



PEACE

A Quarterly Journal of Peace and Illumination

Founder : H.H. Sri Swami Omkar

Editor : Secretary, Sri Shanti Ashram

Vol. 91. MARCH - 2017 No. 01

CONTENTS

1. Upanishad	-		2
2. Meditation	-		6
3. Prayer	-		7
4. God realisation in half a second	-	Swami Omkarji Maharaj	9
5. God-saturated world	-	Swami Omkarji Maharaj	11
6. Good friday - the day of crucifixion	-	Swami Omkarji Maharaj	13
7. Greatness is in adjustment	-	Swami Omkarji Maharaj	15
8. Helpful thoughts	-	Swami Omkarji Maharaj	16
9. Highest wisdom	-	Swami Omkarji Maharaj	17
10. Secret of self-purification	-	Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj	22
11. Keep open the doors of your heart	-	Swami Chidananda	26
12. Recollections of friendship and devotion	-	Smt. U. Manorama Rao	31
13. Sri santi ashram centenary celebrations ki jai	-	Swami Hamsananda	32
14. Shanti ashram - my home away from home	-	Nadira Roopchund	34
15. Worship of the Divine Mother	-	Swami Tattvavidananda Saraswati	36
16. Kena-upanishad	-	Swami Brahmananda	42
17. Lord Buddha - the embodiment of compassion	-	Swami Jyotirmayananda	45
18. Ashram News	-		51

Kaivalyopanishat

स्वप्ने स जीवस्सुखदुःखभोक्ता स्वमायया कल्पितजीवलोके ।
सुषुप्तिकाले सकले विलीने तमोभिभूतः सुखरूपमेति ॥

*svapne sa jīvassukhaduḥkhabhoktā
svamāyayā kalpitajīvaloke.*

*susuptikāle sakale vilīne
tamobhibhūtassukharūpameti..*

In the dream state also, the individual enjoys the pleasures and pains in the world of living beings created by his own ignorance. At the time of deep sleep, as everything resolves, overwhelmed by ignorance, the individual merges in Brahman in the form of Bliss.

Svapne ca jīvassukhaduḥkhabhoktā, in the dream also the individual enjoys pleasure and pain. Pleasure and pain are common to the waking and dream states, though the objects of the two states are not the same. The subject-object division, which is characteristic of the waking state, continues in the dream state. The dream person, who is the doer and the enjoyer, is not the same as the waking person. Today's dream is different from yesterday's. He was a king in one dream and a beggar in the other. The truth is that he is neither.

In the waking state the mind and the five sense organs are active, whereas, in the dream mind alone is active. The pot experienced in the waking state is nothing but the pot *vṛtti*, thought modified as the pot, caused by the sensation of the pot. The pot reflects light, which falls on the eyes creating the sensation of form, and the pot *vṛtti* is formed. In the dream state, the dream pot is also the pot thought; but it is not caused by pot sensation but by *vāsanā*, memory, of the pot.

There is no continuity in the dream. Suppose you get the same

dream night after night, then you will not know the difference between waking state and dream state. The waking state seems to be continuous as it is long on the time scale, whereas the dream state is short. For this reason, you know that the dream state is unreal. Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan, the great philosopher, recounted an episode. Every night a pot maker would dream of being the king. The same court, ministers, wealth, etc. were there in the dream. Ultimately, he did not know whether he was a pot maker or a king. In fact, he concluded that his life as a pot-maker in the waking state was a bad dream, and that as a king in the dream was real.

In the dream, there is a world, a totality, and the dream person as a part of that world. The totality and the person as a part of it are created by the individual alone. The basis for the creation of a dream state with such a division is the mind in ignorance. The ignorant mind creates a dream world, a person as part of that totality, and a few situations based on the impressions of the waking state and picks up pleasure and pain. The dream state has its own space, time, objective world and subject-object division. It is a replica of the waking state.

The pleasure and pain of the dream state are *karma phala*, result of past actions, as much as those of the waking state. A happy dream is the result of *punya*, virtue, and a nightmare of bad karma. Bad dream exhausts bad karma and pleasant dream good karma, just like in the waking state. You may say that the dream world is unreal, but pleasure and pain of the dream are as real as those of the waking state. For example, there are nightmares in which the pain is acute. The waking world and the waking person are as unreal as the dream world and the dream person .

The dream person enjoys the dream world. But, you are not the person in your dream. What is your relationship with the dream person and the dream world? You are the *sākṣi*, witness, of the person-world duo of the dream. The dream person is doer and enjoyer; he identifies with the dream body; and there is space and

time in the dream. It is not in any way different from the waking state. The true nature of the individual is that of *sākṣi*, the uninvolved witness. Suppose you are really the dream person, not the *sākṣi*, then if in the dream one were a beggar, one would continue to be a beggar.

Who is this witness of the dream state? Is he the person of the waking state? I am neither the king nor the beggar of the dream. So, who am I, the Swami? No. Swami is the waking person of the waking world. When I am not the dream person of the dream world, how can I be the waking person of the waking world? If I am the witness of the dream world including the dream person, I should be the same witness of the waking world including the waking person. That means that the Swami is no more real than the beggar or king of the dream. Therefore, the reality of the dream beggar, dream king, and waking Swami is the same uninvolved witnessing awareness. That is what I am. Dream is nothing but a projection of the mind. Waking world also is similar - a play of the mind.

King Janaka had a dream in which he was a beggar. Next day he met the sage *Aṣṭāvakra*, told him about the dream, and asked: 'Who am I, king or beggar?' The sage replied: 'Neither, because the beggar negates the king and vice versa. You are the witnessing awareness in which a beggar and a beggar world have sprung up in the dream and in which a king and a king's world have sprung up in the waking state. You are the source of both'. If I understand the dream state well, I cannot be the person that I imagine myself to be.

Suṣuptikāle sakale vilīne, as everything resolves at the time of deep sleep. This contrasts the sleep from the waking and dream states. In the waking state, sense organs and the mind are functional. In the dream state, sensations resolve, but the mind remains active. In deep sleep, sensations as well as the mind resolve, go into a state of not-knowing. This not-knowing is not absolute; it is relative to all-knowing of the other two states. When you say, 'I slept knowing nothing,' the 'nothing' is the opposite of all the things of the waking state. Therefore, sleep is relative, not absolute.

Waking state is the experience of subject-object duality. Dream state is also the same. Sleep state is another experience. If knowing all is an experience, knowing nothing is also an experience. It is like entering into a dark room. You see nothing, but you are there. The experience of happiness is also there in sleep. Therefore, sleep is not a void. In addition to ignorance, the witness is indeed there, and you are that witness. If sleep is an absolute void, then who talks about sleep as an experience? Void cannot assert itself.

The three states rotate. They happen in succession, but they do not happen to you, because you are neither the waking person, nor the dream person, nor the no-person of the sleep state. Good weather and bad weather happen, but they do not happen to space. You are the space-like awareness. Nothing ever happens to you because you are the changeless, motionless, immovable Awareness, which is the spaceless and timeless Being. 'You are That'.

(*Tattava Prakāṣikā* by Tattavavidananda Saraswati)

THE DIVINE NAME

No one obtains liberation without the Name of the Lord. Your highest duty is to repeat His Name always. Name is the greatest treasure of treasures. The greatest of sinners can attain God-realisation through the blessings of the Name. Meditate on God's Name with the belief that the Name and the Named (God) are identical. The Name of God is the most potent, unailing tonic, sure panacea and sovereign specific.

Swami Sivananda

MEDITATION

तव परि ये चरन्त्यखिलसत्त्वनिकेततया
 त उत यदाक्रमन्त्यविगणय्य शिरो निःश्रुतेः ।
 परिवयसे पशूनिव गिरा विबुधानपि तांस्त्वयि
 कृतसौहृदाः खलु पुनन्ति न ये विमुखाः ॥

*tava pari ye carantyakhilasatvaniketatayā
 ta uta yadākramantavyigaṇayya śiro nirṣṛteḥ .
 parivayase paśūniva girā vibudhānapi tāṁstvayi
 kṛtasauhṛdāḥ khalu punanti na ye vimukhāḥ ..*

The spiritual aspirants who serve and worship all beings, seeing the supreme Lord in them - knowing them to be Your abodes - move and live in the world fearlessly; they easily overcome (lit. walk over the head of) the God of death in this life itself.

Others, who are disinclined towards You, learned though they are, never find freedom; they live like animals in tether. Unable to lift themselves to freedom and knowledge, they live in bondage. (They are slaves to the three *guṇās* and live in the realm of ritualistic portion of the *Vedās*, of injunctions and prohibitions, held and bound by the rope of desire for sensual pleasures). On the other hand, saints who whole heartedly love You, O Lord, transform (purify) those who come in contact with them and lead them to a higher life.

- from *śṛtigitā* by Swami Gabhirananda,
 Advaita Ashram Publication)

Even a little good thinking and a little doing good are highly beneficial. It will lead to Eternal Bliss. Then why not try a little good thinking and good doing; even from now?

- Swami Sivananda

PRAYER

अप्सरासुर च या मेधा गन्धर्वेषु च यन्मनः ।

दैवीं मेधा सरस्वती सा मां मेधा सुरभिर्जुषताग्ं स्वाहा ॥

apsarāsu ca yā medhā

gandharveṣu ca yanmanah,

daivīm medhā sarasvatī sā māṃ medhā

surabhirjuṣatām svāhā..

या *yā* - which; मेधा *medhā* - intelligence; अप्सरासु च *apsarāsu ca* - in the divine damsels; च *ca* - and; यत् *yat* - which; मनः *manah* - mind (intelligence); गन्धर्वेषु च *gandharveṣu ca* - in the divine musicians; दैवीम् *daivīm* - present in the gods; मेधा *medhā* - intelligence; स *sa* - that; सरस्वती *sarasvatī* - Goddess Sarasvati; सुरभिः *surabhiḥ* - the celestial cow; माम् *mām* - me; जुषताम् *juṣatām* - may bless; स्वाहा *svāhā* - I offer.

There is intelligence in (the dance of) the celestial damsels, in (the music of) the divine musicians, and in the gods themselves. May That (well known in the scriptures) Goddess Sarasvati bless me with that intelligence. She fulfills the aspirations (of the devotees) like the divine cow. I offer my prostrations.

Apsaras are celestial damsels and the gandharvas are celestial musicians. Culturally, music and dance are very important art forms. Each is an expression of the power of life and knowledge. It seems that these art forms are popular among the celestials as well. As the *Kaṭhōpaniṣat* (2-1-10) says, *yadeveha tadamutra yadamutra tadanviha*, as is here, so is there; as is there, so is here too! The gods also need the blessings of *Sarasvati*, the goddess of knowledge. In the Vedas and Puranas, we come across many gods who have the knowledge of *Brahman*. Lord Yama is a teacher of Self-

knowledge, as we see in the *Kaṭhōpaniṣat*. Similarly, in the *Kauṣītakī upaniṣat*, Lord Indra imparts the knowledge of Brahman to king Pratardana.

