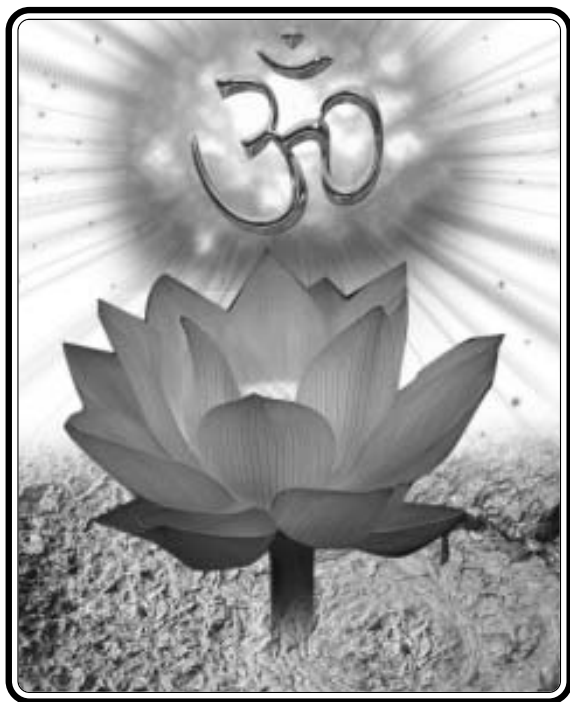


AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF OMKAR

- SWAMI OMKAR

VOLUME - II



GOD IS ONE

THE MISSION OF PEACE

SRI SANTI ASHRAM

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Chapter 61

PEACE CLINIC IN WALTAIR ASHRAM

The ways of God are mystical and incomprehensible. There is a saying in Telugu:

Sthala Bhogam, Sila Mahatyam

It means that there are some places or spots of land which are intended for great work, which are to have a glorious future. There are also certain stones that are to become God's images in holy temples and receive the worship of thousands of devotees. Similarly, our Waltair Ashram on Rishikonda Beach became a holy place of pilgrimage not only to all the aspiring souls and devotees of every religion and nation but also to all the poor and sick children of God.

Dr. M. G. Kini was considered an outstanding bone specialist of the day and he had wide experience in orthopaedics, the science of bone surgery. Dr. Dinakar Rao, a tall, stalwart doctor hailed from Mangalore, like Dr. Kini; he too was another specialist. Both of them held important and responsible positions in the Surgery and Medical Departments of the King George Hospital in Visakhapatnam. As there have been Lions of Vedanta, in the spiritual line so these two were Lions of Service in the realms of Surgery and Medicine. Another Lion of Service was Dr. C. K. Prasada Rao, a simple, devoted and dedicated soul with a great heart of compassion and love. There were many other big and small souls of service in those days at the King George Hospital when our Peace Clinic was started at Waltair Ashram.

These great and famous souls of service were unapproachable to the common man, the poor patients, but not because of prestige and pride but only because they were so very busy, day and night in selfless service in the King George Hospital. Yet all things are possible for those who trust and believe in God, the indwelling spirit of every heart. Holy scriptures such as the Gita teach us that God can make the crippled climb mountains and the dumb speak and this has been my personal experience. In spite

of my handicaps and slipping on ice, after having fallen in Philadelphia and later on in Thotapalli Hills and also after the heart malady, God was pleased to speak through a finite being like me and made me happy to climb hills such as Kailas and the hills in the Mother Ashram which lead to Shivalayam. How good is God always!

There are many hamlets of the fisher-men all along the sea coast. The poor people live in small clusters of huts and spend every day in casting nets and catching fish, their only, means of support. Because they are so poor and have to work so hard even when they are critically ill, many never see a doctor or a hospital. Even if they were to go to the King George Hospital, who would see them ? Who would take care of them? Not even one percent of them are in any small way educated. They are so ignorant that they do not know even 'A, B, C,' in either English or Telugu letters.

Nevertheless, in spite of the fact that they do not take medicines or go to hospitals for every disease, many of them are healthy and happy. Their day begins at the early hours of dawn, when they go out in their small boats with their hand-made nets. They are tossed about by the angry rising waves but cast their nets. Then they return home, often with a rich harvest. Their women folk rush the fish in baskets to the market and thus they eke out their meager living. With the money earned from the sale of fish they buy rice and dhal, etc., on which they live. Thus their days pass in the same routine, fishing, selling, buying rice with the proceeds of the 'catch'; and thus they live in Peace day after day, glorifying God for His richest blessings.

When our lions of service, Dr. M. G. Kini, Dr. Dinakar Rao, Dr. C. K. Prasad Rao and another devoted doctor named Dr. Ramanamurthy, visited the new Ashram by the beach, they were not only struck with the beauty and glory of the lovely beach and sea, but also with the great need for medical service. They saw with their own eyes the sickness and suffering of the poor fisher folk. During one of their visits they happily surprised Sister Sushila and myself, by offering their free and selfless service. They

proposed to come every day, after their hard and trying work in the hospital to serve the ignorant, poor and helpless fisher-men. On their wise suggestion a large medical habitation was constructed, they started the glorious service immediately. Along with the mighty lions of service there followed all the other sheep also in the form of Nurses, Pharmacists, Ward Boys, etc. Soon the spacious cottage with its palm leaf thatching was filled with tables, benches, water tanks, basins and medical instruments-all provided by the generosity of the noble doctors and their assistants.

Fortunately sister Sushila Devi had been a trained registered nurse in New York and her presence and selfless services were a great blessing and reminded us of the ideal life of Miss Florence Nightingale. Sushila Devi was full of kindness, compassion and deep love for the childlike, poor and innocent fisher folk. The helpless, sick and poor flocked in not by dozens but in hundreds to be treated by the most skilled and famous surgeons of the day, who had come to their very doorsteps to help and serve them in their need and suffering. This great, selfless service, so freely and voluntarily offered by the great doctors of Surgery and Medicine, with the co-operation and help of their devoted staff of workers, was a living miracle for those who had eyes to see it. It was a real Christian service, with Christ's Love and Compassion. I remember that we started our Peace Clinic in the Holy Season of Christmas; so I should like to add here an inspiring poem on Christ.

Christ

If Christ a thousand times
In Bethlehem were born
If He is not born in thee
Thy soul is all forlorn.

May all glory be unto God and Peace to all His children

OM OM OM

The Harvest and Its Needs

‘Blessed are the feet of these who bring good tidings’ quickly.

By that mysterious wireless code of the God-loving, news of the new Santi Ashram spread and brought steady streams of visitors from the town and the little villages along the white strand. They all expressed heartfelt joy to have within reach a promising haven which was already busy in a humble way, giving spiritual and physical succor to all that come and ask, as far as circumstances permitted.

It is true that Waltair is favoured with a fine hospital and a wealth of physicians and practitioners but the many villages on the outskirts are somewhat isolated from those blessings and many of these simple and illiterate villagers even fear the austere hospital and are too poor for paying the doctors' fees, small though they often are. Therefore at Waltair, Santhi Ashram Clinic and First Aid Dispensary set up at once, provided medicine and care, a far-reaching blessing to the poor and sick of the neighbouring hamlets. Much of the work lies in 'prevention', namely teaching elementary hygienic measures, for many of these precious children of God fall a prey to cholera, smallpox, fevers and skin diseases that find root in squalor and poverty.

In a noble spirit of compassion and service, besides Dr. Dinakar Rao and Dr. Kini, two Homeopathic Physicians and an Ayurvedic Doctor also volunteered their valued aid. What a blessing and impetus for the Cause! Brother Suryanarayana, M.A. kindly offered his talents and gifted services. Brother Narasinga Rao, Tenneti Viswanadham, Narasimha Swamy, Sri Durga Rao Chetty, Ramanaiah Patrudu and other esteemed friends of Peace stood by the cause with heartening zeal. Sadhu Rishikesh and Brahmachari Ananda are helping the Ashram and the Rishikonda Branch which is only a walking distance of four miles along the beach.

At the Waltair branch are daily held spiritual congregations for *bhaktas*, regardless of colour, caste or creed. As the material needs are supplied by the general public, the services of the Ashram may thus be increased. Permanent buildings are needed, namely a prayer hall, library, workers quarters and *kutirams* for

Sri Swamiji and other sannyasins. A kitchen, dispensary, fencing and gate, and a road leading from the main road and a good well with pumps are all required. With trust in divine providence and such gifts and efforts as each member could heartily offer along with happy co-operation, we can all work together to make our Waltair branch a perennial spring of Peace and Service. Then brothers and sisters in the Cause let us unite in this enterprise with heart and hand. If you cannot help materially perhaps you can plant a fruit tree or help lay a path. One and all are welcome to make your own Santi Ashram, a Haven of Peace for yourself and for others!

OM

OM

OM

(Peace March-April 1937)

SERVICE IN THE PEACE CLINIC:

It is almost unbelievable how the most important Doctors of King George Hospital who were almost unapproachable for even the rich people at times, now came to the poorest huts of the fisher folk and served them selflessly for the sake of love, without expectation of reward in any form. Indeed, it was a living miracle which showed the glory of selfless service. These famous Doctors of King George Hospital would come early, by 8 a.m. and stay often until sometimes, or 2 p.m. to serve all the sick fishermen patiently and lovingly. Only a selfless soul of God Vision, who believes that all are God, all people are the living images of the one, indivisible God, can serve the sick and poor so selflessly without wanting any recompense in any form. Unto such selfless service has its own reward. Verily, it is the greatest privilege for anyone to have this opportunity of selfless service, God comes to us in all forms and it is our privilege to face God in all and serve Him cheerfully.

Sister Sushila Devi, as a registered nurse with a diploma, testifying to her practical course of training of several years at a famous hospital of New York City, was very efficient and happy to serve all the helpless and long neglected people who

were sick with diseases and poorly nourished for want of proper, healthy food. Sister Sushila, out of her boundless love for the sick and poor helped some of the unfortunate people, not only with her tender care but also with food and clothing. She was so attached to selfless service that she would serve ceaselessly, even after the clinic hours, treating patients at odd hours, giving medicines, serving the suffering in all possible ways, ignoring her health and sacrificing all her time, energy and money, all for the welfare of the fisher men and the other sick people who came to the Peace Clinic from nearby villages and from Visakhapatnam. They came in great numbers for it was the most wonderful privilege to be served freely by such experienced doctors and nurses.

Once, when Sister Sushila Devi, in her great compassion and love for the sick and poor, in her great fervour of service, was cleaning the wounds or boils of a leprosy patient without any gloves on her hands, I remember that, Dr. Kini admonished her to be very careful, to take all precautions to protect herself, especially with the leprosy patients. Our Sushila simply smiled at the warning of the doctor and continued her loving services, repeating cheerfully that not a blade of grass moves without God's Will and it was He who was serving through her humble instrument and thus it would be God alone, who would take care of her in her selfless services. Sister Sushila Devi was a real Mother of Compassion to all those simple, helpless and suffering fisher people. After a hard day's work, whenever she took a walk by the Sea-side the fisher people both young and old and even the little children would flock around her showing their empty stomachs and praise her selfless services on their behalf, to the glory of God for all His richest blessings of service. I should love to conclude this chapter with the inspiring Prayer, or rather Meditation on Humanism which was written by Sister Sushila Devi.

Meditation on Humanism

- Sister Sushila Devi

May we be tranquil and courageous, casting out all fear.
May we strive undaunted towards our goal of Peace for all beings.
May we remain optimistic and cheerful by considering the
amplitude of time in which humanity has progressed and evolved
in many ways and will continue to do so.

May we feel the friendly kindness of Humanism with its
boundless tolerance, love and concern for all people.

May we put forth constant effort to study the capacity for
greatness in mankind, irrespective of caste, creed or colour.

May we employ this understanding to help the human and
sub-human beings towards a happy, healthy life, free of
exploitation.

May we free ourselves and others from the outworn and
stifling superstitions and traditions that tend to separate and
antagonise, rather than unite men.

May we believe that the greatest spiritual values are found
in raising the quality of human relationships.

Om Tat Sat Om

(Peace Aug - Sept. 1952)

Chapter 62

HOLY MOMENTS IN WALTAIR ASHRAM

VAISHAKHA MONTH AT RISHIKONDA BEACH :

Here at Rishikonda Beach Ashram, in Waltair, facing the blue sky and the Bay of Bengal life flows on so graciously that one seems to be in some fairy borderland on the very confines of Paradise. The daily wonder of sunrise and sunset enhances this impression, for radiance spreads over the joy—dance of the waves to our cottages among the palms and scarlet hibiscus bushes.

It is so easy to feel the nearness of Him whose presence is home to His children, when His holy glory and beauty beam on us from everything around us. Where there is beauty, harmony and love, that place, even in the tiny chambered heart of man, is God's sanctuary. How peacefully the vista reaches out in every direction, only the OM sound of the breakers as they meet the lonely stretches of white strand and the cry of some sea bird are heard occasionally. In the background are present the very fertile fields, lush with crops for man and beast. Beyond them are the rear picturesque mountaines carved by the Great Sculptor into strange and fantastic shapes. The Hanumantha waka flows placidly from wild ravines, quenching the thirst of countless jungle-inhabitants till it passes through our hermitage lands to join the sea. It is not only the silver treasure of these cultivated lands ; but is also a happy hunting ground, for snowy cranes stalked about among the water hycinths.

The Sacred scriptures of the East comment that it is auspicious to found ashramas and temples on deltas where rivers meet the sea, symbolic of the final merging of the individual soul with the Universal Soul, *Prakriti* with *Purusha*. So our Hanumantha waka, with its ancient historical associations, flowing from its source in the mysterious sanctum of the temple of Simhachalam, a great pilgrimage centre in these mountains, is the boon of our hermitage. In due time, with God's grace it shall have a bathing ghat and a small shrine where the holy breath shall be invoked to move over the waters and turn them into a healing *amrita* for the

sick and weary pilgrims who flock to Swamiji's feet each day.

Looking out towards the sea we see the extinct volcanic cone of the Rishikonda Mount, the promontory of the long range of hills. In days of old it harboured a group of Rishis or holy sages who meditated together for the welfare of the race. Swamiji and the members of Santhi Ashram envisage this ancient haunt of the *rishis* again being consecrated for the good of humanity, a centre where holy men shall once more radiate Peace, Love and Life to the rest of the world. The ruined temples at the foot of the sacred mount shall again be rebuilt and made into a fit place where souls may together live in God and pray night and day.

Every day our loving and guileless fisher people come flocking after their day's toil to obtain medicine for body, mind and spirit. They have such deep faith and trust that they respond remarkably to the treatment. Perhaps that is why the great teacher of Galilee spent much time with this tribe and even chose disciples from their midst to become the fishers of men from the vast net of *Maya*.

Last night our blessed Swamiji and a few *chelas* kept the Vaishakha vigil on the full moon of May for the Peace and enlightenment of all suffering beings. As the monsoon is gathering for its annual downpour the great full moon was veiled with a milky mist that threw a queer light over land and sea. The Vaishakha moon seemed to be weeping for the world and clouds of pity obscuring her bright gaze.

Just as we chanted OM in the prescribed cadence and rhythm, behold the waves grew luminous with an electric blue glow as if all the tiny, radiant, phosphorescent animalculae had come riding on the breakers far from the very depths of the sea, to join in the praise and invocation of the Lord of the Universe. His holy breath was felt in greater or lesser degree by one and all, according to the attunement and receptivity of their hearts.

Those who are blessed to abide both physically and spiritually in the few calm and tranquil places of this karma-driven war-mad

world have an immense duty to perform. We cannot be indifferent, though far removed, to the agonies that seep over our hearts as we tune in on the radio of the world. We cannot give ourselves up selfishly to soul-culture, stuffing our ears with the sophistries of selfish philosophies nor close our eyes in dreamy Nirvana while the crucified world bleeds on. We must bring back from our vigils the most high, the strength, wisdom and love with which to create about us wherever we may be, with practical and capable hands the conditions that our God of Love intended for both mankind and all the suffering sub-human beings. We can by ministry, purify and perfect our own individual lives to work with the holy breath that sent forth a Buddha, Christ, Krishna and follow meekly in their footsteps to make the world a better place because we have passed through it, carrying a chalice of heart-balm. While destruction goes on elsewhere, we can, who yet live in Peace build a mode of life, beautiful and desirable for man kind.

May the Spirit to Vaishakha, the spirit of freedom, our refuge and our goal pervade our hearts and expand afar to form the eternal realm wherein all men are children of God, peaceful, prosperous, healthy and happy.

- Sushila Devi

OM TAT SAT OM

(Peace Aug-Sept. 1940)

Animal Sacrifice

- Sister Sushila Devi

In India a land where mortality is very high and danger to life from many sources, the primitive religion of fear still holds the suffering masses in its grip. There is still a great deal of animal sacrifice to propitiate the nature deities.

The slaughter and even exploitation of the helpless, dumb, sub-human creatures is a dark and terrible practice for any reason, but worst of all seems to be animal-sacrifice in the name of a deity.

Here at Rishikonda we learned that this horrible practice

was carried on among the poor fisher folk who are very primitive, ignorant and neglected. Their dangerous work and plagues, due to squalid poverty, make them seek safety and immunity. The only way they know is the way of their ancestors for centuries, the propitiation of the nature deities, whom they imagine as blood-thirsty entities, by offering other vicarious victims, animal sacrifices-and thus they hope to escape.

Learning that animal sacrifice was being performed in a little temple near to our Ashram, Swamiji called for an assembly of the village priests and elders and reasoned with them for many hours and for several days. Patiently he laboured to remove the heavy veil of fear and ignorance from the hearts of those simple children of nature. Having at last awakened the divine in them they responded and threw themselves entirely upon Swamiji and the all-powerful God, of whom he told them and who was above all deities. He told them that his God was a gentle God of Love and wanted only their devotion and if they did kind and good deeds for their family, friends and all beings He would henceforth help and protect them. If however they continued animal sacrifices, they would cut themselves off from this great God of love. Finally they gave their solemn promise and all chanted the name and praise of the almighty God ere departing for their villages over the sand dunes.

The God of Love certainly performed a miracle in over-shadowing with His mighty influence the deep-rooted fear of these souls. The greatest of their new-found faith and resolution came on the day of one of their most important and time-honoured festivals. On that great Devi-day they came in colourful throngs to their little palm-thatched temple on the shore. At the Ashram we had spent the previous night in deep prayer and communion with Divinity, knowing how great an evil was yet to be wrestled with and what strength was needed.

The village priests, dressed in their festive garments and ornaments and with bodies painted with various symbols sat in a circle with the local dancers and musicians making wild music

with drums and cymbals. The meek animals that had been dedicated for the sacrifice were brought to the altar, then fearing that these poor people would waver in their resolve, Swamiji, I and other Ashram members pressed through the milling people to the altar. Then we reassured the priest who was really undergoing a terrific inner struggle with ancient, deep -rooted fear and superstitions and said, 'Now give up these creatures to the great and powerful God of Love, with your blessing' and then we will all worhsip Him together for His protection and benediction. A slight, stormy murmur rose from the throng. It seemed in the very *akasha* that a battle was taking place also between positive and negative forces ; the tension in the air caught at one's throat and heart and made every sensitive cell vibrate with psychical excitement.

Positively, quickly we snatched away the poor little brown sheep, the suckling pig and the fowl and the crowd made way silently, respectfully, while we handed them over to friends for safe-keeping. Our hearts were sick and almost paralysed with horror at the fate the creatures barely escaped as the rituals were inhuman. To give these simple folk something in place of their cruel, bloody ritual we performed a beautiful and impressive ceremony, lighting a fire, symbol of Light and offering incense, flowers and ghee and a few grains. We had the priests and elders take an active part so that instead of losing face and prestige they felt and seemed much more important in performing these more aesthetic rites that had the admiration and approval of the many great personages who had come to witness their festival. Soon all the ancient evil that had been rampant in that place of death and torture, now seemed cleansed by great waves of light, as the holy name of God rang out to join the praises that the ocean breakers sang with us in happy unison.

Light and Beauty seemed to pour down in throbbing waves of joy and peace and utter blessedness. A new Light too seemed to steal into the hearts of those priests, elders and the great crowds as the eminent visitors addressed and commended them unanimously. The fisher-folk pledged never to participate again in animal

sacrifice. It is indeed a joy to report that another very important festival day came round. and our good fisher folk, true and steadfast to their promise, worshipped the God of Love in a beautiful and elevating fashion. It thrilled our hearts and made them sing with thanksgiving and praise : With God's grace and help we hope to make the lot of these poor people happier and happier. It is a very grave and great responsibility, now that they have thrown themselves on us so trustingly. We need comrades to stand with us in this cause and invite all good and charitable souls in the East and the West to help us to bring light and beauty to this dark and suffering corner of the world. We are in need of dedicated workers to share the burden and funds with which to work. May God continue to bless and enlighten, guide and protect our fisher folk and bless the hands extended to the world over in His service of redemption for not only man, but for the whole of creation which indeed travaileth for the coming of the sons of God !

Om Amen Amen

(Peace, Jan 1941)

The Four Messages of Sri Santi Ashram - Waltair

Dear Friends,

It is our privilege to extend to you a hearty welcome not only into our Abode of Peace, Sri Santhi Ashram, but also into our hearts as well. To begin with, we wish to share with you and with all the visitors who come here the four Messages of the Ashram.

There is the *Message of Rishikonda* which projects into the Sea; the *Message of the Hanumantha Waka*, the rivulet which comes from the sacred hill of Simhachalam; the *Message of the Burial Ground* and finally the *Message of the Ocean* which is ceaseless, life-giving and soul-awakening.

1. In the days of yore it seems that rishis meditated by the side of the ocean on the Rishikonda Hill. Even now we see the ruins of caves and old wells. *Rishikonda's Message* to the visitors is aspire to be a rishi for rishihood alone is your birthright and goal. You are

not the body, the nest of flesh, blood and bones. You are the progeny of rishis. So work, live, breathe and aspire to become rishis Now and Here.

2. The Hanumantha waka, the rivulet says :

Dear Friends, look at me. I come here with a name and form and become nameless and formless in the ocean. Similarly you have come with a name and form and do not leave the Ashram until you become nameless and formless in God.

We are privileged to have a Hindu cremation ground as well as the muslim burial ground adjoining the Ashram. To the credit of the Ashram, peace and harmony prevail between the Hindu and the Muslim dead. We often wonder why there is no peace also among the living when there is peace among the dead. Perhaps the dead are more alive than the living, filled with feelings of love for their neighbours. Be he a Hindu or a Muslim, a Christian or a Buddhist, the man who denies the creator is a *jivanmrutha*, already dead although he seems alive.

3. Now hearken to the Voice of the Burrial Ground :

To day man is and tomorrow he is not. This moment is yours and not the next. From dust you have come and unto dust you will return. So fix your mind on something eternal and changeless, not tomorrow for tomorrow may never come, but right Now and Here alone, in this living moment.

4. The Message of the Ocean is :

O Friends, listen to the Holy music of the sacred syllable OM in the roaring of the rolling waves. Pray join me in this Universal Chant. Let all sound merge in the Soundlessness, the highest state of Cosmic Consciousness.

THE OCEAN IS PRAYING WHY DON'T YOU PRAY, O MAN!

Every wave is a prayer. Make every thought of yours a prayer also. Let all sound merge in soundlessness, the blessed transcendental state of cosmic joy, complete wavelessness which is your divine birthright, the soul and goal of existence.

What else is there to be said my friends? It has been said that one word is enough for the wise. That one word is Self-reliance, God-reliance. No more reliance on outer forms and names. Do not rely on me. Do not rely on anyone else. Rely on God who is throbbing in your own heart and flowing in your very breath.

Sri Kailas Ashram, which is on the nearby hill extends also its hearty welcome to the aspiring souls who long for peace to come towards its heights of glory.

