ?

Can I forget Him, my life ?

Being in the chamber of my own Heart,

He is my help in each strife.

Can I forget God, who is the life of my life, and the Soul of my soul? But I am forgetting Him. Yet am I not remembering Him even in my forgetfulness? Does not He sit like the unbidden guest in the chamber of my soul, whether I attend to Him or not? He is with me and in me always, whether I consciously remember the fact or not. Let me, therefore, cast aside the very idea that I could forget Him.

OM TAT SAT OM !

- from COSMIC FLASHES - Swami Omkar

ASHRAM NEWS

Brahmachari Hrishiksha Chaitanya, Chinmaya Tapovanam, Kottapatnam- In his discourses from 15-7-2016 to 17-7-2016 explained the Mahavakyas in a very simple and lucid language. He said that these sentences are not for mere repetition or japa. One should do nishkama karma (selfless work) which purifies the heart, thereby making one experience the Mahavakyas in one's life.

From 21-7-2016 to 23-7-2016 Swamini Shantananda of Chinmaya Sharada Ashram Singarakonda, spoke on the 16th chapter of Bhagavad Gita. She said that we should develop the divine qualities and give up the negative qualities so that we attain peace and ultimately be liberated.

Swamini Shradhananda, chinamya Mission, Chennur spoke on Omkara Upasana from 25th to 27th of July.

From 28th to 30th July Swami Prameyananda, Chinmaya Mission, Adoni gave discourses on Shanti mantras from Kenopanishad. He compared these mantras with the Peace prayer of Santi Ashram and stated that Peace prayer is the essence of the Upanishad mantras.

On 16th July Aradhana of Shanti Mataji was conducted by Sri Samba Murty garu.

Swamini Vinamrananda Mataji conducted the Gurupurnima Puja on the 19th July. Vattikota Sravani and Potu Suryavamsi of 10th class of Santi Ashram received Mutyala Subbaraidu memorial gold medal and cash prize for securing 1st and 2nd rank respectively.

Dr. Ramswarup Javahar of Kakinada and Dr. Mallipudi Naveen of USA held a free medical camp at the Ashram on 24th July. They gave a checkup to the inmates of the Shanti Ashram as well as the students of the school. Sri Matta Satyanarayana garu and Sri Somu Prasad supplied medicines free of cost. On 24th July the routine distribution of provisions was done for the old people of Shantiashram, Totapalli, Kakinada, Pithapuram, Waltair and Kotagiri.

As a part of the Centenary Celebrations Bhagavat Saptah was conducted at Ramatirtha Yoga training centre from 18th August under the guidance of Swamini Vinamramataji and Swami Satyatmanandaji of Chinmaya Mission, Ongole. 24 members from Ongole participated in the recitation of the Holy Text, Srimad Bhagavatam. Swami Yagnanadaji, Chinmaya Mission, Siddipet gave discourses for five days from 19th to 23rd August on the 10th Skanda and dealt with the birth and the Leelas of Lord Sri Krishna in great detail. In connection with the Krishnashtami a special puja was conducted at the statue of Sri Krishna near Maitreyi Ashram. Sri Ganesh Charan Acharya, Sri Gangaraju along with Vinamra Mataji recited all the 18 chapters of Bhagavad Gita on this occasion. At night a special satsang was held at the prayer hall, down the hill and the children of Gurukul participated in their Bhajans, Keertan and enjoyed breaking the decorated pot (Utti kottadam).

Pujya Jnaneswari Mataji blessed and thanked Swami Yagnananda and all the participants from Ongole. She recalled the affection and regard that Swamini Sharada Priyananda Mataji of Chinmayaranya had for Shanti Ashram and how Mataji said that Shanti Ashram and Chinmayaranya are not two Ashrams but one.

Swamini Vinamra Mataji in her thanks giving speech after the Bhagavat saptah said that Swami Satyananadaji, Swami Yagnanandaji and she were disciples of Pujya Swamini Sharada Priyananda Mataji and studied together. She thanked the swamis for their continued relationship with the Shanti Ashram and the successful completion of recitation and discourses on Srimad Bhagavatam. She added that there can be no final word about Bhagavata. Even Brahma cannot say that this is the ultimate meaning. What then need be said about mortals like us, but constant and regular recitation will enable one to know a little about BHAGAVAT. It is stated in the vaishnava texts that recitation of the text can be done in 7 days, in 21 days, 40 days or 60 days. The Bhagavad Gita is a capsulised form of the essence of the Bhagavata, Krishna Tattva. Sri Krishna declared to Uddhava that he and Bahagavatam are not different. So it is indeed the great good fortune of all those that were able to participate in the Saptah. It is the indication of the infinite

grace of the Lord Sri Krishna upon them all.