This mantra describes the Goddess *Sarasvati* as *Surabhi*, the celestial cow, also known as *Kāmadhenu*, since it grants all the aspirations of the seeker. There is a well-known story in the *Rāmāyaṇa* about *Surabhi*. *Surabhi* belonged to sage *Vasiṣṭha* and lived in his hermitage. According to the story, one day, king *Viśvāmitra* visited *Vasiṣṭha*, who offered him and his entourage a grand feast with the help of this wish-yielding cow. Seeing this, *Viśvāmitra* became very jealous and wanted to grab the cow for himself. *Vasiṣṭha* resisted, and there followed a duel, in which *Viśvāmitra* was vanquished. Here *Surabhi*, the celestial cow, symbolically represents Self-knowledge. Knowledge is a unique wealth that nobody can plunder. One can steal another's material wealth, but it is not possible to steal knowledge. *Viśvāmitra* realised his mistake and, in time, also gained the knowledge by performing severe penance.

This mantra ends with *svāhā*, which means offering. In a ritual, whenever an oblation is offered to a god with a mantra, it ends with *svāhā*. The word *svāhā* itself has an interesting etymology. It is *su* plus *āhā*, meaning, well said or well uttered. It also means 'may the oblation be well offered.' When the devotee recites the mantra ending it with *svāhā* and offers the oblation, the deity's response of immediate acknowledgement and blessing is contained in the word *svāhā*. The word *svāhā* is a compliment from the *devatā* to the seeker, uttered by the seeker on behalf of the deity.

Om! Om! Om!

- from *Medha Sūktam, Vaidika Sūkta Mañjarī*; *Tattva Prakāśikā* by Swami Tattvavidananda Saraswati. Published by Brahma Vidya Kuteer, Secunderabad, Telangana State, India.

GOD REALISATION IN HALF A SECOND

Swami Omkarji Maharaj

God Realisation or Cosmic consciousness

in half a second, with a single breath.

Inhale and exhale Peace your Birthright.

The time to assert and express your Divine Heritage, the Splendour of Millions of Suns is Now and Here. Do not live like a sheep for thou art the Lion of Truth, of God consciousness. Blessed are they who make best use of every living moment, the Present moment Veriy, it is the Infinite Spirit which works through the finite body.

How inspiring and illuminating is the following single sloka. Let us call it rather a holy Mantram in simple words. It is indeed the Mantram of mantrams. Knowing this rnantram the wise melt in Silence; indeed, Silence is the soul and goal of all life.

In the wilderness of the world, under the cool shade of a banyan tree in a holy hermitage a young teacher, an illumined sage taught four of his learned and elderly disciples all in Silence. The Guru was only sixteen but the Chelas, the pupils were all at least eighty years of age. There were many doubts. The teachings were only in Silence. Yet, all doubts were dispelled without the need of any words. Such is the Glory of an ideal life of Supreme Silence which is waveless and complete.

Om pūrṇa madaḥ pūrṇa midam

Pūrṇāt pūrṇa mudhachyate

Pūrṇasya pūrṇamādāya

Pūrṇa meva ava śiṣyate

This is Complete, that is Complete. When Completeness is taken away from Completeness, only Completeness remains.

Now, coming to the Mantram of God-Realisation Now and Here,

in half a second, with a single breath:

Deho devālaya, prokto jīvo deva ssaṇātana

Tyaja dajñana nirmālyam, soham bhāvena pūjayet.

Body alone is the temple of God. The individual is the Universal. Hence, destroy the ignorance that *Jīva* is separate or aloof from God, the Paramatman. Worship Him with Soham, the Universal consciousness.

In Soham worship one does not need any time limit to reach or realise God. With one Soham, Universal Breath, one is already centred in the Light of lights. Soham covers the whole world for it is the Universal Energy.

Soham is both the manifested and the unmanifested. When you are silent Soham is in the Unmanifested state. It is because of Soham that I am writing now at this early hour in the Peace Centre. Dear Loving Readers, it is because of Soham that wherever you may be, you are reading now centred in Soham or God.

Words mean nothing. Waveless Silence is everything. Soham is both the Word and Silence. The wave of Silence going down in the Ocean of *Sat Chid Ananda* is rising again before your very eyes, inhale and Exhale Peace with each and every breath. Soham, *THOU ART THAT. TAT TWAM ASI.*

You are SOHAM in the past.

You are SOHAM in the present.

You are SOHAM in the future.

You are SOHAM eternally,

SOHAM within, SOHAM without!

All that you have to do is only to follow your own breath, Soham ceaselessly, like *taila dhāra*, the oil poured from one vessel into another, without any break. May you follow Soham Now and Always, this is the ardent prayer of thy brother Omkar!

OM! OM! OM!

GOD-SATURATED WORLD

Swami Omkarji Maharaj

My friend, I am privileged to live in a God-saturated world. Why I alone, you too are privileged to live in the God-saturated world. Why you and I alone, everybody, all the people in all the religions and nations all over the world are privileged to be in the God-saturated world.

Before we proceed further, with the present theme, let us try to understand what SATURATION really is. To understand it in a practical way, let us take a glass of water and add into it a spoonful of sugar. It dissolves in the water; let us add more sugar. It too may dissolve. At a certain stage, when the water reaches the point of full saturation, if you add anymore sugar it will not dissolve, but will remain in the glass, visible to the naked eye.

This is SATURATION of the sugar in water. Then what is the Saturation of God? What is the God-saturated world? The Omnipresence, Omnipotence and Omniscience of God is so real, deep and intense always that you cannot add anything more to what exists already. He is so complete that all our prayers and meditations will not make the God within or without to increase.

You are in the finished Kingdom, a Kingdom of God-consciousness or completeness. On every side it is completeness. Everyone is complete, for God pervades and permeated the very cells of your being as well as the universe. He alone exists from the tiniest atom to the biggest planet. All is Him, for everything is filled and saturated with God. Wherever you go, you go towards God, nay, you are walking in His Omnipresence. You do not have anymore friends or foes. You do not have anymore near and dear ones or strangers or enemies. Even the one who desires to stab you in the back is your living God.

What a blessed privilege it is to live in a world of gods, where everyone is a living Image of God! Giory! Glory! Glory! All that we see is God. All that we hear is God. All that we think is God. All that we imagine is God. All that is visible is God. All that is invisible and

incomprehensible is also God.

What else is there to be said or written? Eyes opened or closed it is God-the Invisible Presence-the Light of the world, nay, the Splendour of Millions of suns. In this God-saturated world, with every breath we are creating the world of form and name. As we breathe in, the world is going within. As we breathe out, the world is being created outside.

Let us follow the breath and reach those blessed Heights of breathlessness, where there is neither creation nor destruction, but where exists only the Divine Saturation, the Holy Intoxication, above all the Supreme Silence of Infinite Peace, which is ETERNALLY COMPLETE.

MAY PEACE BE UNTO ALL

OM! OM! OM!

INDIVIDUAL SAMADHI IS SELFISH

If you retire to meditate.

Don't drink the cup of samadhi alone,

Let your salvation be a blessing for all.

Give from it, what you have won.

Do you wish to become a recluse in order to become a contemplative, enjoying bliss? Is it for you only that the joys of Samadhi are reserved? Yearn you not to take with you the millions of your sisters and brothers, who are in the dark? Would you feed on the Divine, when others are starving and parching for the lifegiving nourishment? Let your salvation be for the welfare of all, let your Samadhi be for the good of everybody.

OM TAT SAT OM !

(Swami Omkarji Maharaj, Cosmic Flashes)

GOOD FRIDAY -THE DAY OF CRUCIFIXION

Swami Omkarji Maharaj

Today this Friday is supposed to be the Good Friday, the day of the Lord Christ. Why is it called Good Friday? How can the same day of the Lord's Crucifixion be called a Good Friday? Can this be a day of rejoicing? It is only a day of mourning, attuning ourselves with the great suffering of Christ.

The youth in his ignorance with his surface knowledge thinks that he knows everything and that the ancient people were ignorant. The old of the past with their wide experience are ripe with all of wisdom, whereas the man of today is raw and hasty with inexperience.

The wise men of the ancient days have called this day a GOOD FRIDAY as the little self was destroyed on that memorable day. It was on this day that form became formless, the bubble dissolved in the ocean and the ray merged in the effulgent Sun. Verily the Son of Man became one with God, the Holy Ghost.

How shall we celebrate this Good Friday? Shall we weep or rejoice in his name? Those in whom the little self, the ego, is not dead are weeping inspite of their prayers and worship of every kind, in the form of rituals and ceremonies. Those in whom the little self the ego is dead, they alone are really rejoicing, celebrating the Good Friday in a most worthy manner, commemorating the sacred memory of the Lord.

If we love the Lord sincerely, with all the strength of the mind, heart and soul, let us lose no time in annihilating the selfish ego, the root cause of all the trouble in the heart, strife in the family, riot in the community, clash in the country and war in the world.

In the holy name of the Blessed Lord Jesus Christ, the Anointed One who lived, worked and died for the sake of others, setting an example for the whole world, let us crush this selfishness and annihilate the ego. Let us destroy the little self, the foe of all that is good and holy, never to raise its self-seeking head in us again.

May this Good Friday be a Holy Day of rejoicing. Let us sing with the sages of old thus:

Today is our day of rejoicing,
Today we are very happy.
Our anxieties have departed,
Since we have met God
Today spring is in our heart!

May Peace be unto all beings on earth, in both the East and the West. May harmony and good-will abide among individuals, as well as nations. May all Glory be unto the Lord, the Highest, on this Good Friday, and on all the days to come from eternity to eternity!

May this day be a day of rejoicing in His name, as the little self, the selfish self is dead forever. AMEN!

Offered to Mahatma Sushilaji, wishing her health, Peace, Glory and Illumination in the Lord, and also safe and protected voyage Home, USA.

OM! OM! OM!

MAKE THE MIND TASTE SPIRITUAL BLISS

If chicken and fowls run hither and thither to eat various sorts of rubbish, what does the owner of the poultry do? He gives a slight tap on their heads and throws before them some grains to eat. Gradually, they leave their dirty habit of eating filth. Even so, this mind runs hither and thither towards objects. Give a tap on its head and make it taste gradually the spiritual bliss by practice of Japa and meditation .

Swami Sivananda

GREATNESS IS IN ADJUSTMENT

Swami Omkarji Maharaj

Great souls have the capacity, strength and understanding to adjust with anyone under any circumstances, or in any trying condition; for they see the best in the worst. They recognise only the Eternal in the changing, the Permanent in the passing and the Sun behind the very clouds.

Whereas the small minded, the weak ones, fuss, fret, fume and worry themselves to death and make others miserable even in the worst conditions with the best of the people, for they see the worst in the best, the changing in the Changeless, the passing in the Eternal and the cloud even in the blazing sun.

Indeed in a way, nature is unchangeable. It has been moulded into frames of hard iron, not only from the beginning of the birth, but also from the beginning of the creation itself, maybe from millions of births.

How can you expect to change such a man of iron mould? Can you bend a grown up sturdy palm tree? Can you bend a strong, sturdy tree or bronze statue? Then, why attempt to change or melt the strong and iron hearts of these living statues of ages and ages?