(Peace Sept. 1956)

INHALE AND EXHALE PEACE THY BIRTHRIGHT

What a great privilege it is to inhale and exhale Peace with each and every breath ! May this highest moment be made permanent. Verily, it is the Individual Peace that paves the way towards the Universal Peace.

We may not change or reform the whole world but we can at least change ourselves from selfishness to selflessness, from the human to the Divine. As we change ourselves we silently help and serve the whole world.

May God's blessings be upon you. May your devoted lives be a blessing to the world and above all may you carry the peace of the Peace Mission with you and express it in each and every moment of your lives ! This is the prayer of the members, the sisters and brothers of Santi Ashram.

May Peace be unto All

(Peace Sept. 1956)

OM OM OM

Chapter 63

FASTING

Our Swamiji's Day of Silence :

To avoid disappointment visitors, to our Ashram are requested to note that they will not be able to have darshan of our Swamiji or interview him only on Friday, as it is a day of his fasting and silence. A warm welcome awaits you on all other days.

(Peace Sept. 1933)

Swamiji's Fast

Our Beloved Swamiji recently fasted for ten days, attending to all the Ashram work. It was perhaps on the sixth day of Swamiji's fast, when asked by some visitors the object of his fast he replied smilingly: 'To purify myself to be better fitted for the great work ahead of me; to be fully worthy of all those souls who love and trust me as their ideal and above all to be worthy of God's richest blessings'. The great power he possesses over his body and mind is really admirable. In spite of his fast he felt himself happy in body and mind so that he continued his work of correspondence and meditation in his usual way.

Every day he would tell us that he felt wonderful. From this it is clear that it is mind that makes everything in the world. In this connection we cannot resist the temptation to quote the lines of Milton: The mind is its own place, it can make a hell of heaven or a heaven of hell. How true are these words in the case of our Swamiji. May God bless him with long life and abundant health so that he may carry on the cause of peace.

(Peace April 1934)

ASHRAM NEWS:

Our Blessed Guruji and Sister Sushila Devi have completed most successfully their two weeks' rigid fast, for enjoyment', as they smilingly replied when questioned as to the reason for fasting. All friends and devotees in the Ashram felt indeed that the Holy Spirit was moving and directing this act of Grace. For they were

filled with health, strength and joyfullness to a very marked degree and went about their many duties in the usual manner divinely nourished, it seemed and secretly triumphant and full of inner conquests and inspiration.

During these sacred days Swamiji wrote an essay on 'Fasting for Enjoyment', a helpful and inspiring message for the way faring souls who wish to make strides on the spiritual path. Other helpful and beautiful thoughts just flowed from his pen and that of Sister Sushila and these will be offered for your study in the following issues of Peace. May God be praised for the way He has blessed our Swamiji and Sister with spiritual nourishment during their days of fasting.

Because of urgent and insistent calls from devotees in the U. S. A., Canada and Europe our Swamiji and Sister Sushila Devi may soon go forth to their labours in the West. As our dear, aged Santa Mouni Devi says, whenever our Guruji departs for America as she bows her beautiful silvery head over his feet in devout Eastern Guru worship, 'Ah! Now the sun will shine brighter in the West but it will be so much darker in India.'

OM OM OM

(Peace Oct. 1934)

Fasting for Enjoyment

This is the tenth day of my fast. I am trying to share my thoughts and experiences with my loving readers for an invisible tie binds them to me, drawing me towards them, wishing their welfare and Peace. Hence I wish to share not only my joys and sorrows, tests and trials but especially my spiritual experiences. Before I begin to write about fasting I must pay my homage to Mahatma Gandhiji who is an example of mystical fasting and whose simple life is a ceaseless flow of spiritual fasts. His word is authority on fasting for no one else in the East or West has had so much experience as Mahatmajiji.

It has been my ambition since teenage days to fast for forty

days as the blessed Christ had done, for he fasted and spent his time in prayer and meditation. As every bud is bound to bloom in its time I too felt confident that my sincere desire also; would be fulfilled.

What have I done so far towards preparation for my long-desired fast? I have been slowly preparing by fasting on every Friday, and sometimes even for two or three days. Recently, I fasted with great joy for eight days. This time I want to fast for at least fifteen days. So far I do not feel the least headache or any discomfort during these last ten days, not even a sign of nausea. Every day I am engaged in Ashram work for at least six to seven hours a day. Yet I feel strong. No symptoms of weakness or hunger.

Often I used to eat, because I thought that I had to, in order to be ready to do my work. I am sorry that I never felt any real pangs of hunger but ate out of mere habit. Strange as it appears, even now after ten days of complete fasting I do not feel the pangs of hunger. May all Glory be unto God and may He be praised for blessing me with His divine strength.

Now comes the question of what I eat and drink. If I eat how can it be a fast? I drink only for the purification of the body, once every two hours, plain water and sometimes I squeeze a little lemon into it, unsweetened of course. I do not even feel thirsty. I often force myself to drink for the sake of health. Every day I take care to keep my bowels clean and it helps me a great deal. Sometimes I take a sun bath and a little exercise too. The cool breeze exhilarates and stimulates the very cells of the body. This state reminds me of those saints of old who used to live 'only on water and air. All things are possible for those who have faith and trust in Him.

What is the motive of my present fast? It is purely for enjoyment. My fast is a fast for enjoyment. It may sound queer but it is a fact. Nowadays fasting has become a fad. Everyone is fasting for every little thing. There are people fasting because others are fasting. There are some who are fasting for the good of the country, to teach a lesson to the wrong-doers. There are fasts for penance,

fasts for overcoming inner propensities, fasts to win one's point, fasts for spite and fasts to make opponents repent or fear. It touches my heart to see the indefinite and prolonged fasts of helpless prisoners.

But where are the fasts for enjoyment, fasts for the sake of fasting without expectation of any reward ? How blessed it is to fast for the sake of enjoyment. This is the only real sane and healthy fast. In this fast one consciously awakens the dormant truth or divinity within oneself. God will be no longer aloof or away from him but will be face to face, nay, inseparably one with such a soul. Edward Earle Purinton in his 'Philosophy of Fasting' mentions the following fasts

1. Fasting for Health
2. Fasting for Enjoyment
3. Fasting for Freedom
4. Fasting for Power
5. Fasting for Beauty
6. Fasting for Inspiration
7. Fasting for Courage
8. Fasting for Poise
9. Fasting for Virtue
10. Fasting for Instinct
11. Fasting for Love
12. Fasting for Faith
13. Fasting for Spirituality

Before we proceed any further we must know what a real fast is. Some people think that they are fasting if they do not eat three meals a day but eat only once. Some people think that they are observing fast if they do not eat what they eat every day, such as rice, bread and cereals but take only fruits and milk. Some consider it a fast to take fruit or milk, but this is not a real fast at all.

Then what is a real fast ? A true fast has nothing to do with,

what we eat or what we do not eat. Fasting is not to abstain from physical food alone. Real fasting means to fast from all the evil propensities that are latent within oneself. If you become angry, passionate, envious, bitter and arrogant what benefit does fasting hold for you? Let the motive of your fast be to crush and conquer all that is weak and low. Let your goal be nothing short of perfection. Fast, fast until you purify yourselves. Fast until you shine with the innocence and purity of an unborn baby. Fast until you are blessed with a taste of the nectar of immortality.

The journey becomes tiresome and weary when a traveller begins to count the miles with every step. So also the fast loses its benefits if one concentrates on the food that he is going to take when he breaks the fast or if he thinks, 'How many days more am I to fast ?' or 'When will the fast end ?' One should not be anxious to see by how many pounds he has lost in weight but rather, he should be anxious to know the weight of his Infinite Soul. The fast should not make one a slave. We should be the masters of fasting and never its slaves. We should never be bound by fasts.

To me the conception of a real fast is *One fasts automatically because he is no longer a body but the Living Spirit. As the Spirit he does not need any kind of food or drink.* This is the highest conception of true fasting but it is very difficult to understand. My adorations be unto these blessed souls who are the ideals of fasting and who are not even conscious of their fasts for they have risen above the plane of the senses.

For the perusal and interest of my readers I wish to give below my daily routine and the thoughts that I wrote in my diary during the days of the fast.

First Day :

What a great help it would be if one were to resolve not to eat anything unless and until he is blessed with a taste of Immortal nectar. One cannot determine also not to see, hear, touch, smell, feel, taste and think or even breathe until he is blessed with a Divine Vision.

Second Day :

This is a Friday, my blessed day of Silence, when I can be alone with the Indweller of my heart without outer disturbances or activities of the Ashram. It is glorious to be alone with God. Silence helps fasting immensely.

Third Day :

Today is Lord Krishna's Birthday and I attended the morning celebrations and gave my message on the sacredness of the day. How glorious it is to consider our bodies as divine flutes ! When we empty ourselves from all ignorance, weakness and thoughts of mine and thine, Krishna sings through us, now and here, the sacred syllable OM.

Attended the evening *bhajana* but felt tired as they prolonged it with songs. Somehow the sound and noise did not appeal to me. I am a lover of Silence for Silence is God and God is Silence.

Fourth Day :

Woke up early feeling strong, happy and peaceful. On account of heavy work of the Ashram I felt a little tired; but after a bath felt quite refreshed. Natural baths and bathing in the tub, cooling the whole body, are very invigorating.

In the evening went on the roof and chanted the sacred syllable OM audibly, facing the beautiful sunset. As I chanted I felt the whole of nature, the manifested world, joining me in the chanting of OM.

Fifth Day :

Woke up early feeling quite strong but because of the heavy work could not find time to have a deep and silent meditation, hence felt a little sad. I should not give myself to worry or sorrow for Truth is inseparably and eternally one and ever present both within and without. So I must be satisfied by recognising God in all activities for *Work is Worship*.

Sixth Day:

This is another busy day, yet I made the best use of it for I wrote a good message on 'Opening the Eyes'. I always feel happy whenever I write my messages for Peace. In writing them I find my reward.

We all think that we have opened our eyes. No, we are all still blind; mere children. Only he whose inner eye is opened to Truth and who has nothing to see except God has truly opened his eyes. How true are the words of the great Saviours; 'Having eyes see ye not ?' May we open our eyes and offer them to His service.

Seventh Day:

Woke up rested, since my nights are quiet and undisturbed. Strange as it may seem, the more days I fast, the more work I have to do. So long as there is peace of mind, all work is possible for it is mere play. Today I wrote another inspiring message on the 'Worshippers of Creeds'. All communal fights, religious feuds, racial prejudices and caste feelings are, only due to the worship of creed rather than of the Spirit. God is neglected and mere form is adored. Life is forsaken and skeletons are worshipped in the name of creed or religion. Hence there is unrest, misery poverty and suffering in both the East and the West,

Eighth Day:

The more I fast the stronger I feel, day by day. There is not the least sign of weakness, thirst or hunger. Every night I sleep like a log of wood, waking up refreshed, ready to love and serve Him. How blessed it is to sleep in Him and wake up in Him and to work and breathe in Him. Whether in fasting or feasting, God is my Shepherd and Refuge. He is my Life and Soul. May He be ever praised!

Nineth Day :

Here is another blessed day of Silence - Friday. I always look forward to this day with great expectation and joy, like a miser who looks forward for getting a hoard of wealth. Somehow, on

this day, as I keep it sacred and observe Silence I make more progress than on any other day and feel consciously the nearness and inseparable unity of Truth. Today I wrote another inspiring message on 'Victory over Fear'.

How blessed and rare are they who are fearless ! But everyone is afraid of something or other. Fear is the most harmful and dangerous disease, rather a mental disease which attacks the body, mind and soul. The first step in spirituality is the conquest of fear. May we all be fearless to realise Him.

Tenth Day:

Days are passing peacefully and I am contented to continue my fast, enjoying it immensely. I do not have any taste, even for plain or lemon water. In the name of health I force myself to drink a tumbler of water. I am feeling so strong that I want to sing and go out for a walk.

Today in the early hours of dawn I started to write this message on 'Fasting for Enjoyment' and I am still doing it now, so that I may share my thoughts with my kind readers.

I resolved also to worship God not only with words and thoughts but with each and every breath of mine. They say that man inhales and exhales 21,600 times in one day. I want to worship Him every day with all my 21,600 breaths, recognising the Universal Breath of *SOHAM*. May His blessings ever abide with me and with all of you.

OM OM OM

In conclusion, without making this message too long with the addition of other pages from the diary I want to emphasize that fasting is not starvation; fasting is feasting, feasting on God's Love or Universal Energy. *With body consciousness no fasting is possible, with God Consciousness all fasts are possible.* If you fast, clinging to the body with impure motives your fast will be a failure. If you fast with a pure motive and a devout heart for the sake of enjoyment, not only will your fast be a complete success but even the angels

will attend upon you. It is glorious to fast for purification or perfection. It is a privilege to fast for enjoyment. It is sacred to fast for illumination.

Now, as I conclude my message I feel such a deep ecstasy, strength, buoyancy in body and freedom in mind and soul that I request all my readers to join me in a silent meditation to express deep gratitude to the Almighty, the Indweller of our hearts for all His bountiful and rich blessings ever showered upon me and all of us.

Pray ! Let us worship Him in Silence with each and every breath, offering our all in all at His sacred altar of Love and Service. May we ever worship Him with all our 21600 breaths every day, is my only prayer.

OM

My deep gratitude to Sister Sushila Devi for all the tender care she has been taking of me, giving every kind of assistance and encouragement during the days of the fast. She is also fasting along with me and will write of her experiences also, with helpful hints to all the seekers of Truth.

I am grateful also to Brother Pundarikashaiah who has watched over me day and night like a sentinel on duty with all tender love and care.

May God bless both of them and all of you is my earnest Prayer.

OM

OM

OM

Chapter 64

COSMIC FAST

Our Humble Request to the Visitors:

Realising the innumerable benefits of fasting physically, mentally and spiritually through his personal experiences of the recent fast our Swamiji has decided to undertake a long fast for one month as a preparation for his long- expected foreign tour. It was his intention to fast without the knowledge of others but for the sake of the numerous friends and visitors of the Ashram we are to announce here the dates of the fast so that visitors will not be disappointed by not having interviews from 15th November to 15th December with our Swamiji.

Often visitors come from long distances and forget that Friday is the day of silence. Often they become disappointed at not being able to see our Swamiji. Hence, to avoid disappointment we request our friends to visit the Ashram after his fasting days. Those who want to spend their time in silence and meditation are welcome at any time. We request all the friends and well-wishers of our Swamiji to help him and the Ashram during this month with their silent prayers and meditations, attuning themselves to the invisible vibrations of the One Universal Truth.

OM OM OM

(Peace Dec. 1934)

The diary of the Fast of Thirty Days became the book, 'Cosmic Fast'. I should love to share with my readers not only a few chapters (2, 21, 25) from the book but also the learned introduction of a great friend and devotee of Santi Ashram, the late Dr. Govindaraj of Madras, who named his home Shanti Ashram and left hundreds of valuable books to the Ashram Library upon his demise.

Our Swamiji's Fast:

We lift our hearts to the Almighty with deep gratitude and great rejoicing for all the innumerable blessings that have been showered upon our Swamiji especially during his long fast. All through the thirty days Swamiji did not feel the least sign of headache, nausea, hunger, thirst or weakness or sickness in any form. On the contrary he did the Ashram work, looked after the correspondence, for four to five hours on the average every day. Several inspiring essays and messages were written as well as the book, 'Cosmic Fast'. It was on the 30th day that Swamiji took a walk of nearly half a mile towards the hill where he spent a long time watching the beautiful sunset and meditating in the stillness of the lovely hour.

After a full month of silence and complete fast for the body the outer form is considerably reduced but the face of Swamiji is full and radiant with Divine Light. When he spoke for the first time after he broke the fast, his voice was very feeble. He is now often silent, more than ever and spends long hours in deep meditation. Once again we offer our hearty thanks to the almighty and our gratitude to all the friends of the Ashram for their prayers, best wishes and regards, wishing the success of Sri Swamiji's Fast. His next fast will be for forty days, like that of Lord Christ. May God, in His Infinite Wisdom bless Swamiji with health and long life to continue his silent work of Peace.

OM OM OM

(Peace Jan 1935)

Chapter 65

THE CALL OF AMERICA - FOURTH TIME

We built our future thought by thought
For bad or good and know it not.
Thought is another name for fate;
Choose man, thy destiny and wait.
Mind is the master of its sphere;
Be calm, be steadfast and sincere.
Fear is the only foe to fear.

- Wilcox

Good News

- Sister Sushila Devi

Greetings of Peace Profound to all comrades of the Universal Mission of Peace in America!

Sri Santi Ashram of Thotapalli Hills, India takes joy in announcing that our beloved Sri Swami Omkar will be soon in your midst on his Mission of Peace, to share with you his wealth of spiritual treasure and God-imbued presence. Love for humanity has called him to renounce the world and self and become a Swami many years ago when but a youth, teaching meditating and serving in India. Divine love called him to share his rich spiritual experiences with American Truth seekers and teachers three times previously. Boundless love for humanity is bringing him again to your shores through the auspices of Sister Santananda Saraswati Devi (Dr.Lillian K.Daniel) and her band of devotees of the Universal Peace Institute.

All comrades, friends and lovers of this Universal Peace Mission and its philanthropic activities should avail themselves of attending the lectures and meetings of Sister Lillian Daniel, all of which are preparatory to more esoteric classes and teachings of Sri Swami Omkar, to come in the future.

It is the individual Peace only that paves the way to World Peace. Therefore learn to live in God and help others to live in Him are Sri Omkarji's oft repeated words. All truth seekers should aspire to become the future Truth teachers, telling the seekers of the kingdom of peace and happiness. A special concentrated course suitable to the busy West, but in essence after the Eastern schools of religious philosophy, has been prepared for this purpose. It is a complete course which is very practical and can be easily grasped. Instructions covering important phases of lofty spiritual experience which lead to Self-realisation for the faithful, purified, zealous and consecrated souls.

This course, planned to meet the Western needs and evolution has been arranged to cover a period of forty days. Forty precious days of going deeper and deeper within to the very centre and goal of all life! Forty days of gradual transfiguration and regeneration, leading from darkness to Light Immortal!

The serene and holy atmosphere of the sacred retreats of India will be strongly felt through the presence of Swamiji, an initiate of its highest, purest wisdom. This high priest tells us unpretentiously that God-realisation is not only the birthright of Indian saints in the Himalayas, of saints, sages, masters and messiahs, but that is also the birthright of every divine son and daughter of the most high in East, West, North and South, regardless of colour, caste or creed.

Here are no subtle attempts to mystify, but a desire of a consecrated heart to share its wealth with all who ask. Sri Omkarji's methods are simple and direct, after the straight and narrow way of all the great companions. The loving Christ, the compassionate Buddha, the wise Krishna and all the most loved and revered saints and sages of the East and West seem to speak again in their loving, arresting accents of perfect Truth through the dedicated heart of this torch bearers. He loves and adores all of them and best in living their teachings and emulating their lives, spreading seeds of Peace in his high and holy Mission.

Swamiji does not seek to convert souls to a different religion, cult or creed; nor does he veil the Truth in mysteries, or boast of miracles and wonders but he does enter into each open heart, brining out its best, its own hidden or half-hidden glory of Cosmic Consciousness, the love, wisdom and desire of the ages. To make us intensely feel God's Presence- that is the one great criterion for judging a true prophet, whose works, or 'good fruits are recognised thereby'.

A glimpse through the following outline of classes and lectures gives one a faint idea of the Pearls of Truth of this gentle, Eastern sage. Let us not fail to gather them freely into our purified hearts.

As mentioned before, the lectures and initiations given by Sri Swami Omkar are as free as the air or sunshine. Any love-offerings are for the perpetuation of the philanthropic work of the Mission of Peace which is the common property of all seekers and votaries of Truth, irrespective of caste, colour, or nationality. So, your sympathy and co-operation are requested for the cause of peace.

The time from the First Initiation to the Fourth Initiation covers a period of forty days and this is divided into four sections. Each Initiation Period requires ten days of intensive self-purification and consecrated practice. Date and details of the following messages and initiations will be arranged after Sri Swamiji's arrival in America.

Forty Days in the Inner Sanctuary

- | | | |
|-----|--|----------|
| I. | 1. Craving for Truth; Do you want God? | Lecture |
| | 2. First Initiation | |
| | 3. Benefits of keeping a Spiritual Diary? | Lecture |
| | 4. The Significance of the Sacred syllable OM | Lecture |
| | 5. Silent Meditation. Practice of First Initiation | |
| II. | 1. Second Initiation | |
| | 2. Physical and mental relaxation | Exercise |
| | 3. Religion and Life are not Two but One | Lecture |

	4. Silent Meditation. Practice of Second Initiation	
	5. Practice of perceiving the Presence.	
III.	1. Third Initiation	
	2. Dhyana, Meditation	Lecture
	3. Self-purification, Basis of Spirituality	Lecture
	4. Silent Meditation, practice of Third Initiation	
	5. Power through Fasting	Lecture
IV.	1. Fourth Initiation	
	2. Peace, Inhaling and Exhaling Peace	Lecture
	3. Temple of Silence. Practice of Fourth Initiation	Lecture
	4. Abode of Peace within us	Lecture
	5. Recognise and Be Silent. Universal Meditation.	Lecture
	Farewell Address with Cosmic Benediction	
OM	TAT	SAT OM

The Trip to America:

Because of the expanding work here at the Mother Ashram and at the new Peace Centres our beloved Swamiji and Sister will sail for foreign shores but not until March 6, 1937. Accompanying them to Rangoon will be Brothers Viswanadhan, Narsinga Rao, Rama Rao and Mother Ratnam. We are grateful to the *bhakta*'s of Rangoon for their kind remarks in the newspapers and their proffered hospitality. May their high expectations and love be amply rewarded. Our deepest thanks to Sister Santananda Saraswati Devi, Dr. Daniel and to others for their fidelity and patience and kind preparations for success of the Mission in America. Greetings of love to them !

(Peace Nov-Dec 1936)

OM OM OM



Swamiji with American Devotees in Los Angeles



Swamiji, Sister Sushila Devi in the Meeting at Philadelphia

Chapter 66

SOWING SEEDS OF PEACE ALONG THE WAY

(Rev. Swami Omkar in Rangoon, Burma)

- J.Chatterjee

His holiness Srimat Swami Omkarji with Sister Sushila Devi arrived in Rangoon on their way to America on the 10th March 1937 to spread the message of Peace and Universal Brotherhood. During their sojourn here they were the guests of a devoted soul, Mr. Rajkrishna, Engineer of the Rangoon Development Trust, who paid every careful and loving attention to them.

Knowing of their arrival a few ardent souls came and paid homage and respect to them but Swamiji's dynamic personality, child-like simplicity, purity and all-loving nature soon drew the attention of the Rangoon public. Swamiji and Sister were soon busy in receiving visitors and they never felt tired but rather enjoyed it. He made everyone a prisoner of his love. To him there were no rich or poor. He paid equal attention to all visitors. The place where they stayed soon turned into a rendezvous for all sects and creeds.

Swamiji is not much for speech and one can enjoy him better, in silence. Instead of preaching morals and precepts to his visitors prayers and meditations were held with them with the utterance of the sacred syllable OM. His chanting of the holy word OM awakened every soul from dead slumber and made all feel the presence of divinity. He poured out his heart in his prayers. Swamiji cares not for eloquence. His Silence had more effect on the minds of the people than platform speeches. He exhorted all to practise rather than theorise.

Public Meeting:

With the consent of Swamiji and Sister a public meeting was arranged in Sooniram Hall on the 21st March. On the appointed day people began to pour into the hall long before the

time with eager expectation to have *darshan* of Swamiji and hearing him. The hall was packed to suffocation. Many prominent personalities were present on the occasion.