Swami Satyanandaji in his concluding remarks said that the story of Sri Krishna is very interesting and intriguing with many twists and turns. The Hero Krishna faced many difficulties but overcame them. He marched on without a break. The first 9 skandas are the basis for the entire story. In the 10th skanda Lord Krishna arrives and the two parts of this skanda deal with the birth and leelas. The 11th skanda deals with the self knowledge. It is indeed a great fortune that in this Naimisaranya of Shanti Ashram so many could participate in the Saptah and receive the blessings of Swami Omkarji, Swamini Sharada Priyananda Mataji and Pujya Jnanesawari Mataji.

As a part of the centenary celebrations 'Atma Parisodhana Yoga Camp' was conducted by Swami Pragnaranya at the Ashram. 35 members from the Ashram as well as different parts of the state received the benefit. They were taught Pranava naadanu saadhanam, concentration, turning the mind inward through special techniques like 'Asthipanjara Veekshna etc.'

Pujya Sri Jnaneswari Mataji addressed the members at the concluding function of the camp and laid emphasis on the message of Swami Omkar. "What is the purpose of human life? Why did we come here? Where do we go from here? Why did we come to the ashram. What is our goal? What is the Sadhana that we are doing? These are the questions that each one of us should ask oneself and make progress. She blessed all those present and prayed for their progress in their Sadhana.

Visakhapatnam centre

From 5TH to 7TH August 2016, Centenary Celebrations of Shanti Ashram were celebrated at Visakhapatnam in the presence of Pujya Jnaneswari Mataji and Swamini Vinamra Mataji. 5 am to 6 am yoga classes were conducted by Yogacharya Appa Rao. From 10 am to 12 noon they had sankeertan, music and recitation of holy texts by Sri Kodanda Ramachari, Sri Prabhu Chaitanya and Sri Murali. The students of the Gurukul school held a scientific exhibition; they exhibited charts and models of the projects they made. Competitions

were held in sports, essay writing, elocution and quiz and the winners were awarded prizes. In the evenings Ch Venkataramana of Yoga Conscious Trust, Bheemili, Brahmachari Bhanuchaitanya of Chinmaya Mission, Sri Swami Nirmalanandagiri of Jonnada Vivekananda oldage Janagokula Sevashram delivered discourses on spiritual matters.

On this occasion 100 saplings were planted in the Ashram campus.

On 18th August a 'Sataavadhanam' was conducted by Dr. PTGV Rangacharya, the recipient of Rashtrapathy award from Hyderabad on Sri Sankaracharya and Advaita. Dr. Pandrangi Ramdevi was the moderator. Dr. Viswanath, J.V. Aparna, G. Tiruvengala Kumari, P Kalpana, J. V. Andal Kumari, actively participated exhibiting their mastery over the subject matter and their felicity with the use of the language and entertained the audience. Sri Jnaneswari Mataji honoured all the participants. Swamini Vinamra Mataji proposed the vote of thanks. The function was concluded with the prayer by Brahamcharini Suhita Chaitanya.

On the occasion of 105th Jayanti of Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj on 8th September Swamini Vinamra Mataji, Swamini Vicharaswaroopananda, Swami Hariharananda Bharati, Sri Ganesh Acharya conducted the Paduka Puja. In the night satsangh Sri Hari Hara Subrahmanyam spoke on the life and teachings of Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj, his passion for service and synthesis of three Yogas Karma, Bhakti and Jnana.

8th to 16th September 2016 Sri Kondala Ramacharyulu, Sri Tatacharyulu and Sri Raghavacharyulu recited the Ramacharitamans of Tulasidas, in the evening Satsangh with bhajan and keertan. They had a very special way of reciting the Peace Prayer indicating their deep devotion towards the Ashram. On 16th September they concluded the programme with Sita Kalyanam.

On 10th and 11th September Swami Sarvagananda of Chinmaya Mission, Vijayawada gave discourses on Valmikiramayana

with special focus on Kishkinda Kanda and Sundarakanda highlighting the life of Vali and the reasons for Rama killing him and the significance of Vanara Sena.

On 17th September “Chaturmasyavratam, Lakshminarayana havan and purnaahuti were conducted by Sri Sitaramamurty, Pithapuram in the holy presence of Pujya Jnaneswari Mataji.