If a man is angry, overcome him with Love. If one is hasty, shield yourself with patience. If one is over talkative, rest yourself in silence. If one is criticising and condemning, bear and forbear. If a man thinks in arrogance that he alone is right and that you are wrong, say: "*AMEN. May it be according to your wish! Let PEACE Infinite and Peace eternal be your soul and goal!*"

Be loving towards those who hurt you. Be good to those who do evil. Love thy enemies. Resist not evil. Thus you can adjust yourself anywhere and everywhere.

May the Divine Adjustment adjust all lives with Harmony, understanding and above all with Peace Profound!

OM! OM! OM!

HELPFUL THOUGHTS

Swami Omkarji Maharaj

The seer is greater than the seen.

The knower is greater than the known.

*The subject is infinitely greater than all the objects,
Even if they are big planets of immeasurable dimensions.*

We should not try to become the Self now, for we have been always the *Self-Atman*. Being fixed in the *Atman*, not now and then but always is needed. He who is eternally fixed in the Self expresses the *Atman* in thought, word and deed. Ego is the cause of the world. Ego and mind are not two but one. Because of them the world exists. When they are destroyed, the world disappears.

Scriptures have taught that anyone can be destroyed and anything can be overcome but not the tenacious ego. The answer is: what the scriptures say is right, to the one who admits the ego. But for the one who does not admit or recognise the existence of the ego, naturally it is not at all difficult. Unto such even the opening or closing of an eye lid appears as a task but not the destruction of the ego, rather let us say the non-recognition of the ego.

In the splendour of millions of suns nothing else exists except its self-effulgent Light, before which all the worlds of names and forms dwindle into nothingness.

May we meditate now on that Self effulgent, transcendental splendour which is uncaused, Eternal, Infinite and Indivisible, yet which is pervading and permeating the very cells of one's being, as well as the universe and thus merge and dissolve in the Inexpressible, Ineffable and Incomprehensible!

GLORY! GLORY! GLORY!

PEACE! PEACE! PEACE!

OM! OM! OM!

HIGHEST WISDOM

Swami Omkarji Maharaj

There is only one thing to know, and that is that I KNOW NOTHING.

These powerful words, the words of Highest Wisdom, the essence of all philosophies and the goal of all religions, were uttered by a *Jivan Mukta*, an illuminated soul, a liberated being.

These wise words came into my life when I was in most need of them, as I was suffering seriously from the severe temperature of service, restlessly trying to do good with the feverish thoughts of I have done this and that in the past and I am going to do this and that in the dim future.

What foolish and ignorant mortals we are, trying to comprehend the Incomprehensible! How can the finite comprehend the Infinite with tiny exertions? Man does not want to be quiet and recognise the Omnipresence, Omnipotence and Omniscience. He wishes to put his two fingers into everything from the pie to the heaven.

The baby thinks that he knows more than the mother. The Chela, the disciple thinks that he knows more than the Guru. Thus the ego is present in everyone and everywhere, making a havoc of the life supernatural and Universal.

Verily, when a man comes to know that he knows nothing, all this vanity fades, his arrogance disappears and his ignorance is dispelled. When a man feels that he knows something or everything he is struggling to show off. He wishes that the public should appreciate him. He wants to please everybody, thus he pleases none.

The realisation THAT I KNOW NOTHING is a wonderful and unfailing remedy for the feverish life of restless rush and push in mad haste. What are we with all the mighty intellect and dry learning and with all the perishable wealth, only a mere bubble in the Ocean of

God's Glory, a flickering Light of a mere glow worm, before the self-shining light of the Sun! Alas, we are only a mere tiny atom before the mighty spheres of creation.

As we meditate on the wise words that I KNOW NOTHING, temperatures of every kind become normal and thus fevers of every type cease and man becomes humble, silent and God- absorbed.

It is only when we think that we know something, that we begin to discuss, teach, preach and reform others, thus become slaves of name and fame ever scheming and planning with a thousand worries and sorrows.

When once we give up our ego and cling to Mother Universal with all the purity, trust and confidence of a baby, the Mother, the Primal Energy takes care of us. We have nothing to do or say or even think for ourselves. Mother knows what is best for us. 'We know nothing, all bubbles merge in the ocean. All rays go back to the sun. All manifestations return to the unmanifested.

Question: When shall I be free?

Answer: When the "I" ceases to be.

This is the Highest Wisdom. When the ego dissolves or disappears, man is face to face with God the Transcendental, forgetting the little self and recognising the Highest, the Infinite, the Eternal. In knowing nothing man becomes silent, dumb and complete. May all homage be unto such, the wise of the wisest!

MAY PEACE BE UNTO ALL

OM! OM! OM!

HINTS TO EXPRESS SOHAM

Swami Omkarji Maharaj

(Hints for feeling and expressing Soham consciousness amidst work in daily life)

Our Chaitanya, the Editor of PEACE, a worshipper of Soham says:

Question: Swamiji! I can feel Soham, be aware of the breath within during my meditation with eyes closed, but how can I feel it when my eyes are opened, when I see a thousand things of every form and name, especially amidst my busy work?

Answer: Dear child, when you can feel Soham consciously within, when eyes are closed, you can feel it when eyes are opened also, for that WHICH IS WITHIN IS WITHOUT too, for it is One without a second. It is all a matter of personal experience, but not of mere words. Keep on wearing the Soham Spectacles even when you are not in meditation, in your very work, thus through Soham Spectacles of Universal Love or God consciousness, everything appears as the manifestation of Soham, the Primal Energy. Not only all that you see is the manifestation of Soham, but also that which is seeing through your very eyes is Soham energy. .

Question: How can I feel Soham when I walk, Sir?

Answer: It is easy to feel it, especially when you walk alone, for with every step it is Soham. You are inhaling and exhaling Soham consciously while walking. You can feel a certain kind of rhythm, oneness with Soham during your walks .

Question: How can I be aware of Soham when I eat and drink, Sir?

Answer: When once you realise all motion, all manifestation whether it is in eating or drinking, in writing or reading, it is all from the

same source. The Divine energy, it is easy for you to be aware of it, to recognise it in all the various manifestations of life not only within you, but even in others and in the whole universe.

Question: Sir, it is all easy to feel Soham within and without, in all moments, but how to recognise Soham in the endless wanderings of the restless mind?

Answer: My child, what is it that thinks in your mind? KNOW THE SOURCE OF THINKING. If it is not for the Divine Energy how can your mind think or wander? In the very wandering of your mind, follow the Soham, then it would be easy for you to be the master of your mind.

Question: Sir, is it possible to recognise Soham in those who take joy in insulting, criticising and persecuting us? .

Answer: It is more than possible. It is a blessed opportunity of your life to test your self-realisation or soul-consciousness. Blessed are they who are persecuted in His name. Anyone can love his friends but only a God-man, a soul of Soham realisation can love his enemies too. For him there are neither friends nor foes. All are the living Images of the One God. Hence, love them, adore them and worship them, to be sanctified by recognising the One in the many!

Question: Dear Swamiji, kindly teach me Soham, giving an illustration so that I can understand, remember and follow it more closely.

Answer : The Vedas, the essence of all Wisdom has given us one of the most illuminating illustrations of the snake in the rope. He who understands this simple and direct analogy understands Soham perfectly.

1) Two things never existed-only one thing exists.

2) It must be either rope or snake as man imagines.

3) Man in ignorance mistakes the rope for a snake and suffers untold agonies with fear, worry and suffering of every kind.

4) When he recognises the rope as rope, with the lamp of wisdom, he becomes free of all fears.

5) Here the rope is the breath the ceaseless Soham.

6) So long as you recognise and cling to Soham, the snake of the body does not exist.

7) The moment you forget Soham, there is the body-the snake

Now do as you please, for here is the Highest Truth, given in a nutshell. Thou art the Soham; the ROPE, the BREATH and all else is ignorance and imagination. DIVINITY THOU ART, SOHAM ART THOU.

Question: How to be aware of Soham when I sleep and snore, Sir?

Answer: What is it that sleeps in you? THE REAL YOU NEVER SLEEPS. Know that YOU, and you will be above sleep. SOHAM NEVER SLEEPS. It is equally present in the waking, dreaming and sleeping states. If you can feel Soham within you, you can feel it without. If you can feel it is Silence, you can feel it in sound. Above all, if you can feel Soham now in the living present moment, you can feel the same eternally for Soham is the only reality, the Light of lights existing from eternity to eternity.

May we ever abide in this Infinite and Eternal Glory! May all Homage be unto SOHAM!

MAY PEACE BE UNTO ALL!

OM! OM! OM!

Dedicated to my Prabhu Chaitanya, wishing Soham consciousness in thought, word and deed, now and always.

OM! OM! OM!

SECRET OF SELF-PURIFICATION

H.H. Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj

To serve and not wait to be served is the secret of harmony, joy and well-being. Shifting the emphasis from privilege to duty is the golden key to peace, plenty and prosperity. A solemn determination to do one's duty and the cultivation of a spirit of selfless service are the brick and mortar for every selfless worker.

If one always focuses one's attention on one's duty, the privileges will come automatically. Trouble arises only when man claims his privilege- often self-granted and ignores his duty.

"To work alone has one got the right, not to the fruits thereof," says the Gita. There is a very great secret in this dictum. It is only the fruit or the expectation of reward that binds man to this world. If man is not attached to the fruits of his actions, if he does his work for work's sake, then he does not accumulate any more Karma to be borne. Such a person does not expect anything at all, and all his past Karma works itself out. He gets various experiences, but he is not interested in them, and therefore, he is not really affected by them. When his past Karma has been exhausted, he gets liberation.

The circle of cause and effect in relation to oneself can be transcended only by performing actions selflessly. Selfless service is the direct road to Self-realisation. The secret of selfless service is to concentrate one's entire attention on service, on performing one's duty, and leaving the fruits thereof to take care of themselves and not to long for them.

One's actions must be based on the principles of appropriateness, goodness and the immediacy of the need, always keeping one's privileges second to those of others in relation to one's duty. Reason or discrimination between the right and the wrong should always be the guiding factor in one's actions.

In everyone there is the higher and the lower self. The higher self is the purer one, and is a fountain of virtue. It goads man to become

noble, selfless; it urges him to serve and to do his duty-to work for work's sake. The lower self in man goads him to seek and to demand his privileges and to close his eyes to duty. It is this little self, the false self-arrogating egoistic self, that impels man to be selfish, to be greedy, to be lustful-in short to be an animal.

This lower self has to be completely annihilated by the higher self. That is the threshold to *Moksha* or final liberation from every limitation and imperfection. One should try to attain this goal through spiritual practices such as introspection, self- analysis, cultivation of virtues, reflection and meditation.

True selflessness is the realisation of bliss to one and all. Never forget this. This is the consumation of *Karma Yoga*. In this selflessness, everything short of the infinite consciousness will smack of imperfection. The path to this *Kaivalya Moksha* lies in the practice of selfless service and devotion to duty; for, these two rub the ego on either side and destroy it. Destruction of the ego is the realisation of the cosmic consciousness. Selfishness and craving for privileges fatten the ego and thus take one further from the Divine.