On the arrival of Swamiji and Sister in the hall, all stood up in reverence and Mr. R. Sanyasiah garlanded them. Dr. Raghunath was elected to the chair. The meeting commenced with a prayer. Some poems and welcome addresses eulogising them were presented and read. After the opening speech of the Chairman many prominent speakers of the place spoke in English and other languages and explained the aims of their Mission and its bearings on the World Peace at this present critical juncture. Then Sister Sushila Devi delivered her sweet and expressive speech and thanked all for the kind reception accorded to them and every heart was touched.

The expected hour arrived at last when Swamiji rose amidst loud applause and he delivered a bewitching speech for an hour and a half . Thorough Silence prevailed in the hall and everyone heard him with rapt attention. He commenced the lecture with a short prayer and the utterance of the mystic syllable OM, which created congenial and calm atmosphere in the hall and made everyone feel the Presence of God. His lucid and inspiring words struck the key note of every heart and filled all with ecstasy. His speech ignited every soul with the divine flame. The meeting came to a close with the chanting of *Om Tat Sat*. Everyone carried with them Peace and Bliss.

The meeting created an atmosphere in Rangoon such as was never felt before. There was a regular influx of visitors to Swamiji and Sister and they were kept very busy. Besides interviewing many visitors at home they also personally visited several families to preach the Gospel of Peace. They freely distributed leaflets and literature of the Mission to all whom they met.

Establishment of a New Peace Centre :

Their visit to Rangoon was not in vain, for their message of

Peace set many hearts to the thought of starting a branch in Rangoon. Within a few days our ideas crystallised into action. Accordingly, on the 28th March a branch of the Mission of Peace was opened temporarily at my residence, 110-49th street to carry on the Peace activities. The opening ceremony was performed with Swamiji conducting Prayers and explaining the objectives of the Mission. The following gentlemen came forward to be standard bearers of the Torch of Peace: Messers. M.I.Ali, R.P.Patel, N.Rao Nidu, Gopaldas, Lekhraj, Udhandas, S. Venkanna, Suryanarayana, B.Krishna Rao, Ch. B.Bhimaraj, S.Subramaniam, Br.Vallabhdas Gandhi, I.Chateerjee, etc. The ceremony came to a close with a short prayer and the chanting of OM by Swamiji.

ADDRESS

Delivered by Mr. M. I. Ali on the occasion of the Opening Ceremony of the Branch of Sri Santi Ashram, 28 March 1937.

Beloved Brothers and Sisters,

We have assembled here tonight to celebrate in Silence the Opening Ceremony of a branch of Santi Ashram in Rangoon. First, I wish to congratulate Brother Chatterjee for his praiseworthy discharge of the onerous duties which have devolved on him.

We are enthusiastic in extending our warment reception, heartfelt sympathy and salutations to our most respected and ever beloved Swamiji and Sister Sushila Devi for their selfless devotion in taking upon themselves the task of delivering the Message of Universal Peace and Brotherhood to suffering humanity in the world. We invoke the blessings of Allah, Krishna, Buddha and Christ upon them as they go forward that their Mission may be unchecked and thereby bring Peace and Harmony to this discontented world and save it from impending catastrophe.

According to the injunction of the Holy Prophet of Islam deep veneration and devout respect go to one who preaches Universal Peace and Brotherhood and believes in the oneness of

God by preaching the Truth of all prophets of the world. We have found in Swamiji and his Mission the Truth preached by our holy prophet some 1400 years ago to drive darkness from human hearts.

Peace and happiness are the things which are in need at this stage in the world and it is difficult to find them. Peace and happiness are not the commodities of the world but they are of the creation of the one who wants them. It is within the power of the individual efforts to control and direct his own thoughts. Once gained, the individual peace leads to the peace of the whole world. Peace and happiness are things which can be had by constant practice of meditation alone. Thus the flood-gates of beauty and bliss will be opened. Constant endeavours to live in happiness and peace are a great moral tonic. Keep the body and mind strong for the body is the Temple of God and the mind its Light. Remember that it is the dwelling place of God; so keep it fit for His stay. Our Beloved Swamiji and Sister are going to leave us to sail far away but the seed of blessings, he has sown today will be before us, a full grown tree, constantly reminding us of his presence.

OM

Meeting with Bakri Baba:

One of the incidents which occurred during their stay in Rangoon was a meeting with the Mohammedan Saint known as Bakri Baba. The saint has been living in Rangoon for the last four years, feeding the poor and curing all sorts of diseases, that are hopeless and incurable especially, with his consecrated water. He is selfless and holy, completely dedicated to the service of humanity. On hearing about him, Swamiji and Sister arranged for an interview. They went one day at 8 p.m. and were well received by him even though he was busily attending to cooking affairs. He gave them light refreshments. Swamiji and Sister watched the feeding of the poor and his devotion to the service of humanity which they very much appreciated. On completion of the feeding, Baba took a seat by their side. It was about 11 p.m. calmness prevailed everywhere.

Under the great dome of the limitless sky, set with myriad stars, the great souls met in Silence. All were speechless, merged in ecstasy. Hours passed in this state and at last time for their departure arrived. After mutual exchange of thoughts they all prayed together and departed. May His Benediction infuse more strength, vigour and love in Bakri Baba to do much more selfless service for the suffering humanity !

OM OM OM

REV. SWAMI OMKAR IN CHINA

- D.O.De Silva, R.B.G.S.

For days, weeks, months and years I have longed to meet an Indian Yogi and now at last my wish has been gratified, my prayers are answered. I have met and talked with Swami Omkarji for only a few brief moments but the contact has been made and I trust that the connecting link will never be severed for I am now a life member of the Universal Mission of Peace, Sri Santi Ashram and a subscriber to Peace.

Seventeen years ago, when I first came to Hong Kong via Japan I met an elderly Jewish gentlemen who hailed from India. He liked me so much that he called me 'son' and was instrumental in introducing me to the great saints of India. He told me how when he was a lad, a sage came into the family compound and foretold that he would soon go to China and never return. It all happened exactly as predicted, including other incidents by the way. The Jew also told me of another Yogi of great age and strength who could communicate by thought with the great Lamas of Tibet and China and who ate all the gifts of food that were brought to him by his hundreds of disciples. He also told me of a Jewish Rabbi who always divided his food into two parts and gave half to the poor. All this and more greatly impressed my youthful mind but although I had many meals and spent many hours with him I do not ever remember seeing him pray and thus I became disappointed.

The years passed, different countries were visited and some great ones of the earth were met by me - Lord Northcliffe, General Booth, Annie Besant, Krishnamurti, Ramsay McDonald and others. Living in Hong Kong I have had the unique privilege of meeting and assisting some round-the-world tourists, motorists, cyclists, walkers, singers, actors, violinists, pionists, explorers, religious leaders and others but none have impressed me more than our dearly beloved Swamiji.

A few days ago when I called on an Indian silk merchant he casually mentioned to me that a Swami was passing through Hong Kong on his way to America on a lecture tour. 'A Swami in Hong Kong!'. It was thirty-eight years ago that I met Swami Vivekananda in Ceylon. I was only a college student then but deeply religious and a seeker of Truth. So, as a member of the Hong Kong Theosophical Society I was determined to ask Sri Swamiji to visit our Manuk Lodge on the following Thursday evening and give us a lecture on Peace. Unfortunately I was unable to see Swamiji that day. Later however I did see him and he kindly consented to give a lecture on 'The Goal of Life'. No time was lost in making the usual press announcements and in notifying friends and members of the Society.

The little hall in the Hong Kong Club Annex was filled to capacity and the audience listened with deep interest and rapt attention first to Sister Sushila Devi and then to the gracious words that fell from the lips of our beloved Swamiji.

THE GOAL OF LIFE

(Lecture by Sri Swami Omkarji at the Theosophical Society)

Swamiji began by asking his listeners to remember that the words of a lecture such as this, heard outwardly are easily forgotten. More important are those given inwardly to oneself for they are impressed upon the heart and will remain and effect one's whole life. We should go within ourselves and not put our faith in lectures, however inspiring, or in any outer things or circumstances.

Let us try to realise the Omnipresence of God and understand how we are surrounded and permeated by His Presence. He is within

and without us, above and below and all around. He is never away from us, never outside. He is sparkling in our very eyes and dwelling in our very hearts. What is life without the recognition of the Indwelling Spirit? Unless we come to the realisation of It we are nothing.

The Goal of Life may be summed up in one word, 'God Consciousness.' This is the Real life, universal and eternal, behind all worldly things. The difference between the animal world and humanity lies in the dawning of God Consciousness and Its complete attainment is the Goal of Life for all mankind.

Five Stages:

We know of five stages of life; the mineral, vegetable, animal, human, and God-life. Some men live only in their physical forms and may be compared to the mineral stage; others care for their children and families and have advanced to the vegetable stage; next is the stage of the clan or mob where one cares violently for the privileges of its members, like the herd or animals. Then there is the man who has grown to the stage of loving the whole of his fellow-countrymen and finally there is the God-man for whom all countries are alike, all religions are one, for the world is his home and all people, his brothers and sisters. He does not see anything except the face of God in all his fellow-beings.

We should not try to classify others according to this idea but should examine ourselves and see to which stage we belong and then strive to climb from the one to the other and reach the upper most level where, Christ, the Buddha, Mohammed and other great leaders of men are.

Too much attention is paid by most people to non-essentials; the one thing essential is the Glory of God-Consciousness. But to reach this does not mean the renunciation of our duties and the work of everyday life. Where ever we may be, whatever we may be engaged in, that is a part of God. No church or temple is necessary in which to express the truth, for religion and life are not

two but one. So we should not forget God when we leave the church or lecture hall but carry Him with us wherever we go and realise the Glory, the joy and the ecstasy of His continuous Presence.

Dedication to God:

There must be a dedication of ourselves to the God within, in order that we may feel and know Him everywhere. Then we shall realise the individual Peace fully established in our hearts. We cannot change the world but we can change ourselves and when we have established Peace in our own hearts then we can help to establish it in others and thus it will spread to the community, nation and to the world. The only way to bring Peace to the world is to begin with our own hearts. If heart, mind and soul are with the Eternal, the Infinite, if we centre in Truth, then we can carry the blessing not only to our home, our community but to our country and the whole world.

Prayer and meditation are the ways that lead, through intuition to Self-realisation. It has been said, Be still and know, I am God. We must give God a chance to express in Silence, in order to realise that blessed Peace which cannot be described but only known by oneself, that God-consciousness which is the goal of human life.

Towards the close of the lecture Swamiji explained the first principles of meditation and then initiated the whole audience with a practical demonstration which ended with Om being intoned thrice by all. The audience was greatly thrilled and several stayed behind to be introduced to Swamiji and Sister and to have a few words with each personally.

The next day a friend took them for a motor drive to places of interest on the island of Hong Kong and before they sailed at midnight on the '*President Jefferson*' for Seattle, Washington, U.S.A., my wife and I and some Indian friends went on board to wish them good journey.

(Peace May-June 1937)

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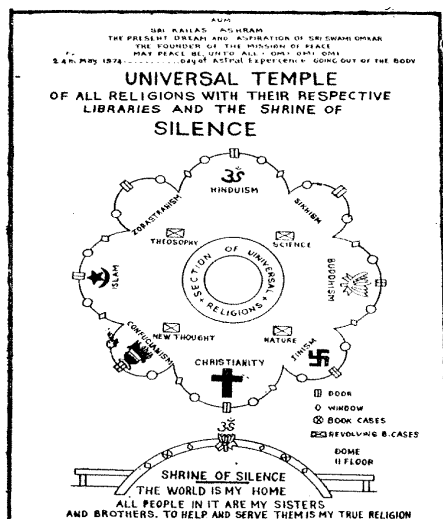
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Chapter 67

HEARTY WELCOME IN AMERICA

Our Swamiji's Departure:



As previously announced our Swamiji and Sister Sushila Devi left the shores of India on the 6th March and reached Philadelphia on the 20th May, safely and in the best of health. They had the pleasure of visiting Rangoon, Hong Long, Shanghai, Japan and Seattle and Washington on their way and were received warmly by the citizens of those places. They are now staying in our Philadelphia Peace Centre and their address is: c/o Dr. Lillian K. Daniel, The Universal Peace Institute, 219 South Board Street, Philadelphia, Penn.

(Peace July 1937)

Swami Omkar and Sister Sushila Devi in America:

After a fruitful and delightful visit with the comrades of the path in China and Japan, our beloved Swamiji and Sister Sushila Devi sailed for America. The genial kindness of the crew and fellow-passengers aboard the 'President Jefferson' made the journey very pleasant. At Seattle Dr. Daniel and Mr. Spaulding

surprised the travellers by their hearty welcome.

The Work in Philadelphia:

Arriving in Philadelphia Swamiji began his selfless and loving ministry assisted by Sister Santananda (Dr. Daniel) and Sushila Devi in the Peace Centre in the heart of Philadelphia. The meditation hall was nicely arranged with flowers and OM symbols By Dr. Levitin and other gifted members and an uplifting atmosphere was everywhere. Swamiji gave a series of truly beautiful messages called Forty Days in the Inner Sanctuary and Initiation Ceremonies, sacred and profound, clothed in simple terms, adaptable to the Western audience. Brother Cheney added an air of holy festivity with his spiritual music and thus prepared the hearts of the listeners for the inspiration of the blessed hours with Swamiji.

Many dear souls were deeply moved by the words and subtle, holy radiations from the heart of the Guru (Master) to transfigure their lives. However, a deep sense of peace and a glimpse of eternal glory flashed from heart to heart and was sensed by all present.

Swamiji's Silent Work:

Besides this blessed time in the inner sanctuary our Swamiji gave private counsel and initiation to many Truth seekers who sought his guidance. Amid the faces of the new friends in the city of brotherly love, it was a joy to see the dear old friends who had aided Swamiji on his previous apostolic missions with their noble efforts. It was indeed a joy to meet again Mr. And Mrs. Entriiken, Mrs. Klauder, Mrs. Patterson, Mrs. Minnich, Mrs. Rader, Mrs. Newcomer, Mrs. Herbster and many others who have nursed through the years a reverent love for Swamiji, our beloved teacher.

Visitors from Afar:

As the news of Swamiji's return began to spread, many friends came from near and far to see him and Sister Sushila Devi remarked, at their spiritual devotion that it reminded her of the dear Indian devotees who travel long distances just to sit for a few

moments at the feet of their sages, putting themselves enraptured with the enlightened ones, striving to catch even one drop of Brahmic Bliss. Thus also came Mr. and Mrs. Hayward, Mrs. Lily and other devoted souls of the New York Centre and other devoted friends who are soon to figure importantly in the new era of the Peace Cause. So too came Mr. Chauncey Blair, an ardent young Vedanta scholar, Miss Mallory, who expresses a soft and gentle inner radiance in art and Mr. Fox and family. Swamiji gave impartially his rich gifts of his luminous soul and all went forth from his presence with Peace and joy.

The American Summer:

During the late summer, almost as fervid as an Indian summer, Swamiji and Sister continued sowing seeds of Peace at the pleasant home of Sister Sushila's family in New Jersey, where they were shown great kindness and hospitality. A few Truth teachers in search of deep metaphysical truths and other earnest seekers came to study with Swamiji.

Swamiji at Cape Cod:

Mr. and Mrs. Hayward, with their innate goodness invited their friends to converse with Swamiji and receive Initiations in their Cape Cod home. Surrounded by pines and very near the sea it served as an ideal Ashram for the visiting 'Hindu Holyman' as Swamiji is spoken of. Mrs. Hayward has related the happenings of those days in a separate article. In Mrs. Hayward's article she tells how Swamiji met the Rev. Hibbard and was invited to speak in the Cape Cod Community Church, which he did. That good Christian Minister and his flock remarked that Swamiji made them feel the wonderful Spirit of the Christ. Thus is Truth, the Universal, is appealing to every creed, religion and nation, when it is the outpouring of a truly God-imbued heart.

The Work in New York:

Mr. and Mrs. Hayward have opened their home in New York to a singularly evolved and receptive group of friends to meet every week

in holy communion with Swamiji. Aided by Sister Jnana Devi and Sister Sushila Devi, Swamiji is giving initiations and inspirational messages to lead candidates to higher realms of love, wisdom and peace. Some friends remarked at Swamiji's gift to present his one sweet theme, namely, 'God Realisation through Practise of the Presence of God' is ever original and unique in manner.

Words fail to describe the heavenly aroma of these sacred meetings, wherein, all unite in a spirit of oneness. The Eastern decoration of the drawing room helps to create a peaceful atmosphere and as the beloved eastern teacher speaks his words of Peace they flow into open hearts. The great mystery of love often becomes overpowering and the heart's fountain overflows in sacred tears. May every blessing attend Mr. and Mrs. Hayward who are so kindly smoothening the path for the feet that bear the glad-tidings of Peace.

Sri Santi Devi:

Mrs. Jean D.Lilly, who has long been a great patroness and friend of Santi Ashram and its cause is also taking an active part in the work in America and in her home Swamiji is holding weekly meetings for all the interested public. May these loving, selfless and sincere efforts bear much fruit in the Vineyard.

Swamiji addresses the Biosophical Institute Group:

The Biosophical Institute Group, under the splendid leadership of Brother Kettner and very active on behalf of World Peace invited Swamiji for the birthday of Spinoza, the great soul who is their beacon light. A soul-awakening message from the depths of Swamiji's soul moved every heart and many expressed their heartfelt gratitude for the spiritual gifts received. It was a great joy for Swamiji, Sister and friends to contact this group of very beautiful young Peace workers and feel their spirit of zeal for Truth, with all its attendant sacrifice of self. We look forward to closely faring with Dr. Kettner and his devoted young souls on the way of Peace.

Sowing Seeds:

Thus our Beloved Swamiji and Sister Sushila Devi and his devoted followers are earnestly sowing seeds for the fulfilment of the vision of peace on earth. Dear reader, your hearty cooperation is also invited. Pray for the cause of peace, work for peace and support its cause with your love-offerings whenever you can.

Remember also, Dear Friends in the one life, to tell your friends about the Mission of Peace and help to spread peace from heart to heart, for then only can we make a way to world peace. All correspondence may be addressed to Peace Centre, 420 Riverside Drive, New York City.

- Brother Hanrahan, Secretary

SWAMI OMKAR IN CAPE COD

- Jnana Devi

A great joy was in our hearts as we saw through the train window the sweet smiling face of Swami Omkar. He had come to make a ten day visit in our little, peaceful Cape Cod house surrounded by pine trees.

Swamiji's first words when he arrived at our home were expressions of joy for he felt utterly in accord with the gentle flow of the little inlet from the sea which forms a peaceful river in front of our pine woods. There is a strip of land beyond and then the sea.

During the following days Swamiji's words have been of praise and glory to God. His great aim while with us is to open our minds to the importance of the present moment, to not waste time but to give Now, all to God and reach the Highest. This we long to do but to the Western mind and way of living, it is very difficult to make the final renunciation.

Swamiji has given two beautiful messages in the little white Osterville Community Church. He was invited to do so by the Reverend Hibbard, a deeply spiritual soul.

Every day Swamiji goes to the beach with us. After three days of instruction and practice he has learnt to float on water. This gives him great joy for he always had thought swimming and floating were marvellous accomplishments only possible for the elect few, in secret communion with nature; just as Westerners think that the Easterners' blissful merging in God is for themselves and an impossible mystery, all they need is the instruction, application, concentration and time to practice. Their reward will be peace of mind and a realisation of Universal Love and Radiance.

One of Swamiji's great charms is his sense of humour always quick and responsive to see the least opportunity for laughter. He laughs a great deal at himself and at his serious and wonderful teachings. He reminds me of a fountain, always fresh and cool and sparkling, a life-giving fountain of Divinity and Wisdom.

Swami Omkar, who takes unto himself all creeds and religious denominations and expresses love and service and universal brotherhood and peace, I believe, is the present day gift of God to the whole world. How much he is needed in this insane world of strife and turmoil !

If the world could stop for a moment in its busy whirling and listen to the teachings of Swami Omkar and follow his simple rules of brotherhood and selfless love, how soon it would be again the Garden that God meant it to be, full of flowers, Peace Flowers and the singing would reverberate among the stars; the singing of sanity sanctity and Peace.

OM OM OM

Chapter 68

RELIGION OF LOVE

Every seeker of Truth should not only be a firm believer in the Religion of Love but also an ardent and humble worshipper of the love that includes all and excludes none. In the Religion of Love no sermons are needed, no lectures are required, no outer teachings are necessary. All that you need is to possess an open heart, a heart of all-embracing Love and to look into the faces of your fellow sisters and brothers with Infinite Love and Unity. Recognise in them the same God who is throbbing in your own heart. In the Religion of Love it is not the spoken word that counts but the ideal and silent life that one lives.

I had the privilege of spending two weeks with Sister Sushila Devi and her saintly father in New York. Often I used to take joy in marketing, buying groceries for the family. Around the corner, near our apartment there was a vegetable store owned and managed by five brothers. Whenever I went there the brothers would argue among themselves to have the chance of waiting upon me. One of the brothers said: 'Sir, I like to do business with sincere friends like you and so I take joy in waiting on you.' The elder brother, who managed the store said to me once: 'Dear Brother, you can have whatever you want from my store, vegetables or fruit. If you are in need of money also at any time you can have it from me.' I was deeply touched by his devotion and love and thanked him profusely.

Next to the grocery store there was a cigar store where they sold newspapers and kept a telephone booth. I would go there sometimes to use the telephone or to buy a newspaper. Often there were three people in the store, a lady and two gentlemen and every time I entered the store they would rise from their seats as a mark of respect. I was touched when they said they would be only too happy to take all the telephone messages that came in my name. Often when I spoke on the phone I would have to note something down and so I borrowed a pencil from the lady and then went

away with it in my pocket in a hurry. After a day I realised my mistake and feeling ashamed I returned it with my apology. To my astonishment the lady opened a new box of pencils and asked me to pick another good one. When I asked the reason she again with a smile asked me to take another good pencil. After I had taken another one, with her persuasion she said: 'Please keep this pencil also, along with the other one, for your use.' How can I express in these finite words the overwhelming gratitude and ecstasy that I felt at her great kindness ! Is not this tenderness the manifestation of the Religion of Love !!

Next to the cigar store was the laundry of a poor chinaman. He too was ever kind, loving and good and would bow and salute me by raising his hand whenever he saw me. Then there was the shop of the florists. One day the owner called me in and said, 'Sir, something tells me that you love flowers. Please take this bunch as my offering and keep it in water in your home.' Once again I was touched at the expression of God's love.

Next there was a large store where they sold all kinds of clothing. All the clerks and manager were always kind to me. One day the manager said: 'My clerks do not know how to wait on you , Sir, please always come to me.' And then there was the five and ten cent store where I bought from a girl attendant a flower plant. Every time I went there she would ask how the plant was thriving. I was happy to tell her about the troubles of my plant and also at times about its luxuriant growth. Often she would advise me not to pour too much water in the pot but to keep the plant in the sunshine. She was sweet and kind and I was happy whenever I passed that way to visit the store and tell her about the plant. Is this not the Religion of Love, to recognise God in every face, without caring to know either name, religion or nationality? As I moved and walked around in the world there was hundreds of such touching instances which express the Religion of Love. I shall not weary my readers with recounting them all but shall share only a few outstanding ones.

Once Sister Sushila's father wanted a haircut. As he was elderly I did not wish to take him out of his house but said I would try to find a barber who would be willing to visit the house. I went to the neighbourhood barber shop where I usually had my haircut and asked if the barber would come and give haircut to father Nowald. He was very busy, but looked at me seriously and said : 'Is he your father? I replied with a smile, 'surely'. Then with a smile he said, 'I will come.' He closed the shop and came with me and gave father Nowald a good haircut .When I tried to offer him a little tip, for he had lost business by closing his shop, he declined and said: 'I should not take from you.' When I asked why he responded: 'You are a good man belonging to God and I love you.' May God be praised ! I was in tears of ecstasy at His bountiful blessings of the Religion of Love.