On 24th September, the birthday of Pujya Sri Swami Chidanandaji was celebrated. Swamini Vinamra Mataji and Brahmacharini Suhita Chaitanya performed the Padukapuja in the morning. In the evening Satsang, Pujya Sri Swami Vidya Swarupanandagiri, Head of the Sukhabrahmashram, Sri Kalahasti spoke about the close bond that Chidanandaji had with Shukabrahmashram. He said he was happy to participate in the birth centenary celebrations of Swamiji here in Shanti Ashram, though he could not go to Rishikesh for the Celebrations. In his discourse Swamiji said man always is in search of happiness. But because of maya, Avidya and ignorance he is not able to experience this happiness. Just as in the spring the whole of nature glows with ecstasy so should a man in the presence of saints, overcome the power of maya. To explain this he gave innumerable examples from the lives of saints. Sri K. Murali Manohar who accompanied Swamiji gave the essence of Vedanta through songs in his unique style.

Sri G. Nageswara Rao a devotee of Shanti Ashram in his speech said that Shanti Ashram grew from strength to strength under the presidentship of Pujya Swami Chidanandaji Maharaj. In 1986 when Swamiji stayed in the cottage built by Chellaramji and later he met Chellaramji in Bombay. Perhaps it is because of the inspiration of Swamiji, Chellaramji built 30 rooms for the school and gave generous cash donation.

Sri Harihara Subrahmanyam in his speech said “Patanjali Sutra talks about ‘sthiram, sukham, asanam’, siddhi. Swamiji did intense sadhana during nights. After 10 pm he would sit on the bank of Ganga and meditate for long hours irrespective of the season, be it summer, rainy or winter seasons. He was never troubled by winter. He loved the stay in Kedarnath which is at the height of 13,000 ft.

Once in winter it was snowing. Ravalji completed the puja and left. But Swamiji sat outside the temple and was meditating. When Ravalji came to know about it he with a lantern came searching for him, prostrated before Swamiji and took him to his quarters. The days programme was concluded with Peace Prayer.

On 26th September, Pujya Swami Yogadananda Swamiji of Jnananada Ashram Gangachollapenta, Vizayanagaram visited the Ashram. As his very name indicates he is a master of Yoga. In his lecture he stressed on the significance of Patanjali Yoga, its usefulness in maintaining a healthy body which alone can enable an individual to do intense sadhana. He illustrated this by narrating the dialogue between Uddhava and Srikrishna, how one can overcome the hurdles in the path of Sadhana by yoga and mantrajapa. He explained in great detail about Hanumanji's Yoga Siddhi, how he was able to cross the ocean through pranayama. One can reach the supreme – Rama – through Sita, the Sushumna Nadi. Through pranayama one can go beyond the six chakras and reach Sahasrara – the completion of the Yoga prakriya. After achieving this great goal Hanuman in all humility says that he has not done anything. Swami Omkar too did this pranayama sadhana. It is because of his sankalpa such a huge Ashram is established and running very smoothly. Sri Arabindo said that a sadhaka should know both the Arohana (going up) and Avarohana (coming down) process to realise. (Aham Brahmasmi, Sarvam Khalvidam Brahma). This is called the purna yoga and Swami Omkar belongs to this category.

Sri Venkata Ramana, disciple of Swami Yogananda spoke on the importance of association with saints, discharge of one's duty to attain knowledge and ultimately Moksha. It is indeed great good fortune of people to come to the Ashram and do sadhana.

Om! Om! Om!

THE MYSTIC SOUND OF OM

Swami Jyotirmayananda

*The clouds gathered in sky
And the rains fell incessantly
Like cascading waters
In a waterfall*

*The lightning flashed intermittently
Followed by a deafening sound
Of thunder and it seemed
The sound of Om came
From every direction.
And the whole world resonated
With the sweet sound
Of Om Om Om*

*The trees danced
Chanting Om Om Om.
The winds blew
With the sound of Om Om Om.
And a thousand Om came rolling
On the ocean waves*

*A tidal wave rose
Like mighty wall roaring with
With sound of Om Om Om,
And my very being was engulfed
In the blissful ecstasy
Of Om Om Om!*

- from International Yoga Guide, August 2012.

AN APPEAL AND INVITATION

The life members who have contributed for the Peace Journal for 10 or more years long ago are requested to renew their membership since the Printing cost has increased considerably. The other members are also requested to renew if they have not renewed. This is the Journal started by Pujya Omkar Swamiji Maharaj 90 years ago and still continues with the blessings and stewardship of Pujya Jnaneswari Mataji. It is our responsibility as the disciples of Pujya Swami Omkarji Maharaj to contribute to the Peace Journal by renewing the membership in the form of life membership.

Now Sri Santi Ashram is celebrating its Centenary Celebrations from 21-1-2016 to 21-1-2017. The closing function is being organised from 16-1-2017 to 21-12-2017. Great Mahatmas are attending this function. The Devotees of the Ashram may please attend and get the blessings of Mahatmas and Pujya Omkarji Maharaj and Pujya Jnaneswari Mataji.

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