CHARACTERISTICS OF SELFLESSNESS

A selfless, dutiful person is peaceful wherever he is placed; he radiates peace to all around him. It is only he whose mind constantly dwells on the one common consciousness pervading everything that can be really peaceful. The very nature of that consciousness is peace. The mind that is in communion with it is always peaceful. The objects of the world are constantly changing; the experiences that the senses gain from the objects are also changing; the mind that is linked to these, therefore, is ever restless.

What are the marks of a truly selfless man? He will be equanimous in all conditions. He will not be elated by praise, nor will he be depressed by censure-because he expects nothing and accepts whatever comes his way without disturbing his inner tranquillity in any way. He is indifferent to the pairs of the opposites. He is inwardly rooted in the Self. He is always blissful. He radiates bliss to one and all. He is always happy; his very proximity makes

one happy. Such a noble soul is ever devoted to common-weal, to the well being of the entire humanity. None is his enemy; nor has he a special attachment for anyone. He treats all equally. He loves all without any differentiation. He serves all with *Atma Bhava* or *Narayana Bhava*.

PROCESS OF TRAINING

Selflessness is not achieved in a short while. It needs cultivation from the cradle. The mother who rocks the baby in the cradle should be selfless, and it is she who should first of all sow the spirit of selflessness in the child. Fearlessness and unflinching devotion to truth, absence of vanity and of frustration are essential for creating the necessary condition for cultivating selflessness. The mother should impress these qualities on the child through her own personal example. Unless this is done, one has to struggle very hard to cultivate selflessness in adolescence and youth. The mother should look upon all children as her own and not allow a clinging attachment for the child born of her. The baby is highly inquisitive. It watches the mother closely. Everything that it sees and hears during childhood, every impression that is formed during childhood, will follow one till the very grave. Selflessness must, therefore, be instilled into the baby's mind at this stage. Then when the child is somewhat older, the period of judicious instructions starts. Instructions from the parents will hardly make any impression unless they are attested by their conduct.

Every boy and girl should be taught to be selfless and devoted to duty during their early education. Moral lessons should be imparted in the school, and the teachers must necessarily have to behave in an exemplary fashion. The schools should frequently conduct "service tours" when the boys and girls should be taken out into the villages and made to assist the villagers in keeping their village clean and hygienic. Students of the medical colleges must be encouraged to conduct medical missions into the rural areas during the vacations and render free medical aid to the suffering. This training will nourish the seed of selflessness in them, and when they launch on their individual careers, these men will, in their turn, be able to lead their fellowmen.

"Share what you have with others." "Feel that your own Self pervades all beings." "Behold the one Self in everyone you see." These should be the great Mantras that every man and woman should constantly remember. When these Mantras are engraved on the tablet of one's heart, then will the fountain of peace and bliss within one begin to flow.

Such is the glory of *Nishkama Karma Yoga*. May all serve with the right *Bhavana*. May all be regular in self-introspection and meditation. May all constantly remember their goal of life. May God bless all.

(from the *Divine Life Society* publication, *Rishikesh, Uttarakhand-December 1999*)

BREATH IS THE STRING OF LIFE

We all are beads, tied up to a string,
Countless we are, but the garland is one.
The string of life - it is our breath.
So one we are and never alone.

The Individual is a bead. Countless are the beads. But the string that ties them up into a garland is one. On the infinite is strung this garland of finite beings "*Sūtre mani gaṇā iva*." Engross not yourself with the beads, remember also the string, which sustains them all. Fix your attention on it.

OM TAT SAT OM !

from COSMIC FLASHES, Swami Omkarji Maharaj

KEEP OPEN THE DOORS OF YOUR HEART

Sri Swami Chidananda

Salutations and prostrations to all the *brahma vidya* gurus from the earliest times - even beyond creation - and to all the great ones since, who have blessed this holy land, India, with their divine presence, sanctifying their times, sanctifying the very ground on which they trod!

They are all bridges to liberation, immortality. They are all portals to supreme blessedness. They are all gateways to the highest *kaivalya sāmrajya mokṣa* (the kingdom of final liberation). *Mahājana yena gataḥ sa pantaḥ* - that is the way, the way trodden by the great ones. And preceding us they have left their footprints upon the sands of time. May you also go that way and attain the same state of supreme blessedness that they attained!

They are pioneers upon this great path that leads to liberation, illumination, supreme blessedness, attaining which there is no returning into this world of pain and death. They are trailblazers. Therefore, to keep them in the heart, to keep their ideal lives before us as radiant examples to emulate and live up to, is the surest way of attaining that very state of blessedness.

Contemplate, therefore on the saints, the sages, the seers, the illumined masters, the perfected ones. Contemplate on them daily morning, noon, evening and night. Keep them in your heart. Keep them ever before your vision. They are the lights that illumine our path to blessedness. Without them this world would be a dreary desert, a wilderness full of thorns, poisonous trees and venomous creatures. Without them this world would be what it is today on the outer surface. Because of them there is hidden beneath the outer exterior of this present clay world of violence, hatred, conflict, clash, selfishness and immorality a radiant spiritual world, a radiant world of purity, of perfection or goodness. There is here and now a radiant world of divinity.

Live in that world! Not in this external world which, with its strident noise, seems to demand your attention, forces itself upon your consciousness. Reject it! Get thee behind me, Satan! Refuse to recognise it, because there is a greater reality. The seen is not the real; the unseen is the real. The outer, visible one is not the real; the inner, hidden one is the real. The outer is but a pale, ineffective reflection of that which is radiantly real, eternal and unchanging. Focus upon that truth and cross the bridge to eternity that the ideal, exemplary lives of the sages and saints constitute for humanity.

As long as human memory cherishes the sublime, noble and ideal lives of these great ones, there is a future for humanity. As long as human hearts cherish these lofty and radiant examples, we walk in the light; we do not dwell in darkness. This is the truth. This is verily the truth. This is indeed the truth.

You live where you choose to live. If you close your eyes to the light, you choose to live in darkness; but if you choose to keep your eyes open to the light, your heart will be flooded by light. You will walk in the light; you will live in the light. And there will be no groping, no stumbling, no wandering. There will be a sure and steady progress towards a clearly perceived ideal and goal.

In firm footsteps you can walk upon the path that is radiantly present before you, lit up and illumined by your own faith, lit up and illumined by your own vision, lit up and illumined by your own awareness that behind the seen there is the unseen, behind darkness there is light, behind the cloud there is sunshine, behind the screen there is the great beauty of beauties, the everpresent radiance, the splendour that the body-house houses. Within this body-temple there is the hidden splendour.

This is to be focused upon. That is to be held firmly in your heart. That is to be cherished in your thoughts. Man without vision perishes. Man with vision is never harmed. No harm can come to that being who lives with a vision and a goal. *Na hi kalyāṇakrit kascid durgatim tāta gaccati* (the doer of good, O my son, never comes to grief). *Kaunteya pratiḥānīhi na me bhaktaḥ praṇasyati*

(O Arjuna, know for certain that my devotee never perishes).

These are not vain statements. They are the manifestations of truth, the utterances of eternal promises. We should recognise that we live in the Light even in a world of darkness around us. For, beyond and behind the everchanging, the seen world of unrealities, transcending them, there is an unseen world of the eternal, unchanging Reality. We must live in this truth, in the awareness of this fact. That is the surest way of overcoming all things external, conquering all obstacles and attaining the Supreme, for which we have been sent here.

We have not been sent here to go around in circles. We have not been sent here to grope in the darkness. We have not been sent here to wander and stumble and fall, to weep and wail. We have been sent here for attainment. We have been sent here for overcoming and accomplishment. And until we attain that, we should not rest upon our oars.

That is the great glory of human life. That is the grandeur of these times, times that have been endowed with more light, more wisdom, more knowledge, more insight and more vision than any other century, than any other generation within human memory, within known human history.

This closing decade of the twentieth century and the first decade of the twentyfirst century form a glorious period in human evolution. Just as the fifteen minutes before and the fifteen minutes after the midday and midnight *sandhis* (junctions) are spiritual moments in time and the two hours before and half an hour after dawn comprise a charmed period, even so, the junction point between the twentieth and the twentyfirst centuries has on either side a decade of supreme blessedness and auspiciousness, potent with infinite possibilities for spiritual evolution. This generation is supremely blessed, and you who are now living in this period are more blessed than you can ever imagine.

All the positive forces of radiant and resurgent spirituality are converging upon this period, filled with great blessedness, great pos-

sibilities, great potential and immense spiritual help from all the *brahma vidya* gurus from the most ancient times. For they are immortal. They are beyond time; they are eternally present. *Brahmavid brahmaiva bhavati* (He who knows *Brahman* verily becomes *Brahman*). They are called *nitya siddhas*, eternally present. Dattatreya, Dakshinamurti, Vyasa and Vasishtha are one with *Brahman*. They are everpresent spiritual centres, spiritual forces, everpresent centres of light, and they only await our call, our turning to them. They are there as centres of grace, centres of spiritual power, force and energy.

Therefore, to recognise this great truth and to seek to make the very best use of this period, rather than to allow it to pass and later on lament, would indeed be wisdom on your part. Remember the parable of the wise and the foolish virgins in the New Testament. Remember that this is a period when God is knocking at the doors of the human heart. This is a period when God is calling: "*Uttiṣṭhata jāgrata prāpya varān nibodhata* (Arise, awake, stop not till the goal is reached)."

He may call through an Aurobindo, through a Ramana Maharshi, a Ramdas or a Sivananda. He may call through a Ramakrishna, Vivekananda, Rama Tirtha, Nityananda, Sai Baba or Muktananda. He may even call through Venkatesananda, Krishnananda or Chidananda. He may call through anyone. He may call through a dream. He may call through your own sudden intuition. He may even call through a passing, seemingly insignificant incident in your daily life. He has no dearth of ways of calling. He may call from the mouth of a babe. There is no end or restriction to where He may call from.

If you heed to the call, then he that hath eyes, let him see; he that hath ears, let him hear. We have to develop the vision and the receptivity. We have to develop the wakefulness, the alertness to catch the call as did the wise virgins, as have all the great ones who responded to the call.

These are all truths which you have to recognise and reflect over. They are being placed before you as so many indicators of the

supremely blessed period in which you are living. They are placed before you for your serious consideration and immediate recognition. Let it not be said of you that blessings were poured upon you, showered upon you, and you did not receive. Sri Anandamayi Ma used to say: "There may be a downpour of rain, but if a vessel is kept with its bottom up, then it will not collect even a drop of water. Take care how you keep your vessel. You must keep it right side up."

Therefore, keep open the doors of your heart. Let it not even require to be knocked upon. Keep it open before anyone comes to knock and asks you to open. Then you are thrice blessed. Even otherwise, ask and it shall be given, knock and it shall be opened unto you, seek and thou shalt find it. But if you already keep seeking, already keep the doors of your heart open, you are indeed thrice blessed. You are indeed most wise and supremely fortunate.