This reminds me of a similar incident which occurred at the Ceylon-India Inn in New York City when I gave my message at the Buddha's Birthday Celebration. The function opened by one of the ardent Buddhists who is a waiter there. He recited prayers in Pali and spoke a few words about the Buddha. After several learned speakers from different countries spoke, I too gave my message and a deep Silence reigned. After the meeting the Buddhist Brother who had opened the meeting came to me with tears in his eyes and said: 'O Swami, I did not know that you are a real Buddhist.' It touched my heart and repeated: 'May all, Glory be unto Buddha, the Lord of Compassion and Enlightenment.'

The following week, when I was taken by friends to the Ceylon-India Inn the same waiter served us and when we offered the usual tip he refused it saying: ' You are my own brother, I should not take from you'. O, how God expressed His Love in so many ways through so many forms !

Whenever I passed down our block, everyone in every store would greet me with words of love and kindness. It was rather amusing sometimes when I walked with friends just to listen to all the voices shouting: 'Hello Brother, how are you? Hello Doc, how are you today ? Hello Swami, how do you do? Sir, can I do

anything for you today? ‘ Everytime I passed that way I felt that I was walking on sacred ground, in God’s Church for I faced Him on every side, in every one.

The most interesting part of it is that I never discussed religion or my faith of creed with any of these numerous friends. I do not even know their names. Some were Armenians, Italians, Spanish, German, Chinese, Greeks, Britons, Americans and Puerto Ricans. Yet, rising above all creeds and nations we loved each other dearly and deeply. We felt God, for we were bound by His Great Love and there was no need to discuss or talk about creeds and doctrines in lifeless words.

Once I had a heavy day and I returned in the bus feeling tired and some-what depressed. The conductor in the bus approached me and started talking about Hitler, Mussolini, Stalin, Franco and finally about Mahatma Gandhi. When I said: ‘Where Love is there is God, and inner peace should start from the heart for it is the individual peace that paves the way, towards World Peace, he jumped in ecstasy and shook my hand again and again saying; ‘Dear Brother, your religion is the best religion in the whole world!’ He almost embraced me with genuine feelings of ecstasy. When I was about to get off he stopped the bus for an extra minute and got down himself and gave me his address with the request to send him our Peace Literature. This incident, with the touch of God’s love aroused me from my depression and gave me a taste of His love. Once again I was walking in the air, floating in His Presence, for He had made the bus conductor a friend for life.

As our Peace Mission was in a jungle, far away from any town Sister Sushila Devi and other friends of the Peace Foundation bought a small willys car for the use of the Ashram in case of sickness or emergency. I needed several extra things such as a luggage carrier, signals, etc. So one of my friends took it to a motor shop and parked it there, by the side of the shop. Soon, it seems a big policeman came and said: ‘You cannot park the car here and I’m going to give you a ticket right now!’ My friend said he had to lift his head for the policeman was so tall. To the

astonishment of my friend as the policeman looked over the car he suddenly turned to my friend and said : Where is the Swami?’ My friend asked ‘ Which Swami?’ And the policeman said, ‘Of course Swami Omkar: Here is his motto on the car, ‘Inhale and Exhale Peace’. The friend asked the policeman: ‘How do you know of him?’ and the answer came ‘I attended one of his Peace Meetings at Mrs. Lilley’s house on Riverside Drive.’ The policeman smiled and said ‘This makes all the difference. You can park the car here as long as you want.’

Need I tell you how I felt when my friend came and narrated this incident with a beaming smile and radiant joy? This is yet another experience of how peace changes hearts and spreads itself silently from individual to individual and then universally. It made us all happy to see that even our Peace Car, with its Universal Mystic symbol OM in the front and with its Peace Signs on both sides in small golden letters was doing its part by carrying and spreading Peace. This message on the Religion of Love, on the power of Silent Love, would be incomplete if I failed to add this beautiful illustration from the life of one of the great Western Saints. The Saint was living a life of unostentatious Peace and Love. A bustling disciple wanted to stay with him to learn and assimilate the Truth. The teacher was always silent and the disciple could not learn much from the Silence for he was just a beginner. The disciple was judging the God-man from his own standards and thought that he saw his teacher idle, always sitting and never teaching, preaching or helping anyone.

One day the disciple approached the Master and said: ‘O Holy Preceptor, it hurts me to see such a learned man as you wasting your time in doing nothing. Why don’t you go out and preach and teach, broadcast your holy knowledge?’ The Saint smiled at the suggestion of his young pupil and decided to teach him a lesson and so he replied, ‘Alright, tomorrow we will start very early and visit all the villages and teach and serve the people.’ The disciple was overjoyed. On the morrow, at the appointed hour both of them started forth. The Master passed through many villages and

different streets and he carried the Torch of Wisdom and silently blessed many people. Then he returned to his Abode of Peace with his restless disciple.

The disciple was exasperated and said to the *guru*: ‘Sir, once in your life you stirred from your dwelling and promised to teach and preach in your wanderings but instead you went silently through the streets and never opened your mouth to utter a word. What kind of man are you?’ The great sage looked at the ignorant disciple in pity and said: ‘My child, today all along the way, in every village and in every street that we passed through, we carried our teachings. We touched here and there with Peace, we blessed children in Silence. We smiled at others with Love. We exchanged greetings of Peace with many. We covered the whole place with Love and we embraced all the people with the Religion of Infinite Love that does not need any outer words and proclamations.’

The real teaching, the Highest Teaching is always imparted in Silence, without the outer show of words. The disciple, by the Grace of the Sage had an inner flash and understood the wise words of his teacher. He fell at the Saint’s feet and begged his pardon for his hasty words. This beautiful state of Realisation speaks louder than rumbling thunders and reminds me of another beautiful story from the Eastern Scriptures.

The Guru was a young lad of sixteen years. The disciple was eighty years old. He was full of doubts. He asked questions everywhere and had wandered all over the world and yet had never been satisfied. At last, his good fate brought him to this youthful *guru* who was deeply absorbed in meditation. As the disciple could not disturb the Guru’s Silence he too closed his eyes to meditate. Lo! in a flash all in deep stillness without a single question or answer or any kind of wrangling words, all the lifelong doubts of the disciple disappeared in the presence of his saintly *guru*, all in Silence. Such is the glory of sacred Silence, unutterable Silence, supreme and waveless Silence, where it is all Peace, Poise, nay Life, Light and Love ! Dear readers what else can I say? As I take joy in calling myself the common property of all seekers of Peace,

as I belong to all of you I am sharing my personal experiences and striving to express the inexpressible beauty and power of the Silent Life of the Religion of Love.

Whether it is in the East or West, when a man lives a silent and selfless life he is a blessing to the whole world even though he may not utter one word. Silence speaks. His life speaks. His love speaks slowly, steadily and surely to the whole world. As we may never happen to pass by the same road again let us scatter flowers of Peace and Joy, Hope and Love, as we pass by, to one and all, irrespective of caste, creed, colour and nationality. Verily, all are His children, the images of the One, Universal God. May the essence of the following Truths penetrate into our hearts and souls as we repeat them now.

Do not merely love
But live as love.
Religion and Love are not Two
But One.

May all homage be unto the Silent Lives of the Silent Ones who practise the Religion of Love.

OM OM OM

Chapter 69

THE SWAMI OMKAR PEACE FOUNDATION

Sri Swamiji's Birthday:

Swamiji always spends his birthday, January 21st in deep silence, meditation and complete fast. He says that every one should spend at least one day of the year in complete dedication, in commemoration of the birthday, rising, above body, mind and world.

The previous day happened to be an Initiation Day; so all the students and friends, having come to know of Swamiji's birthday surprised him not only with their sincere greetings but gratitude and love but also with a birthday cake with burning candles and refreshments for all present. This thoughtful token of their regard for our beloved Swamiji naturally endeared Brother and Sister Hayward to our hearts more than ever. Not only Swamiji but everyone present enjoyed a communion of rare blessedness, peace and joy.

The Peace Foundation:

In commemoration of the auspicious birthday of our Swamiji it is also a great pleasure to relate to our loyal peace comrades of the East and West, that on January 21, 1938 the *Swami Omkar Peace Foundation* was incorporated in the United States of America, the State of New York for the sole purpose of spreading Swamiji's Message of Peace from individual's to nations. A committee of eminent lawyers and other ardent well – wishers of the Mission of Peace have been busy making the *Peace Foundation* a real blessing to both the East and the West.

(Peace March-April 1938)

OM!

OM!

OM!

The Peace Foundation:

The Board of Directors met at the lovely, peaceful home of Brother and Sister Hayward who were doing so much towards the progress of the selfless Cause of Peace of our Swamiji. As we entered the room we were all happy to see *The Swami Omkar Peace Foundation* Certificate with its gold frame, Government seals and signatures. It was a striking and dramatic introduction to the interesting proceedings that followed. Swamiji, Sister Sushila, Mr. and Mrs. Hayward, Mr. Hanrahan, Mrs. Dallas, Mr. and Mrs. Thompson, Mrs. Hass, Mrs. Lilley, Brother Strokes, Mrs. Begg and others earnestly considered the affairs of the Peace Cause and many helpful plans and suggestions were offered. Another meeting will soon be called and members and patrons of the Mission of Peace will establish the Trust Fund for the Peace Foundation.

May Peace be unto All!

OM OM OM

Facsimile of the Certificate

(Peace July-August 1938)

The Message of Peace

(For the Establishment of Peace on Earth)

Dear friends! I love you because God is Love. My soul craves to help and serve you, for in serving you I am serving God. Peace is needed for the establishment of the kingdom of heaven on earth. What is your contribution for World Peace? If our hearts are devoid of peace our lectures and sermons for the Peace of the world are a mockery in the face of God. In spite of daily sermons and prayers in churches and temples there is unrest everywhere. In every nation there are signs of bitterness, hatred and war instead of harmony, love and Peace.

The Golden Rule of 'Whatsoever ye would that men do unto you even so do ye unto them' is to be practiced in our relationships with individuals and with the sister nations of the world and should

not remain as a myth or a legend. Religion should not be a cloak used only on special occasions but it must be lived in our daily lives in each and every moment. We are to manifest it in all our thoughts, words and deeds whether we are in the church or home, for religion is the realisation of God's Presence within. The harvest is great and the labourers are few. In the name of God, in the name of Christ and Krishna and in the name of Truth or Love will you not help the world by establishing Peace in your own hearts first?

Please do not fail to give your help or sympathy by saying: 'I am neither a statesman nor a member of the League of Nations, Yes! You are a statesman in the Garden of Peace. You are a member in the kingdom of God. Your birthright is Peace. Your Divine Heritage is Universal Love. Hence, it is your duty to work for Peace with an all – embracing Love.

Come forward now with all the strength of your heart and soul to prevent war and establish Peace on earth. United we stand, divide we fall. Remember that unity is life and separation is death. Hence I plead and beg for your co-operation. Irrespective of differences in nations and religions, whether you are a president or a peasant, emperor or a beggar, priest or a layman, I request you now to contribute your quota: first establish Peace in your own heart, for it is the individual Peace that paves the way for Universal Peace.

Our Peace must be based on the understanding of God, the Universal Energy, the basic principle of creation and not on mere treaties signed by politicians to serve their individual and national needs. Where is the Peace that passeth all understanding if it is not in Unity with God Who is All in All? Recognise your Unity with Him now. Can you not feel the Presence of God within yourself? Is He not throbbing in your heart? Lo! He is here; merge within, and feel, feel, feel His presence. By recognizing God in your own heart you will be able to behold Him in everyone, regardless of creed, colour and nationality for everyone is a child of God.

Beloved one, will you do a little service for me? If so please feel the Presence of God, not tomorrow or when you go to church but Right Now, in this moment, at this place, as you read this message. Behold! He is shining in your very eyes. Can you not see Him? Having eyes see ye not? Having ears hear ye not? Pray! utilise your eyes to behold Him; your ears, to listen to His still, small voice; your hands to serve Him, your words to glorify Him, your heart to manifest Him, your mind to merge in Him and your soul to recognise Him.

This is all that I ask of you, my brothers and sisters, to make the whole world, God's creation, an Abode of Peace and remember always that great Truth that service of man alone is the highest worship of God.

May floods of Harmony, rivers of Peace and oceans of Love flow from you towards the whole of humanity for the good of the world and may the indweller of your heart bless you with Peace, Health and Long Life. This is the prayer of your own brother, Omkar.

May Peace be unto All!

(Peace January 1938)

SWAMI OMKAR PEACE FOUNDATION

131 Riverside Drive & East 96th Street

New York City, U. S. A

President:

Mrs. John B. Hayward

Vice – Presidents:

Mrs. James R. Lilley

Mr. John J. Hanrahan

Sister Sushila Devi

Secretary & Treasurer

Arthur V. R. Thompson

Board of Directors:

Mrs. Donald Dallas

Mrs. Nancy Fullwood

Mrs. Louise Hass

Mr. John B. Hayward

Miss Harriet Sheldon

Mr. J. G. Phelps Stokes

Mrs. A. V. R. Thompson

In February 1938 the Swami Omkar Peace Foundation was incorporated as a non-profit organization under the laws of the State of New York for the following purposes:

1. To provide the means for Swami Omkar's sojourn in the United States so as to establish Peace in the hearts of those with whom he comes in contact in the hope that eventually Peace will extend from one to another and will silently and steadily assume its universal aspect.
2. To make possible the continued publication of the Peace magazine which the Founders of the Peace Foundation believe to be the only non-denominational magazine of its kind in the world and which is sent forth with the sole aim of emphasising the thought Peace can be found in the heart of each individual by a sufficiently intense desire to recognize it there.
3. To provide modest accommodation for American friends when visiting the mission in India and to establish a similar Abode of Peace in an inspiring natural environment in the United States.
4. To provide the means for having all of Swami Omkar's Peace Messages printed so that members of the Foundation and everyone else possible may have his written words. To gather

together Peace-loving people of all religions and nations in a close and harmonious group.

5. To make possible the privilege of each member, from time to time to receive personal instructions from Swami Omkar which will afford a spiritual help and guidance.

The founders of the peace foundation will welcome with joy anyone who would join them in their efforts in spreading Peace far and wide, in both the East and the West.

A supporting membership in the Peace Foundation is only Ten Dollars per annum. The founders earnestly solicit contributions to this membership and larger contributions from those able to give more for the purpose of supporting this important work of the Mission of Peace.

Members of the Peace Foundation will be helped to realise the Peace that passeth all understanding through their individual efforts of Self-reliance and meditation so that their lives will be a blessing not only to themselves and their families but also to their country and to the world. Will you not help us by becoming a member?

For those who feel disposed to contribute much larger amounts to the Foundation, Patron Membership is provided which conveys all privileges for life, including Life Subscription to the Peace magazine.

For further details please write to:

Mrs. John B. Hayward, President
Swami Omkar Peace Foundation
8 East 96th Street, New York City

Or to :

Sister Sushila Devi, Vice - President
Sri Santi Ashram, Santi Ashram Post
Via Peddapuram, East Godavary District
Andhra Pradesh, India.

Chapter 70

HOMAGE TO AMERICA

Sri Ramakrishna Celebration:

At the New York Vedanta Centre, blessed for thirty two fruitful years by the dedicated leadership of Swami Bodhanandaji, the sacred birthday of Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa was celebrated in a highly spiritual manner. Hindu music was offered by Mr. Guha, attuning and inspiring the hearts of the devotees who gathered. With all reverent love of one great soul for another, Swami Bodhanandaji welcomed and introduced the honoured guest-speaker of the day, our beloved Swami Omkar. Swami Bodhanandaji spoke first and gave an inspiring message on the significance of the day and the life of the exalted saint, Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa. Then our Swamiji followed with one of those rare spiritual banquets of his, never to be forgotten by the audience. His ecstasy was contagious, awakening in many hearts the desire to throw themselves into the solemn chanting of the sacred syllable OM. Indian confections were distributed to one and all as a memento communion of that day of grace, the Birthday of a Saviour of humanity.

Our Peace Meetings:

Ever to be held in sacred remembrance are the Peace Meetings held fortnightly at the home of Mrs. Lilley, Sister Santi Devi. She graciously introduces our Swami Omkarji and Sister Sushila Devi with some very interesting comments and then follows an hour of indescribable Peace and Blessedness transcending all worldly cares.

The Ministry of the Venerable Brother Stokes:

It was with great joy that Swamiji, Sister Sushila and other Peace friends attended recently one of the famous, unique and beautiful ‘At Homes’ of Brother and Sister Phelps Stokes. By breaking bread together the invited guests partook of it in a friendly

discourse on spiritual and other exalted subjects, reminding one of the love feast of the ancient Christians, meeting in a spirit of unity and brotherhood. Brother Stokes then gave a brief but profoundly holy talk, showing that he has gone deep into the Ocean of the Divine to bring up pearls so lovingly to share with his guests. Our blessed Swamiji also gave a few beautiful thoughts, making us feel the Presence of Light, Life and Love.

(Peace May-June 1938)

Lord Buddha's Birthday:

A Peace Dinner was given under the auspices of Mr. Basanta Roy, author and philosopher. Many eminent men addressed the gathering, among them S. Sokei – an Sasaki, Abbot Tsune Chi Yu, Rabbi Newman, Major Phelps Stokes, F. I. Shatara, Dr. Muzumdar, the Hon. Atwater, Consul General of Siam, and our blessed Swamiji who led the friends of East and West into the Presence of Peace itself. So much was the gathering impressed that a deep and holy silence pervaded all over, after Swamiji ceased speaking. In deep-felt reverence all refrained from clapping as had been customary with the other speakers.

Good-will Day at the Grace Episcopal Church:

The Fellowship of Faiths, under the leadership of Mr. Dass Gupta met for the propagation of its high ideals at the lovely, old Grace Church in New York. It was opened by an introduction from its well-known leader and the Invocation was given by our Swamiji who is widely known and revered as the *Peace Swami*. He again justified his name for he seemed to breathe clouds of Peace with every vibrant word over the audience gathered to forward Universal Peace. Mr. Das Gupta also requested Swamiji to give an extempore message which he complied with graciously. Being such an open channel of the Spirit of Peace he seems to be always prepared to speak when called upon. The subject, 'Helps and Hindrances to Peace' was given in an inspiring and unique manner that touched

every heart with a deeper and newer meaning of Peace, that Holy Peace which is beyond all thought.

(Peace July-August 1938)

OM

OM

OM

Lord Buddha's Anniversary

(A Talk delivered at the Peace Dinner in Celebration of the 2482nd Birthday Anniversary of Lord Buddha in New York City, May 14, 1938.)

Friends of Peace and admirers of Lord Buddha, on this holy day of Vaisak, my heart longs to touch your hearts with a touch of Nirvana, the blessed state of Peace that passeth all understanding.

In attempting to speak about the great Buddha, the Lord of Compassion, I recall the simple words of Sri Ramakarishna, how a grocery man can give only the price of vegetables but cannot appraise the value of a big diamond. I am like a little child, full of life and love but unable to express my feelings in words about the great Buddha. To understand the Buddha completely we must practically understand the Buddha's *Nirvana*. Without tasting his nirvanic bliss we can never be expected to understand Buddha, for Buddha and *Nirvana* are never two but One. The little I have known of Buddha is not from books or sermons but from moments of my silent meditations. Whether I can express or not Buddha's illumination in words, I have the great joy of knowing that you can all feel it in the moments of your silence and meditations. I am happy to have the liberty of taking part in this holy occasion for I too have had the blessed privilege of sitting under the same Bodhi Tree and meditating for a little while in the place where Lord Buddha meditated and received illumination.

The essence of Buddha's message can be found or summed up in his last words, given out, as he was about to leave the mortal

coil: *Decay is inherent in all component things; so work out your own salvation with diligence.* As we practise with diligence we will be blessed with discrimination. In discrimination we will realise that inordinate desire or passion, is the root cause of all sorrow.

As we begin to walk in the eight-fold Path of - Right Understanding, Resolution, Speech, Conduct, Living, Effort, Meditation and Rapture, we will be blessed with the taste of the Blessed Nirvana. Dear friends, whether you can appreciate my words or not, some day when our hearts are touched with a glimpse of Nirvana, the Peace that passeth all understanding, then alone we shall forget that we are noble Buddhists, or great spiritual Hindus or the most favoured and civilized Christians. As liberated beings, we are no longer confined to finite and limited religions and nations.

Verily, we are the different waves of the One Great Ocean; the respective rays of the One, bright Sun of suns and the various petals of the One, immense Lotus. This is the Goal of life. This is Nirvana, the beautiful state of Enlightenment, Liberation and Illumination. Thus alone can we be lamps for ourselves and for others.

People in the West are afraid of the very word Nirvana. The literal meaning is 'blowing out', extinction. No one wants to die or to be extinguished. If it is the extinction of life, Mr. Kira, the Proprietor of the Ceylon Inn is a great Buddhist and as he would have compassion on our restless lives, would have added a little poison to our peace dinner so that all of us could be extinguished or peacefully passed out by morning.

But dear friends, it is not so; Nirvana is not so easy to be obtained. Nirvana is not the extinction of life but the extinction of the fires of passion, namely lust, hatred and delusion. It is the extinction of racial hatred and bigotry. Nirvana is Holiness, Eternal Peace and Universal Love. It is the blessed state of Cosmic Consciousness, attaining which, a man no longer remains a slave of desires but becomes a master of destiny, ever shining as a light

unto himself and others.

It was Lord Buddha who said: *Be a Lamp unto thyself*. But unfortunately we try to be lamps which glitter for others; and we neglect the great Light within ourselves. We try to reform everybody but ourselves. We try to establish Peace everywhere in the whole world except in our own hearts. I take deep inner joy in repeating to all of my friends that it is only the Individual Peace that can pave the way to Universal Peace. Without peace in our hearts all that we speak about and listen to, is empty; nothing but a waste of precious time. In memory of Lord Buddha's Birthday let us establish Peace first in our own hearts, here and now.

Words create confusion. Silence creates souls. So I will not disturb you any more with words, but before closing I long to take you all on a flying visit a moment of meditation, to India, the land of Buddha's birth. In our Abode of Peace where I reside, in the room where I meditate, there are three small statues of Christ, Krishna and Buddha. Often, before I meditate I look at Christ and his cross and think this body is the cross and the spirit within the body is the illumination, Christ. Christ is rising. He is to be resurrected any moment.

As I look at Krishna playing on his sacred flute I feel that this body is the flute, when I empty this flute-like body, of all passions and delusions, I can begin to listen to the celestial music of the Universal Syllable OM.

Again, as I rest my eyes on Buddha, who is seated in his lotus posture, meditating on the *sahasrara*, the thousand petalled lotus I feel a sense of deep ecstasy and inexpressible Peace.

Dear friends, I request you to close your eyes now and to feel Buddha's Enlightenment, Krishna's Wisdom and Christ's Love, now and here. We are sitting under the Bodhi Tree of Eternal life and meditating on the Light of Lights.

AUM MANI PADME HUM

Let us meditate on the Priceless Jewel in the stillness of our Lotus Hearts. It is Light within and without. It is the Presence above and below. It is the Peace Universal all around us. Let us feel, feel, feel and work out our salvation with diligence.

OM OM OM

Homage to America

My heart goes out in deep gratitude to all the Sisters and Brothers of America with whom I have been privileged to come into contact during my fourth visit to the West. I feel richer, purer and stronger by knowing now so many more devoted, selfless and dedicated souls in America. I long to stretch my hand in spite of the distance of thousands of miles and say, 'Thank You' to every one of you for all the love and sympathy and encouragement you have given me in the Cause of Peace.

Love is Universal. It is Infinite and Eternal, never- changing. How can these thousands of miles separate or lessen that great, all-embracing Love which is none other than God or Truth. In Him we are born, we move and work and finally merge in Him. Dear friends in America, may we ever be united in Him by recognising His Presence now, here and always. OM! OM! OM!

Sri Santi Ashram, the Abode of Peace is unfortunately located in a valley where a dreadful disease, malaria is prevalent, especially in winter. The Ashram is surrounded on all sides by small villages. Sometimes, at the time of the epidemic the poor and helpless farmers die like moths without any medical relief or good nourishing food or care. Within a distance of many miles there is no hospital or medical relief centre and hence the poor become sick and die uncared for, unattended to. Often, when funds permit the workers in our Ashram would visit some of the villages and give the patients Epsom salts and quinine pills. It is most pathetic and touching to see, in some of the poor huts, three or four sick people huddled together, slowly awaiting death, to relieve

them from their suffering and agony.

Seeing these heart-rending and pathetic conditions, my life's ambition has been to start a small hospital for the good of the members of the Ashram and especially for the thousands of poor and helpless people who live around our Mission of Peace. With this ideal I have approached Rajahs and Maharajahs, merchant princes and millionaires and waited at their doors many an hour patiently but the result has always been an indirect refusal, with the plea that they had been already contributing to many other charities or that they would help at sometime later or other. Sister Sushila Devi also, with her big heart of service and compassion has approached and appealed to some of these mighty rich people.

Then we have the Taluk and District Boards which are supposed to look after the health and progress of the people. I have approached both Presidents and Vice-presidents, but in vain. In the name of politics there are several parties. We approached the members of different parties for our Mission belongs to all people. All have sincerely promised again and again to grant a dispensary to the Peace Mission. But at the time of Board Meetings the party feelings and their politics made them refuse to sanction money for the needed dispensary. Thus my desire to start a hospital has remained a dream. How can there be any Peace in the Ashram when people are dying uncared for, in and around the Mission for want of medical aid? With a heavy heart of disappointment I had resigned myself to His Will, knowing that all innocent desires are bound to be fulfilled just as the buds are bound to bloom, be it today or tomorrow.

Once again the call from America came to Sister Sushila Devi and myself, to share our Message of Peace and Love with the seekers of Truth there. We responded to the call cheerfully, leaving the Ashram in the care of the Almighty, and left for Western lands. While busy in service there, we received the most pathetic and heart-breaking news that six people had died in the Ashram, one

after another, all with fever, all for want of proper medical aid and good, nourishing food in time. A family of devotees who had dedicated their lives to the Mission of Peace have been almost wiped out of existence, the Manikyam family. It made Sister Sushila Devi and myself very sad to hear of the sudden deaths of even the young and innocent children.

An article was written as a last humble tribute to their sacrifices in the Cause of Peace, with an appeal for help to start a Manikyam Memorial Hospital in the memory of these several untimely deaths and for the sake of those who are still alive, doing His work. One devoted sister in New York, hearing of our appeal immediately offered to support a doctor in the Ashram not for one month or one year, but permanently. Another loving sister offered to bear the expense of medicine or any other pressing needs in the Ashram. Blessed are the compassionate hearts of these precious Brothers and Sisters of America! May all homage be to America! May God be praised!

My heartfelt thanks are also due to the Founders and Directors of the Peace Foundation which is incorporated in New York, for all their active sympathy and cooperation in helping the Cause of Peace. A copy of the document of registration appears in the frontpiece of Peace and in the Autobiography for information of the readers.

Since the starting of the Peace, if I ever have had a strong desire it has been the desire to give up begging of every kind, even in the name of Peace. This desire has been granted now by the Founders and Directors of the Peace Foundation. Once again my heart craves to pay my humble homage and deep gratitude to the Founders, Directors, friends and Members of the Peace Foundation.

With the support of our Peace Foundation we are busy in laying the foundation of the Manikyam Memorial Hospital on the tender bones of the dedicated workers of the Ashram, whose lives have been an offering to the terrible disease, Malaria.

In spite of the hoarded wealth and charitable nature of the East it is reserved for America to lend its ever-extended charitable hand to relieve pain and to help and console the poor and sick in their helplessness.

Hail America! The land of Liberty, Freedom and Service! Thy children are everywhere in the East and the West. Thy religion is to love all and to do good to all, irrespective of outer differences in castes, creeds, colours and nations.

Thou alone has a right to say: 'The whole world is my home. All the people in it are my children. To do good, to love and serve is my only Religion.' May God's richest blessings of Peace and prosperity be upon thee. O America, the Land of Freedom, Equality, Fraternity and Generosity!

May Peace be unto All!

OM OM OM

(Peace March-April 1938)

Chapter 71

FINAL RETURN TO THE MOTHERLAND - AMERICA TO INDIA

Our Swamiji's Arrival in India:

We are happy to inform our numerous friends, sympathisers and readers that once again the Sun is shining on our Abode of Peace for our Swamiji has returned from America. The dark and thick clouds of suffering, sickness and want have been dispelled by God's richest blessings. With the advent of our Swamiji there is sunshine in the fields, freshness and greenness in the foliage, trees and plants and a new spirit of joy and great activity in all workers and members. May the light of the Sun ceaselessly shine on our Ashram and all over the world!

OM OM OM

(Peace May-June 1938)

After doing glorious work in the U.S.A. and especially in Philadelphia, under the auspices of the Peace Institute of Philadelphia I was happy to return to the Motherland. It was sad though, that I had to return alone and leave Sister Sushila in New York with her aged and sick mother. Sister Sushila was a registered nurse and her mother and members of her family wanted her experience and loving services in the care of the sick mother. According to their wishes she remained behind in America after making all comfortable arrangements for my voyage to India.

The steamer on which we travelled was a cargo ship with a limited number of passengers. There was another Missionary travelling with us named Rev. Kern. He was very nice and interested in my simple and ideal life and religion which includes all and excludes none. But brother Kern unfortunately believed in Baptism by Fire and that only through the Blood of Christ could one reach Salvation; there was no other way. He thought that if we all did not follow his religious views the steamer would sink and we would all be drowned and go directly to hell. Finally, by the time we had completed our long voyage from America to India,

which took perhaps fifty days the Rev. Kern and I had become good friends and he was kind enough to appreciate my way of love-universal which in the long run is the Soul and Goal of humanity.

Although I know the preciousness of every moment of time it was really strange how I still preferred to travel only on slow cargo ships which have only limited space and therefore take only a few passengers instead of rushing about on airplanes or the big mail steamers which carry hundreds of passengers and provide for a pleasant social life with music, drinking, dancing, etc. Some of the happiest days of my life were spent on those small cargo ships when I was privileged to travel with few or no passengers at all. I used to feel like the sole monarch of the whole steamer; as if God had arranged or chartered the whole steamer just for my journey.

It is really strange how, after a lapse of over thirty years I can still remember the name of the captain of the steamer, a gentle and devoted soul, Mr. or rather, Captain Snow. In the evenings Mr. Ghosh would often draw me to play with him some kind of game. I do not remember its name now, but we had to throw some sort of disc on the deck of the ship and I think that I was always the winner in that simple game. May all glory be unto Him, without whose grace not even a blade of grass moves, not to speak of success in games.

It was my happy and rare privilege to watch the glorious sunsets and sunrises, absorbed in a Silence and Peace too sacred to be described in these finite words. At every port our steamer would stop in order to load and unload cargo. We stopped sometimes for days and at other times only for a few hours, according to the cargo consigned to the particular port. Rev. Kern and I would always go down for a stroll on the land and to see the customs and manners of the people of that place. When our steamer reached Karachi Port our Captain Snow gave us a few hours' time and wrote on the notice board that our steamer would be leaving Karachi by 5 p.m. exactly, on that day. Rev. Kern returned earlier

and I came leisurely by 4 p.m., an hour-earlier than the scheduled time.

Imagine my sad surprise and great disappointment to see that my steamer had left Karachi Port earlier than the appointed time of departure for the work of unloading had been completed earlier than expected. But what about its passenger, left behind, all alone, stranded? It was my first visit to Karachi, a big seaport town and the capital of Sindh before its partition from India. I did not have any friends or any funds in Karachi and I had no money with me, not even enough to buy a train ticket to Bombay to catch my steamer at its next port of anchoring. Except for the clothes on my body I had nothing at all. Rather a strange and unexpected predicament. To make a long story short, I sent a telegram to Andhra and money was sent so that I could buy a railway passage from Karachi to Bombay. Mr. Snow, the Captain and my other friends and the crew were all happy to see me back on the steamer in Bombay Port for they were sorry to have to leave me behind in Karachi.

Later on a suit was filed against the steamer company breach of trust, for having left me stranded, alone, in a strange city by some important lawyer friends of the Ashram. They were able to obtain a compensation of nearly one thousand rupees and this money was useful in the maintenance of the Ashram, for keeping the children and members alive. How strange are the ways of God! Blessed is the contented and happy state of the man who remains the same, unruffled, through all the ups and downs of life.

I had the joy of seeing several friends in Bombay who were happy to see me so suddenly and unexpectedly. They took wonderful care of me and bought me some new clothing, dhotis, etc., and made some delicious Indian dishes for me. From Bombay the next halt was Colombo, Ceylon. After that, on an auspicious morning our ship reached Madras. There, in the harbour were Mr. and Mrs. Ananda Rao and their precious daughters, Manorama, Sushila and Sumati, waiting anxiously with garlands of flowers to welcome me, not only into Madras but into their devoted hearts.

Thus ended my last voyage from the West to the East, with all its tests and trials in Karachi but with the glorification of God for all His blessing of new experience. Verily, He is the unfailing Witness, the Protector, not only of me but of all His children in the East and the West. May all Glory be unto God!

May Peace be unto All!

HAPPY TO BE IN THE MOTHER ASHRAM:

There was once only one steamer sailing the limitless waters of the great ocean. A bird sat on one of the masts of the steamer for a long time. But how long can it sit in one place? Feeling weary and bored the bird longed for a change. It wanted to sit on the mast of another steamer. Thus it left its mast and wandered near and far all over the waters of the ocean. Alas, it could find no other steamer or resting place and thus, growing tired it returned to its old mast on the first steamer and soon found joy in having a place of its own to rest in, where it could stay peacefully.

Thus I too had travelled everywhere, near and far, crossing oceans, roaming in hills and dales, in the Himalayas and in the far away Santa Susanna Hills of California and yet I had found no real Peace, no permanent Peace anywhere in the world. Like the bird on the mast I finally returned to the Mother Ashram in the lovely Thotapalli Hills and found Silence and real rest and Peace sitting in the Ashram, the Adobe of Peace.

My heart has never been satisfied with enjoying Peace, with drinking the Nectar of Immortality all alone. I long to share the treasures of Immortality, the Pearls of Peace with all the seekers of Peace in all the world. My heart longs to repeat again and again.

Everyone that thirsteth, come to the Waters of Peace
And drink deep the Nectar Divine. What shall it profit
You if you gain the whole world and lose your own soul,
The Atman, the Goal of your precious human birth?

I have always been drawn towards this wonderful poem:

My Creed

Observing

Not one holy day but seven

Worshipping

Not at the call of a bell

But at the call of my Soul Singing

Not at the baton's sway

But to the rhythm in my heart.

Loving because I must;

Giving because I cannot keep:

Doing for the joy of it.

OM OM OM

Religion Outside the Church

There is a wrong conception in both the East and the West that a man who is outside the church or one is not connected with some church or other is not a religious person. To be religious it is not essential that one should visit churches and temples. One can be religious without ever going to a church or professing any particular religion.

I do not mean to say anything against churches and temples. There are certainly religious souls, selfless workers within the church, but they also exist outside the church too! It is not going to church or the avoidance of church that makes one spiritual or non-spiritual but it is the heart of devotion, the spirit of selflessness and the Love Universal that makes or determines a person's religiousness or irreligiousness.

When I booked my passage on the *M.S. Unicorn* to sail to India I was told by the steamship company that a certain Mr. Ghosh

was also sailing on the same ship and that I might have to share a cabin with him. Immediately I started making inquiries about him. One of my devoted friends, a well known Swami told me that Mr. Ghosh was a very good and loving person, but not at all religious, for he never attended religious classes or spiritual meetings.

After boarding the steamer I found Mr. Ghosh to be quite religious, sweet and loving. I had the privilege of giving him one of my Initiation and we both often chanted the mystic syllable OM and meditated together and watched the beautiful sunsets on the ocean.

The Captain of the steamer, Mr. Snow was also a very good, loving and devoted soul with a smiling face and a kind word for everyone. During one of our conversations, when I presented him with some Peace literature he said: 'Swamiji, I am not a religious person and I have never read any religious books or leaf-lets; so please excuse me.' I smiled at his words and said: 'Whoever told you that you are not a religious person? You are always kind and good and help everyone in all possible ways. Does this not make you religious?'

He said: 'O Swamiji, I never go to church, nor do I read the Bible. How can I be religious?' I replied: 'It is not going to church or reading the Bible that makes one religious but it is selfless service to fellow beings, love for humanity that makes one religious. With your sweetness, gentleness and kindness, if you are not religious, then who is ?' He looked at me with a beaming face of joy and contentment and said : 'Swamiji, for your sake I will read the Peace booklets.' With many thanks and greatfulness he accepted the Peace literature.

This made me ponder over how many kind and good people, equally selfless and dedicated there were outside the church? Here are the crew of the ship. I feel confident that they will sacrifice their lives to be of service to others. Shall we call such people, to whom life is nothing in the cause of service, 'irreligious' just because they do not attend any church or read any religious books?

Their church is this wide, expansive sky, the twinkling stars. Their daily experience of service and sacrifice is their Holy Bible. It makes them happy to know with love and encouragement that religion need not be confined to a church or a book but can be practiced anywhere in the wide world. What will they not offer to know that they too are religious and God has not deprived them of their birthright just because they do not go to church. As children of God they belong to Him wherever they may be, in church or outside the church. God's real church is this wide world. We are attending His church service whenever we do our part sincerely, whenever we love and serve others.

My room steward is a college-educated boy. He takes good care of me and we love each other dearly. During one of our conversations he told me that he is not a religious man for he never attends any church. When I asked 'why' he replied: 'Swamiji, in the street where I live there are many children who are faithful followers of a church, attending regularly, never missing even one sermon: yet in their private lives they are worse than animals. I thought that if the church is turning out such bad specimens it is better that I stay outside of it.'

I argued that it was not the fault of the church but of the boys themselves for their wild and selfish lives. Somehow Brother Jack was not drawn towards the church but he was ever-seeking, studying every spiritual book he could obtain and thus he made up his mind to find God outside the church. Surely Jack will find Him for he is a selfless and devoted soul, ever serving others cheerfully.

There is a radio officer of our ship who is a beautiful and industrious soul. Through our journey he was always reading or studying something or other, although never the Bible. Yet I found him to be very loving, devoted and selfless and he always did his part to the best of his ability. He was growing and growing, seeking God in his own way, though not in the church.

One day I felt deeply touched when my steward approached me and said lovingly: 'Swamiji, I wish all the people in the world

believed and acted as you do, for then we would have Peace on earth and Goodwill among nations. On another day he came with a smile and said, 'Some day I hope to reach the Goal of my life and taste the Peace that you are expressing and sharing.' I felt grateful and touched with his sincere and loving remarks. He often came to me with personal problems and I tried to help and serve him.

I love to see all people religious, sincere, selfless and loving. I cannot bear to call anyone irreligious because he is not attending a church, for religion is not confined to churches and temple, to priests and ministers but to the hearts of dedication, service and sacrifice. Religion can be expressed without preaching. It can be conveyed without words. Religion can be manifested in loving thoughts and kind words. It can be shared in selfless deeds.

I had another casual interview with our Captain while watching the still waters of the ocean on the deck of the ship. One thing led to another and he asked me many questions about my life, work, and the Abode of Peace, etc. At the end of the conversation as he turned to go to his cabin he said: 'Swami, if you keep on talking to me like this, pretty soon I too will be converted into a Swami Snow.' I felt deeply touched and said: 'I do not believe in conversions, in changing names and forms from one religion to another. As God is Omnipresent, He is throbbing in every heart. If you could only recognise Him there you are already a Swami.' Thus, practical religion spreads itself even outside the church, slowly and silently from heart to heart.

I take joy in fasting every Friday, once a week, in Silence to be better fitted for the rest of the week's work. Even on ship on my fasting day both passengers and crew were kind and loving and understood about the fast and Silence. They always cooperated to make the day a success. Once, suddenly, Rev. Kern decided to fast for two days. Our friends started whispering among themselves, saying: 'Swami must have been talking to Rev. Kern about fasting and this is the result.' But I never spoke to him in words.

I have been doing all this fasting for my own Self-purification for I believe that it is individual growth that paves the way to Universal growth or progress. Thus I have always tried to set an example for others to follow. That evening Captain Snow approached me and said with amusement: 'Swami, please do not speak to me any more for I will find myself fasting one of these days!' I said that fasting never hurts anyone and rather it is overeating which hurts. The Captain replied: 'I will compete with you to see who is going to live longest. You, with your fasting or I, with my feasting.' I agreed to the contest.

There was more religion or realisation in Christ's fasting in the wilderness outside the church than in all the organised churches in the world. Unfortunately many of His followers ignore the practical side of the religion experienced and expressed by Christ and blindly cling to the formal worship in organized churches. Every time I fast a day I feel that I am growing a year younger. Many people on the boat and elsewhere have asked whether I am twenty-five years of age. I say 'Yes!' for that was the time at which I was reborn into spiritual life. To make my message short, where kindness, gentleness, selflessness are there is real religion, even though it is outside the church.

I do not deny that there is religion within the church but I only say that there is religion without as well. No one need be lost. There is hope for all. There is salvation for all His children. Truth need not be confined to a church or temple for it is Omnipresent. I should like now to close this message by sharing with you three ecstatic moments of inner peace that I felt during the long sea voyage. Please follow me now and attune yourselves with my spirit of Love and Unity.

Imagine a lonely steamer in the endless waters of the ocean. It is the hour of dawn. Everything is trying to express itself. Even the waves that sleep at the bottom of the ocean are awake and lift their crests to pay homage to the rising sun. Slowly, silently and gradually the whole ocean is flooded with light. Light within, without, above, below and all around. Thus, the golden ball, the

Light of the world, rises every day from the horizon to bless you, me and the whole world with Life, Light and Love. This religion is inexpressible, inside the church.

Again, another moment of ecstasy is the hour of sun set. Even the breeze halts to pay its homage to the Lord of Light. The waves are hushed for it is a moment of relaxation and dissolution into the Mother Ocean. As the ball of fire merges or goes down into the horizon it is stillness everywhere, all around. Even the breath stops for one looks at divine splendour with bated breath. As the Sun goes down one meditates on the most enchanting, uplifting variegated colours of every kind. It is something indescribable that can only be seen on the ocean. Then slowly, steadily and silently all colour changes into colourlessness and one feels unutterable Peace. This is another moment of religion indescribable which lies out side the church.

There is another sacred moment of ecstasy on the ocean, on moonlit nights and especially on the full moon day. How can I describe or express in these finite words its glory? Suddenly the silent, cool ball of enchanting fire shoots out from the horizon, filling all the waters of the ocean with its soul-awakening, gleaming rays. As you look and watch, the rays penetrate into the very soul and bring soothing love and Silent Peace. One is filled and flooded with this overwhelming cool light within, without, and all around. The waves of the ocean begin to dance slowly silently and steadily to the rhythm of the hour. It is an hour of silent glory and sacred illumination. Verily, this is religion incomprehensible, where Heavens declare His Glory and the Firmament showeth His handiwork!.

It touches my heart to see these so-called irreligious and reckless children of the sea taking part, watching the sunsets, sunrises and moonlit nights with awe and ecstasy, admiring and worshipping the handiwork of God in mute silence in spite of their passing weaknesses and worldly interests. I see a world of worshippers not only inside the church but out side the church as well. The wide world is His Universal Church. The heavens above

are the open dome. The stars are His sparkling lights. The Sun is the greatest and highest symbol of worship. So let us worship Him not only within, in the stillness of our hearts, but without, in the Universe; not only in temples and churches but outside as well; for He is everywhere, awaiting our recognition not only in the churches and temples at certain hours of the day and night but outside too, at all times and under all conditions!

Silent Adorations be unto the Creator of all these created churches and temples and may we never forget the Creator in the dazzling beauty of His creation, but worship Him in the Infinite, Eternal and Unmanifested as well; this is the prayer of your brother.

OM

OM

OM

Chapter 72

ISAVASYAM IDAM SARVAM

AUTOBIOGRAPHY:

Autobiography, Autobiography, Autobiography! Thus am I pressed and requested to finish the Autobiography by everyone in the Ashram. Chy. Santi and Chy. Jnaneswari are after the Autobiography! Pujya Ramananda Tirthaji now and then silently reminds me of the Autobiography. Even Pujya Sahajanandaji who came all the way from South Africa, I do not know what made him mention the Autobiography. I was surprised when he asked me about my Autobiography for I had never mentioned even a word about it in any of my letters to him. He was kind enough to request me to complete it soon so that he might publish it in Durban, South Africa at the Divine Life Society Press there. How kind and thoughtful is Sri Swamiji Maharaj! How good is God, the All knowing One, Who is moving the devotees to goad me into completing the Autobiography!

In spite of all the pressure from outside during these many months you will be surprised to learn that the last chapter was written nearly nine months ago. What a lapse of time! How true are the words, that not a blade of grass moves without His Will! May all glory be unto God for giving me the urge even now, after a silence of eight months, free of all pressure from outside, from the near and dear ones, to sit down now to write another chapter. By ourselves we can do nothing. When God wants to write He can write the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata* through His chosen instruments. He can make the dumb to speak and even the lame and crippled to climb mountains.

When I think of climbing mountains I remember how, at the time of the heart malady the wise and devoted doctors requested me to no longer climb hills. Yet even now I keep on taking walks over the hills towards our Shivalayam with both the Ramies. Everyday one of the happiest moments of inspiration is spent on the lovely hill at Shivalayam. I feel so deeply grateful to the Doctor

of doctors who takes care of me day and night, in each and every moment of my life! He is like a tender mother who takes care of her frail baby, protecting ceaselessly, like the lid protecting the eye. Often I feel like repeating that God is too good, even to the weak and frail; in fact He is even more concerned with His prodigal sons, His erring children. These words of the saint, Surdas give me such consolation and strength that I love to repeat them again and again.

Where is there a wretch so wicked and loathsome as I?
I have forgotten my Master, the Creator!
So faithless have I been.

How blessed it is to never deny or forget our Maker, the Creator in the name of anything, even in the tests, trials and tribulations of the Ashram. The only tribulation in this world is to forget the Creator, the God of life, Light and Love, Who is ever present, as the Indwelling Presence of our hearts. When forgetfulness of God is the greatest tribulation, or rather the greatest loss and misery in human birth, then what is the greatest virtue or happiness, prosperity in this precious human birth? It is awareness of God's Presence which is the greatest and highest virtue and the soul and goal of our very existence.

May all glory and homage be unto Him! It is He who makes me write now, or rather is writing through me these finite words. He is the Infinite and I am the finite. He is the Ocean and I am the bubble. He knows what is best for each and every one of us. May He lead us and may we have the strength to follow him, trustingly and lovingly, faithfully, like innocent little children in little as well as in big things.

May Peace be unto All!

OM OM OM

Several months have passed away since I last touched my Autobiography manuscript. The last chapter I wrote was on Silence. Perhaps I have been silent all these months because of the inspiration of the beautiful chapter. Yet, instead of being silent I

have been very busy all these months with endless old and new activities of the Ashram. There is no end to *Maya*, the delusion be it spiritual or mundane. Thus I have been running after the shadows of the Ashram both day and night, very persistently. Today, the 24th February, 1969 I feel like completing the Autobiography. I often repeat that not a blade of grass moves without His will. Let the bird sing when it feels like singing. Let it be silent when it feels like being silent. Let not any amount of persuasion or force from outside compel the bird to sing or do anything against its wishes.