That is how you should be as spiritual children of blessed Gurudev Swami Sivanandaji, who was the awakener par excellence of global humanity in this twentieth century. Congratulate yourself and crown your life with glory!

(from the *Divine Life* publication, Rishikesh, Uttarakhand-December 1999)

OCEAN AND THE SUN ARE THE LIVING GURUS

-Swami Omkar

Here is another silent thought, from the Hours of Silence. A wave is never separate from the ocean, the ray is never separate from the Light of lights, the only Reality, which is the Basis and the Source of all the manifested and unmanifested worlds. All that one needs is only ceaseless AWARENESS of this indivisible Unity. My joy, strength and life lie only in this inseparable and eternal Oneness!

May all Homage be unto the Ocean and the Sun, the living Gurus of all seekers of the Highest Truth!

OM! OM! OM! (In the Hours of Silence)

RECOLLECTIONS OF FRIENDSHIP AND DEVOTION

Smt. U. Manorama Rao

I first met Swami Omkar when I was barely five years old, when Swamiji affectionately christened me as 'half-ticket'! That meeting led to a loving and lifelong spiritual relationship that I will always cherish. Now that I am in my nineties, all the lifelong memories of Swamiji and Sri Shanti Ashram are vivid and memorable.

My father, Sri Ananda Rao Tombat was a friend and devotee of Swami Omkar and Swamiji was a frequent visitor to our home in Madras from our early childhood. My sisters Sushila and Sumathi and my parents, Smt. Kamala Devi Tombat and Sri Ananda Rao Tombat were among the early devotees of Swami Omkar and Sri Shanti Ashram. Swami Omkar has a picture of our entire family in his book, 'Autobiography of Omkar'. Our family would always welcome him whenever he returned to India from his travels, and he, in turn, would bring gifts for us.

As the years went by, my son Dr. U. Ravi Rao, his wife Smt. Suvarni Rao and their daughters Preeti and Rekha and my daughter Dr. Geetha Bhat continued the family tradition of friendship and devotion to Swamiji, Mataji and the Ashram. Swamiji and Mataji continued to visit us and bless us with their presence at our homes in Bangalore and Hyderabad. My mother's kuteer-'KamalanandaKuteer' remains in the Ashram even today.

Time has passed and many changes have occurred in my life, but the wonderful memories of Swami Omkar remain as fresh as they were when I was a child. Swamiji's blessings will continue to inspire and enlighten our entire family in the years to come. Mataji Jnaneswari lovingly and tirelessly carries on the legacy of Swami Omkar. May His benign presence shine on us always!

(Sent for inclusion in Centenary Celebrations Souvenir of
Sri Santi Ashram - 21-1-2017)

SRI SANTI ASHRAM CENTENARY CELEBRATIONS KI JAI

Swami Hamsananda, Rishikesh

Shanti is that, which everyone wants to have.

Rest in God while living.

Ignorance is the cause of not knowing God.

Service to man is service to God.

And word cannot be added to God.

Never think that you are not in God.

Timelessness is God.

India is the country which gives peace to the whole world.

Aspiration for God is the duty of man.

See God in everything.

Happiness comes when individual merges in God.

Remember God at all times to come.

Art of life is to live in God.

Mending the mind on God is real meditation.

Catch the mind and put it in the Ocean of God.

Ever remain in the Bliss of God.

Nothing exists beyond God.

Turn your vision towards God.

Eternity is what the man wants.

Name of God is what helps us in the end.

Atman is same as Brahman.

Running towards God is not necessary.

Yoga is the path to perfection.

City's life makes us to forget God.

Everything exists in God.

Long life is what everybody wants.

Eagerness to reach God is called "Sadhana".

Brahman is all pervading.

Reaching God means reaching yourself.

Anger comes when desire is not fulfilled.

Timid person cannot attain God.

It is time to pray to God now.

Only God exists and nothing else exists.

Non-injury makes us love God.

Same God exists at all places.

Kingdom of God is within our own self.

Inside and outside exists God.

Japa is the way to control the mind.

Aim of life is God-Realisation.

Identify yourself with God.

Note: Please write all the first letters of each sentence together to get "**Sri Santi Ashram Centenary Celebrations Ki Jai.**"

THE READERS ARE REQUESTED TO VISIT THE WEBSITE OF SRI SANTIASHRAM UPLOADED RECENTLY ON 21-1-2017, ON THE OCCASSION OF THE CENTENARY CELEBRATIONS.

LOG ON TO : www.srisantiashram.org.in

SHANTI ASHRAM - MY HOME AWAY FROM HOME

Nadira Roopchund

Sri Shanti Ashram - The Abode of Peace, A 'Peace' of Heaven on Earth, H.H. Sri Swami Omkarji's gift of spirituality to earnest seekers and greater mankind. This spiritual legacy has been sustained through the nourishment of H.H. Beloved Mother Jnaneswari. Sri Swami Omkarji, in His Autobiography, glorified Mathaji thus: "Kumari Jnaneswari has been devoted, loving, sweet and obedient, never thinking of herself but always of others, loving and adoring me as her all-in-all since her childhood. She has impressed me and made me feel that she is one of the ordained disciples of God Himself. She has been noble, completely selfless and magnanimous always. There are moments again when I feel that she is more my Guru, the Teacher, than Chela, the disciple, for she sets an example even for me to follow by her utter selflessness." Swami Sahajanandaji too had often spoken about Mother Jnaneswari and extolled Her unparalleled spirit of service.

Through the spiritual thread that runs commonly between Sri Swami Sivanandaji's devotees (Divine Life Society) and Sri Swami Omkarji's devotees (Shanti Ashram), the members of DLS South Africa were infinitely blessed when H.H. Sri Swami Sahajanandaji graciously hosted Mathaji in South Africa from October 1989 to January 1990. A profound experience awaited us.

Mathaji radiated divinity and love. Her humility belied the Shakti of the Divine Mother incarnate. The very sight of Mathaji caused the heart to well up with deep, ineffable joy. Her love was showered on all who came into Her ambit. Imbued with this Divine Love, many devotees experienced a spiritual awakening. This was all due to our Beloved Swami Sahajanandaji who foresaw our need for supreme love which only the form of the Divine Mother could satiate. To me, Mother Jnaneswari and Swami Sahajananda have always been one

and the same, the same Divine Force in different forms.

As time rolled on after Mathaji left our shores in January 1990, pangs of separation and a burning desire for Mathaji's physical darshan saw me journey to Shanti Ashram in 2007. Only after placing my weary head on Mathaji's lap once again, was this restless soul completely placated.

Having immersed myself several times in Swami Omkar's Autobiography, I was living my dream as I ecstatically walked on the holy ground, touched the beautiful trees planted by Swamiji, sat at the blessed mango tree where Swamiji attained nirvana, visited the Gurukula children.....I was simply intoxicated with Shanti Ashram.

It is almost impossible to express gratitude to these divine incarnations for their unconditional love, untiring guidance and protection, and boundless grace - but to adopt and incorporate their tenets into our daily lives, will be the ultimate expression of gratitude.

The milestone of Shanti Ashram's centenary is testament to Swami Omkarji's vision of providing the means for the quenching of man's thirst for spirituality. Through the grace of Swami Omkarji and Beloved Mathaji, and the dedication of devotees and ashramites, Shanti Ashram will continue to withstand the vagaries of time and not only provide shelter from the smouldering heat of worldly life but more importantly, propel the spiritual advancement of aspiring souls, far and wide, for generations to come.

OM SHANTI SHANTI SHANTI

This article is sent for publication in the Souvenir of Centenary Celebrations of Sri santi Ashram

WORSHIP OF THE DIVINE MOTHER

-Its significance and importance

Swami Tattvavidananda Saraswati

(continued from December 2016)

Offer Everything to the Mother, Saying 'Namah'

People believe they own and possess things. They not only own physical things, they possess and dominate other people also. Parents try to dominate the children for a few years and then the equation will be reversed, and now the children will start dominating the parents. "Father, I asked you to sit there; why did you move from there?" – the boy tells the father. Father keeps quiet; what can he say? He can see the anomaly, yet he keeps quiet. Therefore this possessive attitude, acquisitive spirit, is wrong. In Vedanta we always say that as long as you retain this possessive spirit, you will not come to know the truth. You will remain as an egoistic entity. Because any possession belongs to an ego; it is the ego's possession. You are that ego; it is ignorance. Therefore, we have to work on this ignorance. How to work? Sit before the Mother with devotion and take a flower and offer it saying "*namah*".

Neutralizing the Sense of Possessiveness

How many times should you say '*namah*'? You can say any number of times, because it is required to neutralize the sense of possessiveness. Some of you may have wondered why the repetition "*namastasyai namastasyai namastasyai namo namah*". The idea is you have to stay with the vision. You can use this "*Devi Stuti*" in daily puja, daily chant or even daily contemplation. You can take one of these lines of "*Devi Stuti*" and contemplate.

Mother is in the Form of Consciousness

"*Ya Devi sarvabhuteshu chetanetyabhidheeyate*" (5-17, p.71)

– *chetana* is the waking consciousness. You wake up; before you wake up you do not know anything. But the moment you wake up, the waking consciousness is in place, therefore you become conscious of the body. ‘I am here in the bedroom, in the house; now it is early morning and time to get up’. You become conscious of other members of the family, of society, of the jobs you have to perform, etc. So, what you call world is indeed shining in your consciousness. That consciousness, *chetana* – wherefrom has it come? It has originated from the Mother. In fact, the Mother alone is in the form of the waking consciousness in every life form. This is a meditation. You can contemplate. You can sit upright, close the eyes and say “*ya devi sarvabhuteshu chetanetyabhidhiyate*”. The Universal Mother is present in this body and mind as *chetana* due to which the eyes are able to see forms and colours, the ears are able to hear the sounds, taste buds are able to taste different tastes and the skin is able to feel heat, cold and the sense of touch, and mind is able to contemplate, think. This is the power of consciousness. This power has originated from the Universal Mother. I offer the power, *chetana*, waking consciousness, unto the Mother. I say this three or four times because what is repeated becomes well established in the heart, “*namastasyai namastasyai namastasyai namo namah*”.

Doing with Love, with a Sense of Surrender, not Mechanically

You should chant the *Devi stuti* with a sense of love, while contemplating upon the vision of the seer presented in the verses. The verses are not meant for hurriedly reciting one after the other and be done with it. You have to stay with each verse, thus converting the recitation into contemplation or meditation. The *Rishi* repeats the line *namastasyai* again and again for this purpose alone. Otherwise, he would have put it as “*ya devi sarvabhuteshu vishnumaya, chetana, buddhi, nidra, kshudha, ityaadirupena samsthitha – tasyai namah*”. You have to abide in the vision. You are surrendering yourself to the Mother. You have to abide in that love and stay with that idea of self-surrender. Fire ritual (*homa*) is also done with these verses as “*namastasyai svaha, namastasyai svaha, namo namah svaha*”

etc. Worship, recitation, or fire worship should be done with a sense of love, with a sense of surrender, and not mechanically. Then the ritual acquires a transformative power. It will transform you; the inner transmutation will happen. That is the idea behind the chanting of all these prayers.

Divine Qualities Reflect the Divine Attainment

People say ‘God, God, God’ so many times every day. You have to understand a very special principle of Vedanta. ‘God’ is not only in the form of a *murti* but ‘God’ is in the very spiritual qualities in you: *sadgunapraptireva Ishwara praptih*. Suppose you travel to a famous temple, such as Kashi. You feel that you arrived at the abode of the Lord; that is fine. But then the Lord abides in the heart too. Suppose there is *shraddha* (earnestness) in you; it is a *sadguna* (divine quality). The Lord alone is in the form of *shraddha*. Therefore, there are two types of focus – in one kind of focus you worship the Mother with flowers in a ritual. Then, there is another focus. You look within; you observe your interior. In that interior, you see an earnestness called *shraddha*. You see an earnestness to know the Truth, to worship the Mother and to surrender to Her. That earnestness is another form of the Mother: ‘*shraddharupena samsthitha*’. (5-50, p. 73). Bhagavan Buddha was once asked to talk about God. He said: ‘You first practice *sat-charitram*, the good conduct,’ and he gave *ashta-vidhacharitram* – the eight divine qualities. ‘You practice them first; get established in these qualities, then, I will talk to you about God’, he is reported to have said. Suppose he said, ‘God is in this form’. Then, people would worship that form and ignore the divine qualities. Therefore, God is not only in the form of a *murti* but also in the form of some of these great qualities which we should cultivate (in our hearts), such as *shraddha*, earnestness, and *shanti*, quietude (5-47, p. 73).

Divine Mother in the Form of Shanti, Inner Quietude and Cheerfulness

‘*Shanti*’ includes not only inner quietude but also cheerfulness. Cheerfulness doesn’t mean jumping and shouting; it means being

naturally joyous. You should not be bogged down by the burdens of *samsara*. The burdens of *samsara* are all your imaginations; they are not real. You should not get bogged down by them. You should keep them aside; when the mind stops thinking, *samsara* will end. *Samsara* will be there only when the mind is working feverishly. When the mind becomes quiet, there is no burden of *samsara*. The natural joy wells up; that is shanti.

Divine Mother in the Form of *Kṣudha*, Hunger

Another interesting thing – I am sure we are all hungry and sumptuous food is waiting for us. There is hunger in us. Now, did you create this hunger? No. What does the hunger signify? Hunger signifies the power of life; which is the Mother, the '*prāṇa śakti*.' "*ya devi sarvabhuteshu kshudharupena samsthitha*" (5-26, p. 72).

Divine Mother in the Form of the Faculty of Thinking

Not only good qualities, but also faculties – the faculty of thinking: "*ya devi sarvabhuteshu buddhirupena samsthitha*" (5-20, p. 71); the power of thinking is given to us. In fact, it is not someone sitting above giving to us. The Mother has manifested that way. For example, this light (before us) is given by the electricity. Now, how did electricity give it? Is electricity sitting in the power house and from there by a miracle did it give? No, electricity has arrived here, entered the bulb and made it glow. The Universal Mother has entered this body-mind and is reflecting in it in the form of the faculty of thinking.

'O Mother, I Surrender my Mistakes Also Unto You...'

Sometimes people commit errors. Suppose you look at a rope and assume it to be a snake. How did you manage that? You could not see the rope due to the inadequate light. But, how did you bring this snake? Firstly, the rope is 'covered up' and you cannot see it clearly; that is *tamoguna*. But you do see something thick and long. If it is pitch-dark you won't see a snake. You should be able to see something. That is *sattvaguna*. Then, you project a snake. That is

rajoguna. So the three *gunas* should come together for you to mistake a rope for a snake. You should see something – *sattvaguna*, fail to see the rope as a rope because of the darkness – *tamoguna*, then project a snake – that is *rajoguna*. Thus Mother is the cause of *bhranti* (mistake) in every person's head: '*ya devi sarvabhuteshu bhrantirupena samsthitha*' (5-74, p. 75). Even to make a mistake you need the blessing of the Mother. So many errors and mistakes we have committed; so many false notions we have entertained; that's why we are where we are. Even the mistakes are because of the Mother's power. All our intellectual accomplishments are also because of Her grace. Therefore, I surrender both, the mistakes as well as the accomplishments, unto You: *namastasyai namastasyai namastasyai namo namah*.

The three *gunas* are manifesting at the macro level also. Creation is *rajas*, sustenance is *sattva*, and annihilation is *tamas*. The three *gunas* together constitute the fundamental principle of the universe. Therefore, Mother is the Originator, Sustainer and Annihilator of creation.

Mother in the Form of *Trupti*, Satiation

Suppose we enjoy some nice food. At the end of it, how do we feel? You may not say it because of politeness but how do you feel? You feel a sense of satiation, called *trupti*. That sense of satiation – "I had a good dinner" – you get that sense because of the Mother. You must be hale and healthy to eat well and feel satiated. That health, that hunger, that food, that feeling of *trupti* – the feeling of satiation that you experience – all are the manifestations of the Universal Mother's power.

See God, the Divine Mother, Everywhere...

Not just among human beings. The text says: "*bhutanam chakhileshu ya*", who abides in all life forms (5-77, p. 75). The Mother is not sitting at one place; she is *vyaptidevi*, all-pervading light of awareness (5-77, p. 75). She is like this electric light which is not

merely confined to the dome; it is spreading everywhere. Devi means the power of effulgence. Look all around: a dog, a cat, a mosquito, a fly, an elephant, a tiger, a deer, a bird, a fish – in all these life forms the power of life and power of sentience is the Mother alone; even in plants. Therefore you should see God, the Mother, everywhere. It is all, the one Universal Mother, no different from the Father. That is the spirit with which you should worship the Universal Mother: ‘*namstasyai namastasyai namastasyai namo namah*’.

Om!Om!Om!

(This is an edited version of the talk by Swami Tattvidananda, on the occasion of the ‘Deepavali’ festival (October 30, 2016) at the Arsha Vidya Gurukulam, Saylorsburg, PA. The talk mainly focuses on and highlights the spiritual significance of the “Devi Stuti”, in the context of the ‘Deepavali.’)

Hints to Aspirants

- Swami Ramdas

Adherence to the external forms of worship ceases when your mind is drawn inward. The object of all such worship is to achieve this aim. In meditation, your mind should think only of God who resides within you, and not wander about in the midst of passing scenes of the objective life. When you realise union with the Divine within you, you will have attained the fruit of all your *Sadhana*. The mind going inward through the practice of prayer and meditation finds the presence of the Divine first within, and then without, everywhere. You realise that you are the Spirit, not of local individual value, but of a universal nature and significance. You rise above all forms, thoughts and movements in which you had been involved when the mind was externalised. The inner perception and realisation of God is the culmination of all spiritual effort. Now you know who you are in reality. You are verily He!

KENA-UPANISHAD

- Swami Brahmananda

Nirguna-Brahma-Vidya (Meditation on Attributeless Brahman)

The goal of all vidyas (meditations) is the one, non-dual, infinite Brahman alone. All Upanishads practically deal directly or indirectly with Brahma-Vidya alone. This particular *Nirguna-Brahma-vidya*, however, confines itself to what the Kenopanishad says on this subject. A doubt may arise in the reader whether there are two Brahman, one *saguna* (with attributes) and the other *nirguna* (without attributes). The answer depends upon the state of the questioner and the one who answers. The answer may be ‘Yes’ or ‘No’ or ‘both’ or ‘neither’. Brahman (the absolute, the Consciousness pure) includes all and excludes all, is immanent in all and transcends all. Perhaps It is also free from all inclusion, exclusion, immanence and transcendence. The one and only aim of all meditations is to directly know and realise that the meditator is always non-different from Brahman, the object of meditation, and the act of meditating.

It is significant that the word *vidya* in Sanskrit can mean both knowledge and meditation. We may not be far from the right if we say that meditation which is said to end in Knowledge is the same as Knowledge. Meditation or meditating is really no action like talking, thinking, eating, etc. It is the ‘object’ realising its forgotten subjectivity, thus doing away with the false division of ‘subject’ and ‘object’.

Kenopanishad chapters I and II give this Nirguna-Brahma-vidya. The word *nirguna* as antonym of *saguna* means ‘attributeless’. But here we have to understand it in a different sense altogether. *Brahman* cannot be limited by saying that He is attributeless. Attributelessness is also an attribute in one sense. Mantras 1-5 to 9 say: *tad-eva brahma tvam viddhi* - Know That alone to be *Brahman*. What is meant by the word ‘That’? The answer is given: (1) It is That which is not uttered by speech, but by which speech itself is uttered. (2) It is That which is not thought of by the mind, but by which the mind thinks. (3) It is That which cannot be seen by the eyes, but by which

the eyes are able to see objects. (4) It is That which cannot be heard by the ears, but which enables the ears to hear sounds. (5) It is That which cannot be smelt by the nose, but by which the nose gets its power of smelling. Though the upanishad refers to only four organs and the mind, we have to add to these five the remaining organs, viz. the four motor-organs: hands, legs, anus and the sex organ; the two sense-organs: taste and touch; and the three sub-divisions of the internal organ: the intellect, the ego and the subconscious. Thus, the word 'That' in the mantras refers to Brahman which can be contacted neither by the five motor-organs, nor by the five sense-organs, nor by the four parts of the internal organ (antahkarana). One has thus to meditate on That which transcends all the organs.

Meditation is a function of the mind in the early stages. How can the mind meditate on that which is beyond itself? It seems to be an impossible feat. Even supposing that some one by some means succeeds in meditating on Brahman as indicated in the Upanishadic mantras, the Upanishad in the second half of the second line of the five verses referred to above makes the repeated statement that *Brahman* is not what people worship and meditate (*upasate*) here. If anyone says that he is practising meditation on Brahman, then let him be certain that what he meditates upon is not *Brahman*, the Infinite, the whole.

In mantra II-1 of this Upanishad the teacher says to the disciple: If you think that you have known *Brahman* well, you have not known It fully; you have known only a part, a little expression of that Infinite Being at the most-about the gods above and the self within. You have to deliberate and meditate further. Then the disciple, says Sri Sankara in his commentary, having heard this observation made by the teacher, sat in solitude with his mind concentrated, reflected on the teaching of the master (as contained in chapter I) together with their import hidden by the words, meditated on it and made it a matter of direct, personal Experience. Then he goes to the teacher and says: 'Now I think *Brahman* is known.' Explaining his statement further, the disciple says: 'I do not feel that I have known It properly; not that I do not know, I know also. He among us who knows and yet knows not, really knows' (II-1 and 2). These mantras are very enigmatic and are capable of

giving different meanings. The disciple is trying to express through words what he has directly 'experienced', without the intervention of the mind which is present in all ordinary experiences. That which cannot be experienced through the mind cannot be expressed through words. The disciple is trying to do an impossible task and hence the apparent contradiction that we see in his statements.