Several times friends and well-wishers of the Ashram have said:

Swamiji, are you never going to complete the Autobiography? Why do you spend your time with non essentials, neglect and forget the most important thing for the Ashram and for all of us.

I have been simply ignoring their wise suggestion, feeling that the time and mood will come when the remaining chapters shall be completed. This is the seventy-second chapter and I do not know how many more chapters are to be written.

Now I must also add my First, Second, Third and Fourth Initiations which were first given in America to the aspiring students in the classes arranged for spiritual study. Eminent scholars, doctors, lawyers and many devoted friends and well wishers of Santi Ashram, the Mission of Peace attended those classes and received the very simple and practical Four Initiations. Those were joyful and happy days of peace and contentment in which the highest truths were shared freely, in simple language with all the seekers of Truth and Peace.

I sit now under the lovely trees of a new park which has recently been created in our Ashram enjoying the cool shade. It has been said of Santi Ashram that what was once a thick forest infested with wild animals has now become a beautiful Ashram with lovely hermitages, gardens with fruit trees, hospital, home, for the aged, gurukula-residential school. It seems like a fine dream. Yet, this is a concrete and practical dream, very substantial, for we see strong buildings, large kitchen and comfortable buildings for

sadhus, devoted workers and household-aspirants.

How good is God? Was all this created by me? A thousand times No! Let me repeat that not a blade of grass moves without His will. It is the Father, the Lord of all Creation who does all things. All glory be unto Him! We are only His humble, imperfect instruments. These days I repeat unconsciously the humble and most touching words of saint, Surdas.

Where is there a wretch so wicked and loathsome as I?
I have forgotten my Master, the Creator.
How faithless have I been !

There are moments when one feels blessed just to be alive. Sitting under the cool shade of the mango, jack fruit, custard and cashew nut trees I feel so happy and contented; as the cool breeze blows I feel God's Presence. It is He in every tree, nay, in every leaf. He speaks to me in a million tongues; such is His Infinite Love for His trusting children. The Presence is so intense that I whisper unconsciously:

What is it you want me to do now, my Lord?
And He seems to whisper in the very breeze

My child, I want you to do nothing. I do not want you to do anything anymore in this finite world of change.

Be Nothing

This is my only message to you, now and always.

To listen to this life-giving and soul-awakening message is the goal and soul of human birth itself. I felt deep Peace within and absorbed myself into that Nothingness or Completeness which is ever present, pervading and permeating the very cells of our beings as well as the whole Universe.

Isavasyam Idam Saravam

Blessed are they whose minds are fixed on Isa. May they merge and dissolve in Him.

Om Tat Sat Om

The holy words *Isavasyam Idam Sarvam* recall to mind a message called 'World Peace' which was written during the days of *mounam*, Silence on Mount Kailas Ashram near Visakhapatnam. I should like to add here part of that message for my loving readers of the Autobiography.

World Peace

The man who is blessed with the personal experience of the highest can never excludes even his so-called bitterest or ignorant enemy from his fold of Love Universal. His creed includes all and excludes none. Such a one is free, entirely free from race superiority and religious bigotry of every kind. He is above communal differences and caste prejudices. He is a brother to all and a friend even of the dumb animals. The wide world is his home and all people in it are his sisters and brothers. Love that excludes none and service to all are tenents of His Universal Religions. It is in this personal experience that man feels and suffers with the people in the war-torn areas of the world and feels happy with all the joyous and comfortable people, with all people in all conditions throughout this world. The man of personal experience is fearless like the mighty lion of the forest. He is not afraid of even destructive atom bombs for his experience is based on the *ATMIC BOMB* of Soul Force and its Self-effulgent Splendour of Millions of Suns.

How true are the words: 'Let people live in God and the nations will become united through such men of God-Realisation!' If at least all the *sadhus* of the world whose lives are dedicated to God and to the service of His children could eternally live in God, what a great, practical guidance and blessing it would be to the rest of humanity and the world. Indeed, from time immemorial beginning with the Golden Age, *sadhus* have been the preceptors of the rulers and have influenced their lives with the high ideals of *dharma*, righteousness and Truth and helped them by teaching them to love their subjects as their own children.

If the world is in chaos, want, suffering, sickness, poverty and fear, we, the *sadhus* are to blame to some extent. If ever the world is going to be filled with Peace, Power, Prosperity,

Fearlessness and Bliss of the Beyond it is in the hands of the sadhus of the world to make it so. Blessed is the sadhu who can hold his tongue, be silent until he experiences personally a taste of the Infinite, Eternal, Indivisible and Universal Cosmic Light! It is the man of inexperience who disturbs the Peace of the world, sitting in his own little well of finite life and proclaiming to the whole world that his well is the biggest in all the world. I always feel sad for the people who compare religions and nations with the attitude of picking and pecking and not with the right attitude of appreciation, for all that is best in each religion and every nation. As the source of all rays is the one Sun so also the Goal of all religions is the same, the One God. As the fundamentals are the same in all religions there is no need for any religions to claim superiority over its sister religions.

If we are blessed with the personal experience of God-Consciousness then we feel that the world is pervaded and permeated with God's Interpenetrating Presence and there is no division between Pakistan and Hindustan, nor between East and West for there is but one Stupendous Whole, the One, Indivisible Light of lights of which all religions and nations are but mere sparks or rays. I see from Mt. Kailas the Mother Ocean laughing at the petty quarrels and differences of her little children, the waves. One wave rises from the bosom of the ocean and says: 'I am the only, the biggest wave, exclusively separate and superior to all the other waves'. Watch this very arrogant wave as it rises and then goes down and disappears before our very eyes! No wave can be separate from the other waves. Even if one wave were to think that it is privileged to be a special wave it has but the same constituents or contents as all the other waves in the ocean, in the East and the West. Is not all blood red? Is not all the water of the sea salty? Verily it is all the One Ocean which has water within, without and all around.

A man's tiny life is like that of a finite wave, as far as the ocean is concerned. Why identify with the passing body and perceive division, separation and difference in the One, Universal

Whole, calling this ‘mine’ and that ‘yours’ ? What is the need to divide the one fair face of Mother Earth into finite sections or divisions of communities and nations, creeds and religions? Difference of any kind, in any form should be rooted out and burnt away in the fire of Personal Perception of the Splendour of Infinite and Effulgent Light. It is in Supreme Silence that the sadhus of realisation create harmony and understanding with each breath, inhaling and exhaling Peace with each and every breath. When such is the Blessed Truth and Glory where is there scope for the least strife of differentiation in the name of religion or nationality? When the essentials are the same we must identify ourselves through personal experience with the source and not with the superficial differences on the surface.

Isavasyam Idam Sarvam. All this Universe is filled with God. All this is God. Everyone is a living image of the Almighty. It is He Who is shining in all eyes, throbbing in all hearts and flowing in the breath of all as the One Universal Breath-SOHAM. Verily, the One Light of Reality pervades and permeates not only the very cells of one’s being but the whole universe from the tiniest atom to the biggest planet.

May all the seekers of Peace in the East and West pave the way to peace on earth and goodwill among Nations through their personal experience of Universal Love, Everlasting Peace and Supreme Silence. This is the prayer of Sadhu Omkar.

Hari Om Tat Sat Om

Chapter 73

AN APPEAL FOR THE COMPLETION OF THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY

Months have again passed by since I have given any thought to this Autobiography. This morning, as I am busy with some of the *Gurukula* children getting some Ashram work done, Chy. Santi came and said :

Dear Swamiji, why do you waste your precious time with these non-essentials such as gardening. Is not the completion of your Autobiography more important to the Ashram and more helpful to the devotees?

I felt disgruntled, dissatisfied because of her remark and thought within myself: ‘Gardening work and taking care of the dumb animals is more important than the writing of the Autobiography’.

Anyway, Santi’s remarks have made me take out my old manuscripts of the Autobiography. Chy. Jnaneswari was kind enough to find the books and to read to me some of the last chapters so that I could find a connecting link. As I mentioned earlier the Four Initiations that I gave my students in America with the promise that I would add them in full to the Autobiography, let me add them here. They are practical and inspiring and will lead all seekers of Truth, step by step slowly and steadily towards the goal of human birth, the Indwelling Light. They have already benefitted thousands of aspiring students, given solace to many devoted souls, especially in the West. May God grant that these Four Initiations will lead many more seekers of Truth or Light to the Heart of their hearts, the Soul of their souls!

Santi thinks that the writing of this Autobiography is more important than anything in the world. She and others think that if the call comes suddenly the Autobiography will remain incomplete, unfinished, for no one else can complete it. Thus there are some who do not even care about the dissolution of the body for most important for them is the successful completion of the Autobiography for the good of all.

Let us meditate now on *SOHAM*, the most natural and universal sound, for *SOHAM* is the splendour of millions of Suns!

OM

TAT

SAT

OM

Chapter 74

TREES

In the early hours of the still dawn, I opened the door and went out on my verandah feeling drawn by the silent beauty of the hour, more so as there was a pale moon just over the top of the trees. It was so peaceful and enchanting that I did not wish to go inside again. Drawing out a chair I sat looking at the two big rows of tall flowering trees and the moon just between their graceful arch. It was a sight to be enjoyed but not to be described in words. Hence, I continued watching the moon and looking into heart of the trees, musing and meditating on their beauty and love.

How true are the words of Joyce Kilmer who wrote:

I think that I shall never see
A poem lovely as a tree.

.....

Poems are made by fools like me,
But only God can make a tree.

Yes, trees are the poems of God. He creates beautiful poems, sweet-smelling poems, tall and stately poems, nay, a thousand other kinds of various wonderful poems or trees.

I cannot understand why I love the trees in the Ashram more than those any where else in the world. Perhaps it is because these are my own flesh and blood and I have planted and raised them with my own hands. Yet, all trees are the same trees. But these trees in the Ashram speak to me. They speak with me when they are neglected, when they are not properly watered, with their drooping heads. Strange as it may sound to the worldly ears, often as I pass and stand by a certain neglected tree it almost seems to speak, as if to say: 'We are hungry for want of nourishing food ; we are thirsty, please give us a drink of water.' Immediately I get a gardener to fertilise the earth or to pour water for the tree to drink. Then I, as well as the plants and trees, feel satisfied. When they are well taken care of, the trees express their happiness by bowing their stately heads and waving their branches with the cool breeze.

It is most touching to see, as I pass under the shade of the trees, communing with their souls, sometimes a flower or two will fall just on my head as if it were an expression of their silent friendship. Silent and spiritual touches like these electrify one's whole being with happiness and gratitude.

Thus we see that the trees also express themselves and speak, especially with those who love and understand. Christ said, 'Eyes have they, yet they see not. Ears have they, yet they hear not.' Those who have the real vision of their eyes and ears can behold and listen to His glory in a million tongues and forms. Verily, it is the One, Indivisible Substance or Supreme Soul which expresses itself not only in all the trees but even in minerals and in all the forms of life. It is the same Presence which is manifesting in bird, beast and man and which pervades everything from the tiniest atom to the biggest planet. Peace that passeth all understanding belongs only to those few, rare and precious souls who can recognise the one in the many, in minerals, trees, beasts and human beings and thus worship Him everywhere as All in All.

Often I see a certain tree near the printing office which reminds me of the unfortunate 'Manikyam family' and thus makes my heart sad and heavy. It is full of sweet orange fruits, but alas, one by one all the fruits are falling down and the branches are becoming dry and the leaves withered, for the tree has been attacked by some kind of plant blight. To our sorrow, it is patiently waiting for its death, still bearing hundreds of withering fruits on its drooping branches. We have tried to do everything in our power to save this tree, but alas, its fate seems to be sealed. In our anxiety to protect the tree we even called in an Agricultural expert and appealed to him to save it. He examined it and pronounced its death, for it has reached the last stages of transition, perhaps for want of nourishing soil, the food from the ground. Alas, such is the fate of both man and tree.

Life is fleeting and transitory, whether it is in the form of a tree, bird or man. It comes and goes and nobody knows where! We are so helpless when the life is departing. We cannot hold it, but

rather are often compelled to watch helplessly while some dear life is passing. With pain and finally with resignation to His Will. At times to the sorrow of ourselves and others, be they plants or human beings, we have to operate on or amputate certain diseased parts or branches. In sickness and accidents when certain limbs are diseased or mangled we must remove them mercifully to save the precious life. Similarly, when certain branches show signs of decay and death we should lose no time in cutting or pruning them for the same disease may spread to the whole tree, like the poison of a scorpion or some other poisonous insect.

By the time I returned from the West the whole Ashram had fallen into a partially neglected state, in spite of the speedy preparations the members had made to give it a clean and orderly appearance, knowing the date of my arrival. Mainly due to the scanty rainfall of the last monsoon the trees especially were in a forsaken condition, without water or pruning. Someone remarked, partly in play and partly earnest, that in spite of the gross neglect and carelessness the trees and shrubs continued to live persistently as if saying: 'You cannot kill us however much you may neglect us. We will keep alive until we see our swamiji, who planted us and is ever tenderly loving us.'

Thus, the trees kept themselves alive with great struggle, without proper care and sufficient water. As soon as I started to water them, to clear the weeds around them and to prune and cut off many crooked and dried up branches, especially those branches that were drooping down to the ground. It has hurt me a great deal to see these tender and grown up branches cut off, but the surgeon has to do the work of operation for the sake of the future prosperous and healthful growth of the patient.

Often I touch the tree of which the limbs or branches were cut off and apologise silently. 'Forgive me for hurting you, but it is only for your own good. In no time you will have again sturdy and beautiful growth.' Consoling them thus, we put some clay or soft earth at the open bleeding places where the branches were pruned.

The poem, Plant a Tree by Lucy Larcom illustrates how, by planting a tree we are planting hope, joy, peace, youth and love. How wonderful to be a tall, stately and majestic like a big tree, giving shade to one and all who come under its cool shade. Indeed, it is sublimely unconscious of the difference of caste, creed, colour and nationality. Thus, the trees give us not only shade but flowers and fruits, without expecting any reward. They give so freely. If we could only love them with a little tenderness how they would respond to our love.

It seems once there was a rose plant thriving very well in an uncongenial climate where roses and other flowering shrubs were not supposed to grow at all. The lady who planted the rose plant, when asked the reason for its luxurious life said: 'I love the rose plant and so it blooms for me.'

May we all strive to be the emblems of love, assimilating the message of trees and their response in giving cool shade, flowers and fruit, without expecting any reward, to all the weary pilgrims in the desert of the world, helping them to walk towards the path of Truth or Perfection.

May Peace be unto all! Om ! Om ! Om !

(Peace 1937)

PLANT A TREE

BY LUCY LARCOM

He who plants a tree
Plants a Hope.
Rootlets up through fibres blindly grope;
Leaves unfold into horizons free.
So man's life must climb
From the clods of time
Unto heavens sublime.
Canst thou prophesy, thou little tree,
What the glory of thy boughs shall be?
He who plants a tree
Plants a Joy :
Plants a comfort that will never cloy ;

Every day a fresh reality,
 Beautiful and strong,
 To whose shelter throng
 Creatures blithe with song.
 If thou couldst but know, thou happy tree
 Of the bliss that shall inhabit thee !
 He who plants a tree,
 He plants Peace.
 Under its green curtains jargons cease.
 Leaf and zephyr murmur soothingly :
 Shadows soft with sleep
 Down tired eyelids creep,
 Balm of slumber deep.
 Never hast thou dreamed, thou blessed tree,
 Of the benediction thou shall be.
 He who plants a tree,
 He plants youth.
 Vigour won for centuries in sooth;
 Life of time, that hints eternity.
 Boughs their strength uprear;
 New shoots, every year
 On old grows appear.
 Thou shalt teach the ages, sturdy tree,
 Youth of soul is immortality.
 He who plants a tree,
 He plants Love,
 Tents of coolness spreading out above.
 Wayfarers he may not live to see.
 Gifts that grow are best,
 Hands that bless are blest;
 Plant ! Life does the rest !
 Heaven and earth help him who plants a tree
 And his work its own reward shall be.

OM

OM

OM

Chapter 75

THE UNIVERSAL SYMBOL OF PEACE

Our Universal Symbol:

This beautiful and inspiring symbol consisting of a lotus, the mystic syllable OM in Sanskrit, the Holy Cross and Crescent with Star, is a sight to be seen and worshipped but not described. We have many idols and symbols in the East and the West, in temples and churches but this Universal Symbol is unique and original and brings the culminative spirit of all churches, temples, mosques and monasteries into one concentrated form.

We owe this Universal Symbol to Mr. Krishna Murthy, the proprietor of the Krishna Cement Works and we thank him also for all his other gifts, such as cement benches. May God bless him and his dear ones always.

The Universal Symbol has been installed in our prayer hall and it touches our hearts and inspires us to see the votaries of different religions worshipping before it as a stepping stone towards the goal of life. We extend a hearty welcome to all the friends of our Ashram, not only to visit our Abode of Peace and Service but also to partake in the Universal Worship and thus taste the Peace that passeth all understanding and dedicate themselves to the One God of Universal Love.

(Peace Jan - Feb 1942)

OUR UNIVERSAL SYMBOL

Religion begins with Universal Worship and ends in the realisation of Universal Love towards all religions and their respective symbols. How can one expect any realisation in a bigot or a fanatic? He may be full of enthusiasm and zeal for his particular religion but he is far from realisation of the one, fundamental, highest Truth, that the same God exists in all the various religions.

How true are the words of the scriptures: '*That which exists is one and men call it by various names*'. Thus, worship the truth universally. The Universal Symbol occupies the heart of our prayer

hall with the following words written above it: GOD IS ONE. WORSHIP HIM UNIVERSALLY. At the base of the symbol the mantram, the practical and powerful affirmation, INHALE AND EXHALE PEACE THY BIRTHRIGHT.

In the Universal Symbol all the symbols spring from the Infinite Ocean of Love which represents God's unmanifested aspect. The waves rise from the ocean, they dance for a time on the surface and finally merge and dissolve in the ocean. Similarly all religions have their origin in God; they live in God and finally merge back in the Godhead when man reaches the goal of life. It is only in ignorance that God seems far away, separate. In knowledge God is very near to man. God is the All in All. He alone exists and all else disappears.

The Lotus, the symbol of Buddhism has its base in the Ocean of Love and Compassion. The Lotus represents the Heart, Compassion. It is never outside but rather within every man, no matter how ignorant he may be of it. The Lotus, the heart is not only in the Buddhist but in the Hindu, Jew, Christian, Muslim, Parsi and in one and all. How can a man live without a heart? Thus, every religion has some attributes of other religions just as no one wave stands by itself but has characteristics of other waves. So religion exists not separately but in an integral harmony. The great *mantram* of Buddhism, Om Mani Padme Hum may be said to be the synthesis of four of the great religions of the world:

OM - represents Hinduism.

MANI - the Jewel, the Peral of Great Price represents Christianity.

PADME - the Lotus represents Buddhism.

HUM - represents Islam, the religion of Valour.

As long as man recognises Heart, his own Heart, he has the Lotus within himself. Where the Lotus is there is Compassion, and where there is Compassion, there is the Buddha, the Enlightened One! Thus the Buddha resides in all hearts, that of the

Christian, Jew, Parsi, Mohammedan, Hindu, of any man of any religion and in the men who profess no religion as well. The lower eight petals of the Lotus, the Heart of Compassion represents the Buddha's Noble Eight-fold Path of Right Understanding, Right Thought, Right Speech, Right Actions, Right Livelihood, Right Effort, Right Mindfulness, Right Concentration.

In the sacred syllable AUM or OM which represents Hinduism the OM is the beginning , middle and end. It includes all and excludes none. In the beginning was the Word, the Logos. The word is the Universal Sound emanating out of the unmanifested and from which all further sounds, forms and names spring. The Word is in every religion and it is the birthright of everyone. It might be said that the A represents Buddhism, the U Christianity and the M Mohammedanism and the totality, the OM is the Incomprehensible Whole or Completeness which is Hinduism.

OM is the fragrance of a flower, the tenderness of a blade of grass; the sound in the song of a bird, in the roar of the beast and in the words of man and in every manifested creature for the holy sound pervades and permeates the whole universe. Verily, it is OM that beats in every heart and flows in every breath. Thus, all who recognise the Source, the Word within themselves and the world are in some measure Hindus. When manifested word OM merges in the infinite silence man realises *nirvikalpa samadhi*, Nirvana or the Peace that passeth all understanding.

Next in the Universal Symbol is the Cross, the Holy Sign of Lord Christ whose life has been one continuous stream of sacrifice and service to fellow beings. If you stretch your arms, whether you are a Hindu, Buddhist, Jew or Muslim your very body takes the form of the Christ on the Cross. In the heart of this sacred Cross there is the Self-shining Soul of Christ ceaselessly illuminating and drawing one and all further within, to the Light of lights. As the spirit of the cross is sacrifice and selfless service wherever and whoever one may be if he or she lives for others, then Christ is present saying: 'Lo, I am with you always.'

The symbol of the Crescent expresses the highest in Islam which is valour, strength and self-surrender. When man expresses his surrender to God with valour then, no matter what religion his may be, he is proving his Oneness with the highest in Islam. Along with the Crescent is the Star which also symbolises the star of David, the star of Judaism, the star that led the wise men to the birthplace of the Holy Christ-Child. The Star is the highest point and represents the Thousand-petalled Lotus, the *brahmarandhra*, the door of God-Consciousness which leads to Truth, Perfection, Illuminations.

In the middle of the Universal Symbol there is Fire, the symbol of the Parsis, the followers of Zoraster, the worshippers of Fire or Sun. The Fire or Sun which purifies all, is Purity and those that meditate on the Light of Fire or Sun eventually merge and dissolve in that Light of lights. Wherever there is recognition of the Universal Light, there is oneness with the Parsi faith.

The Moon, the Sun and the stars in the sky and all the different lotus buds in the ocean represents all other known, unknown, old and new religions of the East and the West. Thus our Universal Symbol encompasses all religions and excludes none. The space or *akasa* represents all the intellectuals, athiests and agnostics. The waters in the ocean symbolise the God-saturated souls, the devotees who swim over the waves of life towards the light of the divine, the Sun of suns.

At the base of the Universal Symbol is the powerful mantram.

INHALE AND EXHALE PEACE THY BIRTHRIGHT

Sooner or later this mantram leads all to perfection be they Buddhist, Hindu, Christian, Jew, Mohammedan, Parsi, Jain, Sikh, Taoist, Confucian, Sintoist or follower of any other religions. As long as you are a child of God there is Peace perpetually flowing in your very breath. Even if you are an athiest or an agnostic, Peace is your divine heritage. It is the common birthright of every man, woman and child of every nation and clime. Only awareness of God, recognition of His Presence is needed. Forgetfulness of

God or the Universal Truth alone is the cause of all jealousies, wars destructions and death.

Dear friends of Peace, followers of all the different religions and non-religions of the East and the West we greet you all in the name of our Universal Symbol and invite you to our home, our Abode of Universal Peace to meditate and partake of the Feast of Peace that passeth all understanding.

Dear Children of God, wherever you may be, whoever you may be, far or near, believers or non-believers, Peace is flowing in your very breath as the life of your Existence. Let us meditate now on the very breath, inhaling and exhaling Peace, Our Birthright. It is Peace within, without, above, below and all around. Verily, we are floating in Peace, God-saturated. Our very bodies are the Universal Symbols for the respective religions of the world are within us. Let us identify ourselves with the Universal Symbol, ignore the outer sheath and feel that when we are walking it is the Universal Symbol that walks and when we breathe it is the Universal Symbol that breathes.

As we meditate on the Universal Symbol let us feel Krishna, Buddha, Shiva, Christ, Moses, Mohammed, Zoroaster, Mahavir, Nanak, Ramakrishna Paramahansa, Rama Tirtha and all the other sages and saints of the East and West within ourselves. All are within. Verily, the world is within. How life-giving and soul-inspiring it is to feel our unity with all the Saviours of Humanity! Let us feel, feel, feel our At-Oneness with the All; nay, let us rise even above the plane of feeling and merge and dissolve in the Universal Light. May the Universal Symbol bring Universal Peace to the hearts of all and thus pave the way for the establishment of Peace on Earth and Goodwill among nations. May Peace abide in the hearts of all with devotion and dedication, of all religions in the East and West, North and South.