This seems to contradict the previous statement of the master, repeated five times, that Brahman is not what people worship and meditate, for it is said that the disciple after hearing from the teacher meditated on what he heard about *Brahman*. But really it does not contradict. For although in meditation there is the functioning of the mind in the form of the triad of the meditator, the object of meditation and the act of meditation, the result attained, viz. the Supreme *Brahman*, is beyond all triads, and therefore transcends the mind. All meditations start with the triad, but take the meditator to that which is beyond the triads. A thorn is used to remove a thorn in the leg and both the thorns are thrown away leaving the leg in its original healthy condition. The soap-nut powder put in muddy water makes all the mud sink down and along with the mud it also sinks down, leaving the water in its original pure state. Similarly, here concentration and meditation by the mind on the attributeless nature of Brahman takes the meditator to the supreme state of *Brahman* - the unconditioned, unlimited Consciousness which is beyond the mind, beyond all attributes and their negation. Even at the time of thinking of an object, the mind is really one with the object. In meditation also the result is attainment of oneness with the object of meditation which is *Brahman*. So the Upanishadic declaration that *Brahman* is not what people worship here, not only eliminates all limited forms of the deities that are worshipped, but also all objects thought of by the mind. In short, all *anatman*-all that is not-*atman*, all names and forms perceptible to the senses and the mind and their negation-are not to be mistaken for the Supreme *Brahman*.

The *Atman* appearing to be within the meditator, atomic in size, seated inside the small space in the heart-lotus, is really *Brahman* that pervades the whole space outside and extends further by ten inches, as the *Purusha-sukta* puts it. The secret behind our never-

ending desires is that it is this Infinite *Brahman* that is behind these desires. Hence it is that the desires are also infinite. It is beautifully and picturesquely given in the Puranas in the story of the *Vamana-avatara*. A small dwarfish boy asked king Bali for land measuring three paces by his little feet. The king who granted his request could not fulfil it, for the small boy, Vamana, was really the infinite *Brahman* in disguise who measured all the universes by two paces and demanded the remaining one pace. Then Bali showed his head and the Lord placed His third step on that head. Our desiring also is really the desire for the Whole-the gross, the subtle and the causal realms and that which is beyond them-and hence it is that no one is completely satisfied even with all the objects that this mortal world can give.

Now, the first chapter of the Upanishad gives the incomprehensible nature of *Brahman* or its attributelessness to help meditation. The language naturally is very pithy and aphoristic. *Brahman* is to be meditated as the Ear of the ear, the Mind of the mind, the Speech of the speech, the *Prana* of the prana, the Eye of the eye, and so on. As *Brahman* is thus beyond the organs, neither these organs nor even their presiding deities can know Brahman. Nobody has known Brahman as an object, and hence it is difficult to teach or communicate It to another through words. Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa says that God alone is unpolluted by the mouth, because no one has so far expressed Him through words by the organ of speech. The word 'God' itself when expressed through the mouth cannot connote that Infinite *Brahman* whom even the mind cannot think of. All objects of the world including all concepts expressed in words by the organ of speech may be said to be polluted, because they have contacted the saliva and the germs in the mouth. *Brahman* is different from all that is known, from an atom up to *Hiranyagarbha*, the Creator, and It is above the unknown and unknowable *Isvara*. This is the knowledge which has come down from the ancient past to the modern times through a chain of teachers and disciples. Thus should one meditate on *Brahman*.

In the second chapter of the Upanishad is given some more help to meditation. The language here is again very abstruse and likely to cause confusion, nay, even a feeling of frustration in the

seekers, especially the neophytes. *Brahman*, says the Upanishad, should be meditated upon as That which is known to those to whom It is unknown, and That which is unknown to those who know. Those who after reading a few scriptures think they know *Brahman*, to them Brahman remains unknown. The Seers who have realised the truth that *Brahman* cannot be known like an object or a concept by the senses and the mind-to them *Brahman* is said to be known, as they have directly realised It through intuition which transcends all intellectual knowledge. Such knowers of *Brahman* perceive It in every cognition, in every modification of the mind, as the Self-awareness in all sensations as well as in their absence. They have gone beyond all concepts of the mind which have revealed their real nature, viz. the *Atman-Brahman*. Because in all concepts it is the light of the Atman that reveals the mind which has assumed the form of the particular concept.

This meditation results in Immortality in addition to strength - physical, mental and spiritual.

A Sufi saint says: Man passes through three stages. First he worships anything - man, woman, money, children, earth and stones. Then when he has progressed a little further; he worships God. Finally, he does not say, 'I worship God', nor does he say 'I do not worship God'. He has now passed from the first two stages into the last. First there is knowledge; then there is asceticism; then there is Knowledge that comes after asceticism. The 'Ultimate Knower' is worth a hundred thousand ascetics.

(from the Book "The Supreme knowledge revealed through Vidyas in the Upanishads," by Swami Brahmananda - A Divine Life Society Publicaton, Rishikesh, Uttarakhand)

LORD BUDDHA - THE EMBODIMENT OF COMPASSION

Swami Jyotirmayananda

Ah! Lover! Brother! Guide! Lamp of the Law!
I take my refuge in thy Name and Thee!
I take my refuge in the Law of Good!
I take my refuge in thy Order! Om!
The dew is on the lotus! Rise, Great Sun!
And lift my leaf and mix me with the wave.
Om Mani Padme Hum, the Sunrise comes!
The Dewdrop slips into the shining Sea!

Sir Edwin Arnold
(The Light of Asia)

More than six centuries before the birth of Christ, there was a spiritual crisis in India: Vedic culture began to dwindle in the encircling gloom of illusion, and people, instead of sacrificing the latent beasts of anger and passion, began to indulge in sacrificing innocent animals. Instead of pursuing religion in its true spirit, they began to take recourse to crude forms of austerity, dry intellectual learning, and many hypocritical forms of piety. Violence, cruelty, selfishness, greed and passion began to dominate the minds of the masses. In such an atmosphere of decline of virtue, there emerged the glorious light of the spirit in the form of Buddha - a light that was meant to bring order in the world of disorder, to stop the decline of virtue, to dispel the forces of darkness and to promote the path of righteousness.

An interesting story is told about the birth of Buddha. King Shuddhodana was a righteous king who ruled over a prosperous state known as Kapilavastu in the Himalayan valley, north of Bihar in India. His Queen, Maya Devi, gave birth to a child in a charming garden in the midst of celestial portents and signs, and his body had auspicious marks that foretold his future greatness. The impact of the delight of having given birth to such a glorious spirit could not be endured by the frail body of Maya Devi; she died seven days after his

birth. Buddha, who was then known as Siddhartha, was brought up under the loving care of Maya Devi's sister, Mahaprajapati, his foster Mother.

King Shuddhodana consulted the astrologers regarding the destiny of the child, and after having studied the planetary conditions of his birth, foretold that the child was going to become one of the greatest of men in the world - either he would be the emperor of emperors, or he would renounce the world and teach the path of dharma (righteousness). When King Shuddhodana asked what he should do in order to secure emperorship for his child, they told him that if the child were to be kept away from the sight of four things - a diseased person, an old man, a dead body, and a monk-he would become an emperor; otherwise, he would live a life of renunciation.

Following the advice of the astrologers, King Shuddhodana built seven encircling walls to keep the palace a completely conditioned atmosphere. All luxuries of life were presented before the growing child, and all the sights of pain and suffering were kept away from him. However, in spite of all this care and caution, Siddhartha at times entered into deep reflections over the plight of the withering flowers. Even in his royal garden he saw how a moth is captured by the quick tongue of a frog; and how the frog is, in turn, devoured by a snake; and the snake, in turn, is killed by a mongoose or carried away by a hawk. He noticed how the chain of mutual violence continued to expand in ever-widening circles. He would become depressed and sorrowful at the wide-spread sufferings of all living beings.

As time passed, Siddhartha became a handsome youth. He acquired the knowledge of the Vedas as well as all the learning that was meant for a kshatriya prince. In order to prevent him from becoming a monk, King Shuddhodana kept him in the midst of numerous charming young ladies, and all the pleasures of the senses were available for the prince. In the course of time, his father married him to Yashodhara, a princess of a neighboring kingdom, and eventually, his son, Rahula, was born.

Sometime before the birth of his son, Siddhartha had passed beyond the walled enclosure of the palace four times, and each time

he witnessed one of the four signs that he was not supposed to see. It is said that the Gods themselves appeared before him as a sick and miserable man, as a person disfigured with age, as a dead corpse with its terrifying stillness, and as a monk beckoning him to renounce the world that is fraught with disease, old age and death.

As a result, when the royal palace was jubilant over the birth of his child and all the people were engrossed in festivity, Siddhartha, with the help of his chariot driver, secretly slipped away from the palace. Departing from his beloved wife, his newly born child, and his world of material prosperity, he began to wander through the forests of northern India in search of enlightenment.

He met various spiritual teachers but was not satisfied with their teachings. While practicing intense austerities in the forest of Buddha Gaya, he was reduced to a skeleton, yet he persisted in the practice of severe austerities. It is said that the Gods sent before him three dancers who sang as they passed him, "Do not tune the vina too tight, or it will break; do not tune it too loose, or it will not give sweet melody; but tune it neither tight nor loose, and it will charm the hearts of men." Siddhartha understood the message of the song, and from then on adopted a path of moderation.

Under the bodhi tree Siddhartha passed into the various stages of samadhi (superconsciousness). He waged an intense fight against the spirit of temptation, *Mara*, and attained supreme victory. By his intuitive vision he saw the end of misery and the path that leads to such a blessed end. For a moment he thought to renounce the body and to be merged into the state of liberation, but soon, over powered by a spirit of compassion, decided to preach the revealed path. He reflected within himself, "The ship that I have built for crossing the ocean of the world-process should now be placed at the disposal of all who would like to cross it. Why should I destroy it?"

After Enlightenment, Siddhartha became known as Buddha (the Enlightened). Since his family name was Gautama, he is also called Gautama Buddha. And further, since he belonged to the Sakya tribe, he is also called Sakya Muni.

Buddha began to teach the mystic art of attaining Nirvana -

the end of the cycles of birth and death, and the extinction of all cravings. He spoke of the four Arian truths-Pain, the Cause of Pain, the Cessation of Pain, and the Path that leads to the Cessation of Pain. He elaborated upon the chain of causation that keeps a person confined to the cycles of birth and death, and taught how ignorance was the root-cause of sufferings. His teachings were, in essence, the teachings of the Vedas, however, he gave a new vitality to the Vedic teachings because of his direct realization of the Truth. He condemned sacrifices of animals and all expressions of cruelty and violence. He further discouraged mere intellectual speculations about God, Liberation and the Absolute, and asked his followers to end their pain instead of indulging in various speculations about it.

He gave an example of a person who is injured by an arrow. When a doctor comes to remove the arrow and to heal him of his injury, the injured man begins to ask many questions, such as, "O doctor, what is the name of the person who shot this arrow? What is the arrow made of? How fast was it travelling?" If the doctor were to stop and answer all these questions, the person would simply die. What is needed is to remove the cause of pain, and later try to find the answer, if such is needed.