May Peace be unto All

(Peace Oct-Nov 1942)

OM OM OM

Note : Meditation of the Mystic word - refer 30th Chapter 'Cosmic Fast'



Universal Peace Symbol



Sri Swami Omkar Peace Foundation Certificate

Chapter 76

BLUNDERS - DO NOT COMPLAIN

‘IF YOU DESIRE TO BE ONE WITH GOD? DO NOT COMPLAIN. IF YOU COMPLAIN, YOU CANNOT BE ONE WITH HIM.’ To-day I came across these wise words, uttered in his tests and trials, by a Muslim saint. This is the last examination in God-identification . If a man puts both his hands round your throat, to choke your life out of you, you are to see only the sweet face of God in him. If a man gives you a fond embrace with one hand and with the other hand stabs you in the back, you are to feel God’s Presence, in the very touch of his hand.

Then alone, the latent Light in you will manifest in all glory. The saints and sages have done it, in the past. They never complained of their tests and tribulations. Here is a chance for you too, to recognise God. When others have done it, why can’t you do it? Do it now and be a blessing to the world of humanity.

HE PRAYETH BEST

He prayeth well who loveth well
Both man and bird and beast.
‘He prayeth best, who loveth best
All things both great and small !
For the dear God who loveth us,
He made and loveth all’.

To err is human and to forgive is Divine. God has not created one man all good and another man all bad. Wherever there is good, there is bad also. Wherever there is bad, there is good also. The wise man sees good and ignores bad. The wise and ignorant are two poles apart such as North Pole and South pole. The resentment or anger of an ignorant man is like that of a furrow drawn by ploughshare whereas resentment or anger of a wise man is like that of a line drawn on water. Darkness comprehends not the Light. A selfish man can never understand a selfless man.

The Path of Truth is rugged and full of thorns and stones. Narrow and rugged is the way that leads to heaven. All tests and

trials are given only to the devotees. To the brave to see our mettle, to see whether we can stand by God or Truth in our very tribulations. We all commit blunders. Long, long time ago, I committed the greatest blunder of my life, by offering a portion of land, trusting a friend. He is good by nature but his selfish companions seem to have spoiled his good nature. What ever good we have been doing, he suspects and considers as wrong. Still, we continue to do good, feeling that, some day, God will open his eyes, believing in the great DIVINE LAW, WHEN EVERYTHING FAILS, IT IS LOVE THAT CONQUERS, and have taken this incident as a challenge that LOVE ALONE TRIUMPHS. The Divine Law of Love never fails, Truth alone triumphs. In our tests and trials, the memorable words of Blessed Christ are our comfort and consolation:

FATHER, FORGIVE THEM FOR THEY KNOW NOT WHAT THEY DO

May Love alone flow from us in all our tests and tribulations towards one and all especially towards these who do not understand our good intentions. Anyone can be happy when adored and worshipped when all is going on well. He alone is the greatest soul, who does not complain when criticised and condemned, even if placed on the cross. Verily, TRUTH TRIUMPHS, LOVE WINS.

Even at the cost of death for the peace of our souls, let us cling to truth and love. How inspiring and life-giving is the following Universal Anthem helping us all !

THE UNIVERSAL ANTHEM

One Cosmic Brother-hood,
One Universal Good
One Source, One Sway,
One Law upholding us,
One Purpose moulding us,
One life enfolding us,
In Love Always.

The Past is dead and buried. Let us cling to the living present moment now, seeing Him within and without, in friend and foe, in all the living images of the one INDIVISIBLE GOD. Let us

remember always the golden adage: LOVE OF MAN IS LOVE OF GOD. When we cannot Love God who comes to us in the form of man, how can we Love God, who is formless and nameless? As to-day alone is ours and not tomorrow, let us do our good deed now alone!

DO IT NOW

I expect to pass through this world but once.
Any good thing, therefore, that I can do or any
Kindness I can show to any fellow human being,
let me do it NOW. Let me not defer or neglect it,
For I shall not pass this way again.
Now let us repeat the inspiring poem on Today

T O D A Y

With every rising of the sun,
Think of your life as just begun.
The past is cancelled and buried deep-
All yesterdays. There let them sleep.
Concern yourself with but TO-DAY;
Grasp it and teach it to obey
Your will and plan. Since time began
TODAY has been the friend of man-
You and TO-DAY! A soul sublime,
And the great Heritage of time
With God Himself to bind the twain.
Go forth, brave hear! Attain, Attain.

May the repetition of our simple and inspiring Peace Prayer help us all to let go to the passing clouds of Blunders. Let us be centred in God or Truth or Peace. May we repeat now our Peace Prayer feeling His presence and closing this message with the Peace Chant.

THE VEDIC PEACE CHANT

May there be Peace in Heaven,
Peace in the sky,
Peace across the waters!
May there be Peace on Earth!
May Peace flow from the herbs, trees and plants!
May all the celestial beings radiate Peace!
May Peace pervade all quarters!
May Peace be unto all !

OM OM OM

PRAYER

FOR WORLD PEACE

Adorable Presence!

Thou Who art within and without, above and below and all around, Thou Who art interpenetrating the very cells of our beings; Thou who art the Eye of our eyes, Ear of our ears, Heart of our hearts, Mind of our minds, Breath of our breaths, Life of our lives and Soul of our souls. Bless us, Dear God, to be aware of Thy Presence, now and here. This is all that we ask of Thee!

May all be aware of Thy Presence in the East and the West, in the North and the South. May Peace and Good will abide among individuals as well communities and nations. This is our earnest prayer.

May Peace be unto all!

OM! OM! OM!

* Please be repeating this prayer often.

THE TWO PRECIOUS MOMENTS

In the lives of all seekers of Truth, those who are trying always to reach the goal of precious human birth there are two precious and priceless moments. These blessed and precious souls, whether they belong to the East or West serve not only themselves but also their nation and the whole of humanity. What are their rare and precious moments?

I The moments of selfless service when self-interest is replaced by selfless interest and one works for the welfare of humanity, rising above the ego.

II The period of God-consciousness when body is no body, mind is no mind and the world no world. Where everything is filled with the Self-effulgent Light, the goal of humanity.

In both these priceless moments the common factor is selflessness, complete annihilation of the ego. Man is able to render selfless service when he is selfless, when he has risen above the lower self or ego. He does not seek any reward for his service. He feels that service is its own reward. A God-man is also able to meditate and recognise Light within and without, in himself and in others because the lower self is dead in him. The effulgent Light that he has within he beholds in others. As he is One without a second he has nothing to desire or expect from anyone.

Who is the greater of the two, the man of selfless service or the man of God-realisation? This is not a question we are concerned with now. Each man is great in his own sphere of life. Both serve the cause of humanity and glorify both selfless service and meditation. Each does his own part for the good of the world. What is most important in both these planes of life is complete selflessness.

The Selfish man is a burden to Mother Earth whether he is engaged in activity or inactivity. The selfless man is the greatest blessing to humanity whether he works as a *Karma Yogi*, serving

God's children in His manifested forms or as a *Jnana Yogi*, meditating and living in Silence, serving through his ideal life of Peace.

My friends, it is for you now to examine your lives and recall your own sacred moments of service and silence to see whether you are serving God's children either through selfless service or meditation. My prayer is that each one of you should make the best use of your lives in the service of His children and thus reach the goal of precious human birth before the Call comes.

Verily, he who is blessed to combine both service and silence, centered in selflessness serves best all of humanity for he considers the whole world as his home and becomes a great benefactor to humanity.

May All Homage be unto such!

May Peace be unto All!

Om Tat Sat Om!

THE TWO PRECIOUS MOMENTS :

(BONE—GRAFTING AND COSMIC GOD—CONSCIOUSNESS)

In the history of my long life of 77 years there have been two outstanding and precious moments; nay, sacred and most inspiring moments of my life. One moment was that of God-consciousness when the grace of God descended suddenly without any effort on my part. The body, mind, heart and soul were forgotten. The body became numb, the mind still, the heart calm and the soul complete, all unexpectedly as I sat on a chair doing some Ashram work.

The second moment of ecstasy was when I was able to do a small bit of selfless service for a little child who might never walk again.

1. THE PRECIOUS MOMENT OF SELFLESS SERVICE BONE-GRAFTING - AUGUST 30,1950

I was in the Mission of Peace, Waltair when I saw a child carried by her father coming towards me. When I asked the father why he carried her in his arms he replied that she had an accident and her leg had been crushed by an automobile. For some time the baby Nirmala had suffered and finally the doctors in Delhi and Visakhapatnam said after many examinations that the only way to relieve her pain and restore her fractured bones was through a delicate bone-grafting operation.

The father held a responsible official position and had a large family to support and thus could not afford to lie in bed in a plaster cast for many months, neglecting his office work and all the remaining children and the responsibilities of a large family. He had appealed everywhere for a charitable soul to make the sacrifice, offer the service of a small piece of bone. Even though, in the desperate condition of the child the father had offered money, still no one had come forward to offer a slice of bone from his leg to save the little child. The devoted parents were sad and depressed and did not know what to do in those helpless circumstances.

As Nature Cure has always been near and dear to my heart since my boyhood days the Waltair Ashram had given part of its land, cottages and a well to a nature cure yogi. The parents must have heard of the yogi and Nature Cure Clinic and in their desperation they went there for help. The yogi disappointed the parents for he pronounced the case of Nirmala incurable. As the Santi Ashram, the Abode of Peace is next door, to the Nature Cure Ashram the sad father turned his steps to our door. When all else fails man seeks God, the only true help.

It was an auspicious day for the parents and for the child Nirmala and for myself as well for when I saw them all, as soon as I heard of Nirmala's condition, without a moment's hesitation or consultation with any of the members of Santi Ashram I immediately promised the parents that I would give a slice of bone from my left leg to help and serve the child. I told them they could tell this good news to the doctors and make the necessary arrangements for the important operation. At first the father of the

child thought that I was joking. He went home and forgot both my promise and the incident. To their surprise I contacted them and began to press them to make the necessary arrangements at the King George Hospital. Dr. M. V.Ramana Murthy, an old friend of the Ashram and a colleague of Dr. C.K.Prasad Rao was the Superintendent of the Hospital at that time and at my request he came to see me. He was surprised and happy to hear that I had promised to donate some bone from my leg but added that my life was very precious and I should not take chances with it. Dr. M.G.Kini, the noted orthopaedic surgeon was then in Bombay and he sent the same advice: that I should not take any chances with my valuable life. He was a great friend of the Ashram and he was the one kind enough to operate to set right the bone of my left hip which had been fractured during the fall on ice in America. It was Dr. Kini also who began the great work of the Peace Clinic in Waltair Ashram many years before.

Several friends of the Ashram from near and far and the members also were very much concerned over my welfare and strongly objected and gave warnings regarding my needless promise, the sacrifice of a sliver of bone. As not a blade of grass moves without His Will and as a promise is a promise I resolved to go through with the operation even at the cost of life itself. Despite the well-meant and timely warnings of my friends, on an auspicious day, as I had again and again pressed Dr. Ramana Murthy the hour of the difficult operation was fixed. On that day both baby Nirmala and I were taken to the operation theatre on stretchers. I think I was given some injection to avoid pain during the time, several hours, of the operation. The flesh of the left leg was cut open and the doctors began to chisel, cut, scrape and remove a slice of about eight inches from the bone of the leg. I was conscious during the whole operation of all the chiselling, cutting, scraping, etc. After they had placed a heavy plaster cast on the whole of my left leg, covering even the hips and reaching to the navel on the left side I was taken to my room to rest.

Then the doctors, with the help of assistants and devoted

nurses began to fix the slice of bone on the fractured leg of baby Nirmala. By God's blessings the operation was successfully completed and little Nirmala was wheeled in a chair to the children's ward to rest and recover there. There was never any pain, only a sensation at the place where the bone has been sliced and removed, but for two days the blood would not stop flowing and the cotton bandages, the cast and bedsheets were all drenched. This caused the doctors and nurses worry and concern; all were anxious except I. I felt like the happiest man in the world, grateful to God for the great opportunity that had been given me to help an innocent child and restore the fractured bone of her leg. After two or three days the flowing of blood gradually subsided and all the medical staff and of course my devoted doctor Ramana Murthy were all happy and satisfied with the successful outcome of the operation.

I still remember with joy one tender-hearted lady, a student supposed to help in the operation began to shed tears as the operation proceeded and how the doctors all disapproved. This lady-student is now an important and respected doctor and needless to say, a life-long friend of the Ashram. Verily, God's ways are mystical and incomprehensible. Those were happy days for many devotees came from near and far to see the results of the unbelievable operation of bone-grafting. The Director-General of Hospitals in Madras, during his visit to the King George Hospital came and offered his felicitations over the success of such a unique operation, of the sacrifice of bone without expectation of reward in any form.

Mother Ruttonjee of Hong Kong, one of the life-patrons of Santi Ashram, who along with her devoted family has been taking care of the Ashram with monthly contributions for years sent a donation to the hospital. I felt from within that I should share her loving gift with all the patients in the hospital and so it was arranged that an orange be distributed to each patient as well as to the doctors, nurses, ward boys and nuns who were in-charge of the Nursing Department with Greetings of Health, Peace and Love. How Can I describe in these cold and finite words the great joy that I felt, my

gratitude to the ALMIGHTY, the All-knowing God for the rare opportunity given to me alone, out of all the millions of people in the world, to serve a little, helpless child, especially when no one else had come forward to aid her in her pain and misfortune.

When the devotees marvelled appreciated the great service and sacrifice, I told them cheerfully that tiny slice of bone had been blessed and all the other bones longed to offer themselves also in the same selfless service on behalf of all God's children. I do not know whether there is any sense of egoism or pride in having done a good deed, especially when others praise and offer felicitations. If there is any may the ego be destroyed and burnt up root and branch in the form of selfless service! Verily, service itself is the greatest reward for in serving any of the least of His children we are only serving Him for all are the living images of the One, Indivisible God.

Further , because of this good deed the parents of our baby Nirmala became life-long devotees of Santi Ashram, the Mission of Peace. You will be happy to hear that her father who was Deputy Director of Posts and Telegraphs served for several years not only as life-patron of the Ashram but also as its Vice-President. Such are the mystical ways of God.

May all Glory be unto Him and may God bless our Nirmala with Health and Peace and may her devoted life be a blessing to all the children of God. This is my ardent prayer!

May Peace be unto All !
OM OM OM

30th August 1951:

The day was observed as Day of Fasting and Prayer by Sri swamiji and Ashramites for it was the First Anniversary of the great act of Sacrifice rendered by Sri Swamiji. Readers will recollect how Sri Swamiji subjected himself to a major operation last year in order that a slice of bone might be taken from his left leg and

grafted on to the broken bone of baby Nirmala's leg . We request all our readers to pray to God to grant her long and happy life in His Glory!
(Peace Oct 1951)

Sri Swami Omkar His Offering, the Long Fast and Silence

By Kumari Jnaneswari

On 30th August 1950 Sri Swamiji gave eight inches of his bone from the left leg for a bone-grafting operation to save a child of five years, Nirmala whom he had seen only accidentally that month. The operation was performed at King George Hospital in Visakhapatnam by Dr. Ramana Murthy and other specialists. Sri Swamiji was consequently obliged to remain in a plaster cast for nearly six months on Mount Kailas, his present abode. During this period he experienced once again the advantages and happiness of observing *mounam*, *silence* and has irresistably adopted it again. Formerly Sri Swamiji had observed both fast and silence for forty days in the Mother Ashram, following the golden example of Lord Jesus Christ. It was then that he wrote Cosmic Flashes (March-April 1950) which have been published in book-form by the Honourable Secretary of the Spiritual Healing Centre, Coimbatore, Sri K.S. D.Iyer in 1953.

Sri Swamiji began his silence in Kailas Ashram, on the summit of that lovely hill overlooking the blue Bay of Bengal as soon as he was free of the plaster cast from the bone-grafting operation, on 21 January 1951 as his fifty-seventh birthday was being celebrated in Waltair Ashram. Swamiji feels he can better serve all the devotees and humanity throughout the world by a long silence, *mounam* which brings comfort, happiness and peace to his soul and which can also be radiated to all the universe than by all that has been accomplished during the years of outer service in India, America and other foreign lands.

OM OM OM

(Peace Feb 1954)

2. THE PRECIOUS MOMENT OF COSMIC GOD-CONSCIOUSNESS:

That holy and sacred moment occurred in Santi Ashram, Thotapalli Hills in November, 1956, the year of the Shastipurti, the year of the descent from Kailas and I should like now to share it with our loving readers of the Autobiography.

A Marvellous Experience

(18 November 1956)

It is Sunday, the day of sunshine. Today is the *purnima*, the full moon day and *ekaham* is going on with all intensity and devotion by the members and devotees of the Ashram. In memory of this full moon day they are chanting God's name ceaselessly for twenty four hours.

In the early hours of dawn I awoke as usual and my spiritual study with the reading of Cosmic Flashes and Astavakra Gita. Instead of writing messages or letters I wanted to make better use of the day by repeating the Peace Prayer and having deep meditations, more than ever.

At the hour of dawn I was happy to be doing garden work for an hour. Then, after a bath Dr. Madhava Rao and Dr. Markandeya came to Nirvana Mandir to discuss the Mobile Medical Unit and its operation. After they left I took some fruits and milk and then sat at the table to do a little writing, feeling His presence. It was 9-30 a.m.

Then, suddenly something marvellous began to happen, starting from the feet. My feet were no longer on the earth. There was some kind of numbness and ecstasy. There was a floating sensation. The body almost disappeared. It was something like an evaporation into nothingness. It cannot be described in these finite words but is only to be experienced. It is an experience which rarely comes in one's life.

I made a sign to close the doors for I longed to be alone. It was all ecstasy. Even the life-breath seemed to be disappearing or

already gone from the body for a minute as my head fell back unconsciously. But I was conscious of myself or the higher self for this experience was not unconsciousness or any sort of physical malady.

By His grace I am blooming with health, feeling strong. Nothing wrong with me. After the experience, when I came to normal consciousness there was still a sense of freedom, as if I were without the body still.

This marvellous experience reminded me of the holy samadhi experienced by Swami Vivekananda when touched by Paramahansa Ramakrishna Deva. Here I was touched by the grace of the All-pervading, nay, Interpenetrating Presence.

I am also reminded of a similar Cosmic Experience of an American aspirant who was suddenly transported to the fourth dimensional State of Glory amidst his work and wrote a book of his experience, calling it "Seven Minutes in Eternity".

The very memory of how I was seized or possessed so suddenly and unexpectedly, without the least effort on my part, is marvellous and inexpressible. It is a glimpse of the Great Beyond, a taste of the Holy Manna, Immortality. It was a moment of Cosmic Joy, the Bliss of the Beyond where I was lifted to the heights and all time disappeared. As the mind began to melt I was left In Tune with the Infinite.

May God Bless All with His Holy Peace !

OM OM OM

Glory! Glory ! Glory!

(Peace Jan 1957)



**Swami Omkar Donated Bone to a Baby
in K.G. Hospital, Visakhapatnam.**



**Baby Nirmala Recipient of
Swami Omkar's Bone**

Chapter 78

THE COSMIC FEAST

MAHATMA GANDHI CENTENARY (October 31, 1969):

This is the most important, nay, a sacred day which is nearest and dearest to the hearts of millions of people not only in India but all over the world. It is the holy birthday of Sri Mahatma Gandhiji. But it is not an ordinary birthday, it is the Centenary Day of Sri Mahatmaji. It is wonderful to be privileged to write my inner thoughts on Mahatmaji on his very centenary day, musing and meditating on his glorious life of truth and non-violence. As not a blade of grass moves without God's will, it is He alone who uses me as one of His chosen instruments to express thoughts on this great day of commemoration of Mahatmaji's work and spirit.

Gandhiji's message of Universal Love is the only hope for mankind. In the following illuminating statements Gandhiji points out that every individual is a spark of the life-force from the universal Life-force which is Truth, the *Paramatama*, the Universal Energy. Life for me is real as I believe it to be a spark of the divine. We are all sparks of Truth. The sum total of these sparks is indescribable, as yet unknown Truth, which is God.

Truth is life and it propagates itself, the moment it has got a habitation in some human personality. The human soul is a part of the Universal Spirit of God. Gandhiji says that the force of Love is the same as the force of the Soul or Truth. He emphasizes:

God is Truth and Truth is God. Non-violence is the means of realising Him. I am endeavouring to see God through service to humanity.

I recognise no God except the God that is to be found in the hearts of the dumb millions. I worship the God that is Truth, the Truth which is God, through the service of these millions.

Gandhiji's message of Truth and Universal Love emphasises the Principle of Universal Brotherhood. Hatred can be overcome by Love only. His goal is friendship with the whole of humanity

through Love, Truth and Non-violence. His ideal of Truth and Non-violence has been the greatest blessing to millions of people. Such should be the ideal lives of the chosen children who are created in His image, living for others and serving all of humanity selflessly, knowing that in serving any of the least of His children they are only serving Him.

Now coming to the personal side of my relationship with Mahatmaji which comes to mind clearly on this holy Jayanti Day which is also the Centenary of Mahatmaji's Birth: Some readers will be surprised to hear that these physical eyes never see the outer form of Sri Gandhiji but yet his spirit of Truth and Non-violence have been a part and parcel of my life. My heart rebels when I write or say that I never saw Mahatmaji for I have felt and still feel His presence in the very breath, in the life, within and without, in the very cells of my being. When he is working and breathing in me how can I say that I have never seen Mahatmaji?

I have ever been full of sympathy and admiration for all his aspirations and achievements, for all his responsible works. When Gandhiji was collecting for the Harijan Fund, whenever I received a few dollar bills from friends and devotees of the Ashram in far away America I would rush them to him and he felt so happy that he wrote to me a personal letter of thanks in his own hand. This letter is a most treasured possession, showing his great love. Whenever the Ashram received every month a generous contribution from Mother Ruttonjee and the friends in Hong Kong I would happily send the donations to the Harijan Fund. How blessed is Santi Ashram to have served Sri Gandhiji, Harijans and Mother India with its poor widow's mite in the great and selfless work leading to Truth and Freedom.

To me Rama and Gandhiji are not two but One. He lived in Rama, worked and breathed in Rama, nay died in Rama, repeating Rama's name with his last breath even as the cruel bullet pierced his tender heart of love, service and compassion. Here is one of the favourite verses which he loved to repeat:

Misery so called is no misery.

Nor riches so called riches.

Forgetting or denying God is the true misery.

Remembrance (or faith) of God is the true Riches.

The only way to be nearer God is to serve His creation.

Below are a few more of Gandhiji's wise and illuminating words:

God is not a person. He is the All-pervading, All powerful Spirit. Anyone who bears Him in his heart has accession to a marvellous force of energy, comparable in its results to physical forces like stream or electricity; but man is more subtle.

Prayer is the food of the soul as bread is of body.

Prayer is the key of the morning and the bolt of the evening. Another favourite poem of Sri Gandhiji's:

O Man, why have you left off taking God's name!

You have not given up anger, lust or greed,

But you have forgotten Truth.

What a tragedy to save worthless pennies

And to let go the priceless gem of God's Love!

O Fool ! remove all vanities

And throw yourself on the Grace of the Lord's Love.

May Mahatmaji's Centenary be a blessing to all the aspiring children of God in the East and the West!

May Peace be unto All

OM

OM

OM

FASTS AND FEASTS:

The memory of Sri Mahatmaji and his great love of devotion with many fasts and prayers for the welfare of all God's struggling children, brings back the many holy cosmic fasts and feasts in the

wilderness of Santi Ashram, Thotapalli Hills. To further commemorate the Holy Centenary Day of Sri Gandhiji let me add now a message which appeared in Peace, May 1952, written from the heights of mounam on Mt. Kailas, Waltair.