The words of Buddha were so powerful, his personality so magnetic, his conduct so lofty and elevating, that kings, princes, and people from all walks of life began to follow his teachings. His wife, Yashodhara, and his own son, Rahula, also became monks under his guidance. Buddha continued to promote dharma with an indefatigable dynamism. He and his group of monks collected alms by begging and devoted their energy towards the dissemination of his sublime teachings. Then, at the age of 80 (480 B.C.), Buddha departed from this mortal world, but the light of compassion that emanated from his glorious personality continued to sweep over India, China, Japan, and most of Asia. And even today that light is being increasingly recognized, revered and followed by aspirants all over the globe.

May all receive the blessings of Buddha-the Enlightened!

from International Yoga Guide, May 2012.

ASHRAM NEWS

Conclusion of the Centenary Celebrations of Santi Ashram

17-01-2017 to 21-01-2017

With the blessings of Brahmaleena Parampujya Swami Omkarji and the able guidance of Parampujya Jnaneswari Mataji, under the Presidentship of Parampujya Swami Padmanabhanandaji the grand finale of the Centenary Celebrations were held from 17th January to 21st January 2017.

On 16th evening at 4.30 the Pranava flag was hoisted by Parampujya Jnaneswari Mataji. On 17th morning at 5.30 am the Murty of Shanti Ganapati and Santi Pillar were garlanded. Akhanda nama Sankeertan commenced at 8.00 am and it was concluded at 8.00 am on 22-01-2017. During these five days Hanumanchalisa, Jaya Jaya Ramakrishna Hari Om, Hare Rama Hare Rama Rama Hare Hare, Hare Krishna Hare Krishna Krishna Krishna Hare Hare were chanted. Parampujya Swami Padmanabhanandaji as the Chairperson, conducted the daily programmes and many saints and scholars delivered divine messages.

The programme began with the Vedic chanting by Sri Dvibhashyam Sitarama Murty and party. Smt. Rukmini and Smt. Kameswari sang the prayer song.

Swami Padmanabhanandaji said “we should understand the significance of the very name of the ashram, SANTI ASHRAM christened by Swami Omkar. The very nature of our innerself is Peace. The one who understands this deep meaning will realize God. This Ashram is established to experience the inner peace in silence. Swamini Nirvisheshanandgiri Mataji said “Santi Ashram and Vyasashram are the Sun and Moon of the Andhrapradesh State. They are Kalpavruksha, the wish fulfilling tree for the Sadhakas and sannyasies..One should study the lives of the saints who were pure in thought, word and deed.”

On 18-01-17 Swami Paripurnanandagiri spoke about Meditation, Pranamudra, Viswarupa dhyanam, Omkara dhyanam, Shanmukha mudra, Bhramari pranayama and Omkar described in the Upanishads.

In the evening Sri Sheelannda Mataji in her message said “Like the mother who feeds the child with small morsels of food so do the saints by showing easy paths to make spiritual progress. She focused on some passages from “The Cosmic Flashes” and spoke on the ‘Prana spandana’ ‘Soham bhavana’ and ‘Tejas’.

On 19-01-17 Pujya Sri Swami Smaranandaji of Yogada Satsang Society gave his message. He said “Yogada Satsang Society also celebrated its Centenary. Omkar Swamiji incarnated himself on this earth to remove the ignorance and awaken divinity in humanity. Rama had Hanuman, Lakshmana and Vibheeshana to fulfill the purpose of his avatar and Swami Omkar has Mata Jnaneswari as his Hanuman. If we show kindness, compassion and forgiveness towards others, the divinity in us will become apparent. To experience peace is the only way to offer Gurudakshina to Swami Omkar. Happiness is the corner stone for spiritual life.”

On 20-01-17 Swami Muktanandaji of Anandashram in his message said “we have gathered here to remember swami who from Venkateswara Rao became Swami Omkar. He did not find fault with any tradition (sampradaya). The beauty of the Ashram is that there are no rigid rules. To observe silence, meditate and serve – these are the chief principles. Keeping these in mind he created congenial atmosphere in the Ashram. By constant repetition of the Peace Prayer, we realize our self. The Ashram is created in such a way that it helps people in whichever stage of sadhana they are.”

Sri W.P. Vasandani in his speech said “Swamiji is the divine messenger of Peace. The peace that you cannot get anywhere else is found here in the Ashram.” Chellaram trust and the Ashram have more than sixty years bond. Divine Life Society and Anandashram also have been supporting the cause of education. When Omkar

Swamiji was in the Kotagiri Ashram Sri Kishanchand Chellaram offered cheque for one lac rupees. But Swamiji did not accept it. Swamiji asked him to come to the ashram and experience the Peace. Later Chellaramji changed his plans and came to the Ashram to have Swamiji's darshan. He remarked that he had never come across such a Swami anywhere. He then presented the cheque and Swamiji accepted it. Chellaramji expressed his Joy at the growth and development of the Kotagiri school."

Pujya Mata Pratibhanandagiri of Gandikshetram in her message said "Swami Omkarji is a saint who is sent by God for a specific purpose. He is his own Guru. He is a born realized soul. Working in noise we experience silence here." She narrated a few incidents which she experienced during her association with Swamiji as well as Jnaneswari Mataji.

Sri Swami Tattvavidannada Saraswati in his discourse said "The Andhra People have not fully recognized the greatness of Swami Omkarji. People who are so used to ritualistic worship have not thought of finding out the secret of Creation and the true nature of the self. After Shankara Ramana maharshi, Vivekananda, Sivananda, Ramateertha, and Swami Omkar are the only saints who have talked about the nature of the self. All works of Swami Omkarji should be brought out in one volume as 'complete works'. There is a great need for them."

21-01-17. Padukapuja of Swami Omkar was performed by Swami Padmanabhanandaji. Sri Sambamurty conducted the puja. Jnaneswari Mataji read out the 123rd birthday message of Swami Omkarji. The Centenary Celebrations Souvenir was released by Swami Padmanabhanandaji. At 9.00 am clothes were distributed to the poor. Dvibhashyam Sitaramamurty conducted the 'Laksha Bilvachana' at Viswanath mandir. At 11.00 am distribution of Mahaprasadam began.

Sri Swami Paramatmanandagiriji of Malayala Swami Ashram from Kasi spoke on Bhava sadhana, Antarangika sadhana and the

benefit of listening to the chanting of Veda Mantras. Pujya Sri Swamini Lalitananda Saraswati of Atmavidya Ashram Charitable Trust Nidadavolu, in her speech said "Remembering the words of Sruti, Awake, Arise, Stop not till the goal is reached, we should wake up from our slumber and struggle till we reach the goal of our life viz., to realize our true self. For this Sravana, Manana and Nidhidhyasana are necessary. We should cultivate detachment (nissangatva) through the holy company (satsanga)

Sri Swami Ramananda of Ramana Sevashram said "We normally hear of the seven upper worlds and seven nether worlds. But there is also the 15th world that is the divine abode of Peace, Santiashram. Swami Padmanabhanandaji, Swami Muktanandaji, Swami Tattvavidananda Saraswati and Swamini Seelananda gave their divine messages during the birthday celebrations of Swami Omkarji.

On this auspicious occasion of Centenary Celebrations Sister Susheela's book "Prayers and Meditations" was released. Jnaneswari Mataji's articles and messages were brought out in a book form entitled "Divine messages of Pujya Mataji and travels in India and abroad." The commentary on "the Universal Prayer and Peace Prayer" by Swamini Vinamrananda Mataji was also released.

As a part of the Centenary Celebrations Swami Padmanabhanandaji inaugurated the information centre. With the help of Dr. Krishna and Dr. Vasanta, Ashram website www.srisantiashram.org.in has been launched by W.P Vasandani. Among the many books that were brought out on this occasion the book "Dhyanam" by swami Tattvavidananda was released. This is the Telugu translation of Swami Omkarji's "Meditation".

Each days proceedings were concluded with cultural programmes. Music recital, Annamacharya Sankeertana, Yoga demonstration, dances and skits on the life and teachings of Swami Omkarji Maharaj were part of the cultural programme. The performances of the students of the def and dumb school was the

highlight of the programme.

Pujya Jnaneswari Mataji appreciated, congratulated and blessed all the trustees and volunteers for their tireless efforts to make the Centenary Celebrations a grand success.

Swamini Vinamramataji concluded the Celebrations by proposing votes of thanks to the Trustees, working committees, volunteers, the devotees of Avadhoota Bhakta Mandali who conducted the Akhandanama Sankeertana, school teachers and students and all those devotees who came from different parts of India and abroad to participate in the Centenary Celebrations to make this function a grand success. She expressed her special thanks to Durga Somu Prasad Charitable trust, the Police Department, Road Transport Department, Health Department, Electricity Department and the Press. She expressed special gratitude to Shankar Rao and all the people who worked ceaselessly and untiringly in the Annapurna Kshetra (Kitchen)

AN APPEAL

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.

The readers are requested to visit the website of Sri Santi Ashram uploaded recently on 21-1-2017, on the occasion of the Centenary Celebrations.

Log on to : www.srisantiashram.org.in

FORM IV (SEE RULE 8)

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1. Place of Publication | : Sri Santhi Ashram, (via) Sankhavaram, Thotapalli, E.G. Dist.- 533 466 |
| 2. Periodicity | : Quarterly |
| 3. Printers Name | : Deepti Technical Printers |
| Whether citizen of India | : Yes |
| Address | : C-15, Balaji Towers, Gandhinagar, Hyderabad - 500 080, Andhra Pradesh, India.
Mobile: 9949703224. |
| 4. Publishers Name | : Secretary, Sri Santhi Ashram |
| Whether citizen of India | : Yes |
| 5. Editors Name | : Secretary, Sri Santhi Ashram |
| Address | : Sri Santhi Ashram, (via) Sankhavaram, Thotapalli, E.G. Dist.- 533 466 |
| 6. Name and address of individuals who own the paper and more than one percent of the total Capital | : The Board of Trustees and the Committee of Management of Sri Santhi Ashram (Regd) Sri Santhi Ashram Post, (via) Sankhavaram, E G. Dt. Andhra Pradesh - 533 466 |

Your contributions and support:

- Annadanam : a) Permanent- Rs. 5,000/-, Rs. 10,000/- Rs. 20,000/-, 25,000/- (Meals) b) One day -Rs. 500/-, 1000/-, 2000/-, 2,500/-
- Education Development Fund
- C a part of the Child Welfare Fund
- Old Age Welfare Fund
- Library Fund
- Peace Journal Subscription Fund :
a) India
Abroad
b) Annual - Rs. 50/-
Annual - Rs. 500/-
- General Maintenance Fund
- Publication Fund
- Teachers' Remuneration Fund (accepted each May) Rs. 3,000 per month or Rs. 36,000 per year
- Gosamrakshana (Cow Protection) Fund

Donations can be addressed to :

**The Secretary, Sri Shanti Ashram, (via) Sankhavaram ,
E.G. Dist., A. P. India - 533 446, (D.D. can be sent on Indian Bank, Kakinada)
email : srishantiashram@gmail.com; Phone: 7382009962
FAX : 08868-244220, Thotapalli; FAX : 0891 - 2712025, Visakhapatnam**

Donors IT exemption under Sec. - 80 G.