OM

Spiritual Experiences

(Fasts, Prayers, Meditations leading to Silence)

A devoted friend from the Far East has requested me to write about my spiritual life and experiences from the very beginning to the present time. Although I am averse to going back into the dead past and prefer always to live the glorious present, enjoying His Light, the Interpenetrating, Self-effulgent Light within and without, my love and respect for the loving wish of this dear friend moves me to write this message of spiritual experiences from the boyhood days.

It is difficult to write anything without using the personal pronouns ‘ I ’ and ‘ my ’ and especially when writing of personal experience. All personal experience should lead to spiritual experiences. Personal life should become impersonal life. Blessed are they in whom the little self is dead, absent and only the higher self, impersonal self shines ceaselessly. To begin with, I wish to pay homage to the Peace Prayer which has helped me immensely from my very boyhood till now. The very repetition of the prayer fills me with joy and ecstasy and makes me feel the Interpenetrating Presence of God in the very cells of my being. This is my experience when I repeat the Peace Prayer. May it be your experience also when you repeat the Peace Prayer or any other holy prayer or spiritual affirmation near and dear to your heart, helping you to be in tune with the infinite.

One cannot separate fasts from prayers, nor prayers from meditation. In fasting one prays for the annihilation of the ego or ignorance. At first I used to fast only one day at a time. That was when I was a mere novice in the spiritual life. As the fasts helped me to come closer to God I began to increase their duration first to two days and later to three days. I began to feel increasing health

in body, poise in mind and peace in soul due to the fasts and so I once fasted for a week. Later I fasted for ten days and wrote my spiritual experiences of every day of the fast. The next fast was for fifteen days. Helpful books on fasting have given me great incentive to undertake these fasts.

Often people fast because of some bodily illness. When all medicines fail they resort to fasting which is sometimes considered as a panacea for all the maladies of the body. In my case, by God's grace I have been healthy from the beginning and my fasts have always been observed to enable me to come closer to God, the indwelling spirit rather than for material gain, health or longevity. My next fast was for twenty-one days. It was a period of consecrated joy, poise and peace, recognising His Presence within and without.

Edward E. Purinton in his "Philosophy of Fasting" deals with thirteen kinds of fasts: for health, enjoyment, freedom, power, beauty, inspiration, courage, poise, virtue, instinct, love, faith and spirituality. Strange as it sounds one of my own fasts was for the more pleasure of it. How blessed it is to fast without expecting any reward but only feeling contended with His Interpenetrating Presence in the very cells of our beings! One should never fast because one is compelled to do so. One should be the master of fasting and not its slave. For me the real fast is one in which one fasts feeling that he is no longer confined to the body of flesh and blood but is centered in the living spirit, above the need for food and drink.

Although I have ever been fond of fasting and silence I do not advise everyone to fast and be silent. Whatever helps the individual to feel God's Presence, be it fasting, or feasting, should be resorted to.

The next long fast that I undertook was the fast of thirty days with the vow of *mounam* as well. I did not write down my experiences during every fast but during this long one I wrote thirty chapters of my daily, personal mystical experiences and these were published as the book *Cosmic Fast*. During my boyhood I

had read in the Holy Bible of the great, mystical fast of forty days undertaken by the blessed Christ and I too longed to fast as He had for forty days in the wilderness. It was to this end that the preparatory fasts went on from year to year. As thoughts are things, as the Lord fulfills the least of the desires of His children so the day of commencement of the final fast of forty days came at last in the wilderness of Thotapalli Hills.

The sacred and blessed experiences of those holy days are too sublime and overwhelming to be expressed in mere words. At the request of devotees however, during those forty days of fast and silence forty chapters were written in Telugu and One hundred and Eight in English. These chapters express all the small and great experiences that I was blessed to have during those forty days of silent fasting. It is my earnest prayer that all my readers may understand and assimilate the spiritual experiences of those consecrated days of close communion with the Indwelling Spirit, the Lord of all creation. Certain holy experiences are too great to be described in the finite words. How can anyone describe the taste of sugar? It can only be experienced. How can the finite mind and its verbal language comprehend the Infinite?

Hence, the least we can do is recognise the *Brahman*, the Self-effulgent Splendour of Millions of Suns, before whose glory not only the little ego but even the mighty worlds disappear. As the outgoing senses are drawn within, as the mind becomes one pointed and as the intellect becomes steady the ego dissolves in the ineffable and one attains that state of bliss of the beyonds that state which each blessed traveller on the path of transcendental truth must experience for himself in Silence.

This message of spiritual experiences may be disappointing to people interested in descriptions of visions and such phenomena as the seeing of lights, hearing of celestial sounds and music, and communing with the dead, or even with the living. I wish to invite the attention of all true seekers of Truth or Reality to the fact that all such phenomena, be it of lower or higher nature occur only in duality and that duality is ever ignorance.

Question:- If all duality, even seeing, hearing and thinking is ignorance then what is that which is not ignorance?

Answer:- That which is not ignorance is the Blessed Transcendental State of Completeness where one sees not of another, hears not of another, thinks not of another but where there is only Waveless Silence, ever Full and Complete.

Feeling the Presence, recognising the presence, identifying with the Presence is the goal of all spiritual experience. Realise this now, whether fasting, work, prayer or meditation, both in sound and in silence. Work is Worship. God-consciousness or Supreme Silence is the Highest summit of all aspirations. Do not tarry on the wayside. Reach the goal while there is yet life and light within. Thus the individual becomes the Universal the personal the Impersonal. It is incorrect, however, to say 'becomes' for the individual does not and cannot become for it always is; there is only the One without a second, the Indivisible Light. Rather, the individual realises or recognises that it has all along been the Universal, the *Jiva* has ever been the *Brahman*.

May we ever abide in the transcendental glory which is above the senses, mind, intellect and ego; nay, which is even above time, space and causation. May we ever remember that all phenomenal visions are the hallucinations of the finite mind, like the vision of water in a mirage. Let us be happy, contented and satisfied and thus taste the Peace that passeth all understanding.

May all homage be unto That, Which is Self-effulgent, and because of which everything else exists and shines, from the tiniest atom to the mightiest planet.

May Peace be unto All

OM OM OM

Chapter 79

COSMIC FLASHES

The final fast of forty days took place in Thotapalli Hills during March-April 1950. It was the culmination of years of preparation, spiritually and physically. It was the greatest surprise, for it was not planned, that the fast of forty days ended on Easter Sunday, the holiest day in the mystical life of the Blessed Christ, the Day of Resurrection, the triumph of Spirit over matter. With the help of Sri K.S.D. Iyer the great spiritual force of the Spiritual Healing Centre, Coimbatore our first edition was published in 1953. A second edition was brought out in 1959 at the request of many ardent seekers of Peace in the East and the West.

It was really wonderful, a miracle of God, now many devotees from Germany, who had never seen me or the Ashram began to read our Peace journal and founded a Santi Kendra, a branch Ashram in the far away Flensburg, West Germany. Sister Irmgard George Scshultz and Brother Albert Moldenhauer, to whom I gave the name Vyasa were among the exceptionally devoted. Ganga Mayi, our Sister Irmgard Schultz published a German edition of our Peace, called FREIDEN for all German speaking people. She also translated Cosmic Flashes into German and wrote lovely poems in English which appear at the beginning of the each of 108 Chapters. May God bless with peace always the devoted brothers and sisters of Germany, our Ganga Mayi, Brother Vyasa, Sri K.O.Schmidt and other loving souls, be they in the body or in other realms of Spirit. There have been many other spiritual aspirants in Europe, Scandanavia and England. God has been too good in uniting Santi Ashram with so many loving devotees. Our Santi Devi, Smt. Betty Forster came all the way from Switzerland and spent a year with us, joining us in prayer and meditation and also work for the progress of the Ashram. Sister Vera Slatterv came from England and visited us and helped the Ashram with her love and generous donations. God has been too good! Not only did He bring me to America four times and make many friends of Santi Ashram in America but He also brought to India the devotion and

prayers of many European brothers and sisters. May He bless them all to feel His Inter-penetrating Presence, the Infinite Light in the East and West, North and South! This is the prayer of your brother, Omkar.

As Santi Ashram is a Universal Home, Abode of Peace all are welcome to come and spend a few days, or even remain permanently to serve selflessly and meditate. Brothers and sisters from India, Ceylon, such as our German brother, Vajrabodhi Bikku, Africa, Japan, Hong Kong, Malaysia, Australia, New Zeland , Hawaii, South America, U.S.A., Canada, Europe, the British Isles and the Middle East have written to us, visited the Ashram, given generous contributions, helded in so many ways, repeated our inspiring Peace Prayer and translated it into their own mother tongues. Thus, if one individual establishes Peace in his own heart then that Peace must spread, first to the home, community, nation and finally the whole planet earth. Every plant and flower, every bird and beast, man, woman and child and even the far away planets must all feel and radiate Peace. I long to write down the name of every brother and sister of East and West who over these fifty-four years of Santi Ashram life, has contributed to the Peace of the world. But the names are too many. We need one book in itself to give all their names and pictures too! Instead, let the work of spreading Peace from heart to heart be done in a silent way, merged in the Cosmic Light, within, without and all around for God, or Peace, Love or Truth is eternally present, pervading and permeating the very cells of our beings, including all and excluding none.

OM OM OM

For more details please refer to the text "Cosmic Flashes."

Chapter 80

RAMBLINGS AT KAILAS ASHRAM

Now the last chapter was written several months ago and afterwards I could not write again, begin this chapter in spite of all the repeated requests of the dear and near ones of the Ashram. Pujya Sri Ramananda Tirthaji has also written to me with requests that I complete the Autobiography. Despite all these requests, persuasions and pressures it is strange how I have been unable even to touch the note book in which I am writing this Autobiography. One cannot help but feel that everything has its own time and not a blade of grass moves without His Will. Is it God's will that I should not finish these chapters of the Autobiography? No. A thousand times No. It may be only my sheer laziness and preoccupation with the endless activities of the Ashram that keep me from writing the Autobiography. Certain streets are marked with a sign, Dead End and no matter how much one might wish, it is impossible to go any further on that way.

Chy. Santi proposed that I be taken to the Peace Centre in Kotagiri to complete the Autobiography there for I have already written some chapters in that lovely place of health and peace. As we prepared to go to the Nilgiris Pujya Ramanand Tirthaji requested me to preside at the inauguration of the pillar or stupa of Swami Rama Tirtha at Tehri in the Himalayas. It was near Tehri that Swami Rama left the physical body in the waters of the holy river Ganges. Of course this inauguration is very dear to me and my life work, Sri Santi Ashram for Swami Rama has ever been beloved and near to my heart since my boyhood days when I read and was greatly influenced by his life and works. Santi Ashram was in fact founded in memory of Swami Rama, the great poet-saint of the Punjab who loved Mother India and all its holy aspirations.

As there were yet four days before our departure for the Himalayas the trainees of Rama Tirtha Institute of Peace and I took the opportunity to visit our Waltair Ashram. After doing some

work down below in Waltair Ashram on Rishikonda Beach we ascended to Mt. Kailas where the six-years in *mounam* were spent.

I am happy now on the heights of Kailas, facing the boundless ocean on three sides and ranges of hills on the fourth. Up above I feel the millions of stars beckoning me to continue the Autobiography if only to fulfil the repeated requests of the members and well-wishers of the Ashram. On the auspicious day, in the very early hours of dawn, 3 a.m., with great joy and contentment I rise now to start this chapter, in spite of the poor light. As there is no electricity in Kailas I have to use now a blinking kerosene lamp. I feel that I am the richest man in all the world for I have awakened early and now have so much time at my disposal. While all the children are still asleep, with only little Rammy, my faithful dog, companion at my side now, looking at me as if to request that I complete the Autobiography I take pen in hand to begin. When even a dumb animal friend presses me to complete the Autobiography I think it is high time that I write the remaining chapters and complete this book, for the satisfaction of all the friends and well-wishers of the Ashram and above all for the Peace of my Soul.

Above all, who is writing this Autobiography? It is He who writes. There is only One who can write, the One in the many. May He write now and may all glory be unto Him!

Besides the preoccupation with the responsible works of the Ashram in Thotapalli Hills, as well as our Waltair, Kailas and Kotagiri Peace Centres, one of the main reasons I have not been able to write before this is that I have to go back into the past life of twenty and thirty years ago and dig up people and events of those times. But these days I am happy to live in the present moment, forgetting and burying the dead past. In Kailas, as I write now, sitting in a large hall of one of the main buildings I see an inspiring motto on the wall facing me. The message of this sign has been the inspiration of my life, in the past days as well as now.

It is only one simple word but it has provided life-giving guidance and strength to all the pioneers of Truth in the East and West who have ever done any good for humanity. The message is Now. Blessed are they who live in the present, living moment Now burying the dead past and ignoring the dim and uncertain future! Verily, the eternity is in the bosom of the eternal Now! Moment by moment may we ascend higher and higher until we all reach the heights, the goal of our precious human birth by making the best use of those tiny, precious moments of Now!

As I have ever loved poem on Now I should like to include a few of my favourites here.

TODAY

With every rising of the sun
Think of your life as just begun.
The past is cancelled and buried deep;
All yesterdays, there let them sleep.
Concern yourself with but TODAY.
Grasp it and teach it to obey

Your will an plan. Since time began
TODAY has been the friend of man,
YOU and TODAY ! A Soul sublime
And great heritage of time.
With God Himself to bind the twain,
Go forth, brave heart! Attain !Attain !

- Anon

RIGHT NOW!

All that God is, He-RIGHT NOW!
This very instant: not yesterday, not tomorrow,
But RIGHT NOW ! Today !

Then why all the struggles and strain?
Just let Him be-Let Him come forth!
Acknowledge His Presence-RIGHT NOW!
He says; Beloved, it is My pleasure to give you
The Kingdom-RIGHT Now!

So, though you can no more add to God-Perfection
Nor you can diminish all perfection,
You can claim that Perfection-RIGHT NOW;

- Galen Davis

WHAT IS YOUR NAME ?

These days my name is TODAY.
And not TOMORROW.
Nay, I love to all myself NOW only,
As my name is NOW
My heart longs to do all the good it can render
Now alone,
In the PRESENT LIVING MOMENT !

Glory!	Glory!	Glory!
Om!	Om!	Om!

- Omkar

-From the Bed of Roses

SRI KAILAS ASHRAM:

Now, as I sit here in the lovely and lonely Kailas, which has become somewhat dilapidated-the walls, the buildings, the birds, trees and plants all request me to all my loving readers how God

practically gave this heavenly place, truly the Abode of Lord Shiva to Santi Ashram so that it might be used for the spiritual benefit of seekers of truth in the east and the west.

During the days of World War II, while bombs were being thrown from airplanes, when there was panic in the hearts of the people, the Military constructed a Radar Station to detect the movement of enemy planes from Kailas itself. Thus the town of Visakhapatnam and surrounding areas were protected. The Government spent more than two lakhs of rupees just to lay a road to the top of Kailas and then several buildings, tanks for storing water were built. Electricity and telephone lines were also brought up the hill. But the Military never solved the problem of a permanent supply of water but used to obtain water from a dairy farm at the foot of the hill and transport it daily to the top.

After the war, everything was left, disbanded and along with other military constructions Kailas buildings were ordered to be dismantled. You will hardly believe that all the costly stone buildings which were built at great expense and labour were auctioned for the paltry sum of Rs.1400/- only. Sri Narayana Swamy, a devotee of the Ashram took the buildings at auction and planned to dismantle them. However, he realised that the cost of hiring lorries, workers and equipment to pull down the sturdy stone buildings would very great and he hesitated to proceed. While he was in a dilemma over what to do, one of his relations, Sri P.Narayana Rao, a Karanam and devotee of the Ashram suggested that Kailas be offered to Santi Ashram for the price paid at auction. Perhaps it was the Karnam, Narayana Rao who first took me to Kailas. When I saw that beautiful place on the hill and the ocean on three sides below, I was besides myself, in another world of enchantment and glory. I thought we should not lose such a God-given opportunity but should buy it even if the cost was not Rs.1,400/- but even Rs.14,000/- then and there the deed was drawn up and the money paid to Narayana Swamy. Then the actual transfer

of the land buildings had to be done by the military. The important officers of the military were all happy to see me and I gave them copies of the Peace Prayer and other Peace literature. They were happy when I told them that their War Base would be made into a Peace Base. Some of them became devotees of Santi Ashram and subscribers to our monthly Peace journal.

One devoted soul, Sri Mehra, the Commander of Naval Base took great interest in Kailas Ashram. His devoted wife and children also helped in God's work with dedication. They took me in their jeep to Kailas and also to their home. Strange and interesting as it may sound, the very name of Mrs. Mehra is Kailas Devi. They had many things at Kailas repaired, provided a good gate and did many other helpful things to facilitate my stay in Kailas. Thus, God used me as an humble instrument to prevent the dismantling from their very foundations, of the buildings on Kailas. Mr and Mrs. Mehra also were His beloved instruments who were privileged to help with the renovation of the holy Kailas, so that it could serve as an Abode of Peace for all seekers of God in the East and the West.

Dr. Chenna Reddy, the Finance Minister of Andhra Pradesh was kind enough to stay in Kailas for four days with his devoted wife and children. He sanctioned a grant of more than Rs. 40,000/- to bring water to Kailas by means of pumps and an engine . But when I was absent from Kailas the self-interested men of the world diverted the grant to something in which they were more interested. Thus, even after a survey had been made and measurements taken the water plan for Kailas was neglected and then altogether abandoned.

With the help of Mother Rutonjee and her family life-patrons in Hong Kong, we raised enough money to dig a well on the top of Kailas but unfortunately we did not get any water. Perhaps we ought to have dug more deeply but our limited funds did not permit us to take any chances. As the large hole was a danger to cattle and

goats and also to the children who might slip into it we filled the half-dug well with stones at further expense. At the place where the well was dug and then filled there now stands a Shiva Lingam and devotees come to Kailas to worship Siva, the Lord of Kailas with flowers, coconuts, fruits, etc.

The happiest memory of Kailas now is the time that I was able to spend there, by God's grace, for six long years, not only in prayers and meditation but also in *mounam*, complete Silence. I shall ever be grateful to Chy. Jnaneswari who took wonderful care of me during my days of Silence. She used to bring my food and other necessities every day from the Waltair Ashram below to the heights of Kailas, coming all the way on foot in both rain and sunshine. Friends and well-wishers used to marvel at her devotion and would remark that she was like a bird flying gracefully and so easily towards the peak of Kailas. During those six long years we were able to do in Silence much important work for the improvement of Santi Ashram in both Waltair and Thotapalli. Our printing press was brought to Waltair Ashram and our Peace and other spiritual literature published there for the benefit of all devotees and especially for those in Visakhapatnam and nearby places.

Dr. K.Satchidanandamurthy of the Philosophy Department of Andhra University and other eminent spiritual and intellectual luminaires of Andhra Pradesh and India dream of founding an Institute of Indic Studies on the Holy Mount Kailas. Alas, in spite of all our prayers and good efforts and even the help of Mother Jagadamba, Mrs. E. B. Hogan, who came all the way from Hollywood to assist the Institute; plans were never finalised. Many other important visitors came to Kailas during the six years of *mounam* and also during the months spent there after the heart malady. But let us save all the interesting details about the distinguished visitors to Kailas for the next chapter.

By God's grace and the prayers of so many loving devotees

from all parts of the earth the book, In the Hours of Silece, One hundred and eight chapters of my thoughts and spiritual experiences during the *mounam* on Kailas was brought forth. The chapters were written in both English and Telugu. I am sorry now to mention to my loving readers that there are enough chapters, in two large folders for at least two more books. But, like the ‘Philosophy of Pain’ and other inspiring messages which have been written over the years the further chapters in the Hours of Silence are stored away, eaten by white ants and neglected. As Santi Ashram lives from day to day, depending wholly on the Heavenly Father for sustenance there has not been time or money to publish further books. Let us leave this work in the hands of God and when the time is auspicious, He alone will see that the books are printed and distributed freely to all seekers of Peace in the East and West.

From the very day that the Military vacated Kailas vagabonds and rogues began the work of pilfering electric bulbs, wires and any other valuable things that could be easily carried away. Locks were broken and even the doors removed and stolen. To protect Kailas we engaged a gardener. When he complained that he could not live alone we engaged another family of gardeners. I could not stay permanently in Kailas for the work in the Mother Ashram and in other branches was expanding and needed help; so we tried to find a *sadhu*, a *sannyasin* who wished to pray and meditate alone in the Silence of Kailas. The monkey mind however, will not allow even *sadhus* and other spiritual souls to settle in one place and meditate alone in Peace. One great soul, Sri Swami Bodhanandaji did stay there for eleven months observing *mounam* and spending all his time in prayer and meditation. Even when a tiger came to Kailas to rest and sleep in one of the buildings Sri Swamiji was unafraid. Later on I heard that some shikaris, evil-minded hunters, came and shot the innocent tiger so needlessly in a cruel way. May God forgive the cruel hunters and may He bless the soul of the tiger that came to rest in Kailas.

Now, in our absence from Kailas it becomes more and more dilapidated. Sri Swami Ramananda Tirthaji, who is a part and parcel of the Ashram has visited Kailas often and blessed it by his presence. Sri Tanneti Viswanatham, our Ashram President and my boyhood friend has also visited Kailas and tried to interest his influential friends and government officials to help Kailas. Sri Rajah Saheb of Vizianagaram also wished to improve Kailas. Dr. K. Ramakrishna Rao of the Psychology Department of Andhra University and a great colleague of Dr. K. Satchidanandamurthy is also interested in beginning a Parapsychology Institute on Kailas to study the effects of meditation and *tapas*. Recently we received word from Dr. Paramatma Prakash of the University of Munich, who had first met me on Kailas during the years of Mounam that he would like to construct a kutir on Kailas for the benefit of Sadhus and other spiritual aspirants who long to spend some time in true rest, communion with the Indwelling Presence of their hearts, in peace and silence.

As Shiva is the Lord of Kailas I feel sure that He will never allow that place of heavenly beauty, of primordial peace as one devotee said, to become more dilapidated and run down but will find a worthy instrument to care for and improve Kailas, and thus fulfil my cherished wish, nay, ambition and aspiration to make Kailas into a World Abode of Peace for all the seekers of Peace, Truth and Beauty.

These bodies may, nay, will surely pass away sooner or later, but what we do for others, for God's children will remain permanently in our name, as a monument for the good of all, blessed are the benefactors of humanity !

May Peace be unto All

OM OM OM

Chapter 81

VISITORS TO SRI KAILAS ASHRAM

During my long and happy stay in Sri Kailas Ashram, observing *mouna* for the Peace of all God's children in the East and the West, many distinguished visitors came to the beautiful summit of that holy hill. These finite words can never describe the great Peace and beauty there, with the ocean on three sides below and a range of hills on the fourth. In the early hours of the morning it was heavenly, truly the blessed gift of the All-loving Father to watch the Sun rise over the calm, blue ocean. In the evening the red ball of flame, the Sun, would set over the hills with the city of Visakhapatnam, below. In the stillness of the night, all the lights of the city glitter below while the glorious stars above would sparkle and beckon me to join them, never looking below at the busy, outer life of the men of the world.

At such moments of ecstasy, drawn into the heart of the Sun of suns, to the heights with the twinkling stars, I long to awake all the dead people below, all those who are living for the finite interests of the physical body, for the comforts of family, the outer life of *pravritti* and draw them upward towards the stars. Real life, the inner life of *nivritti* comes when one lives selflessly for others, serving and loving them and putting their welfare before one's own. The only people who are alive are those who are pining for God, the indwelling light, the goal of precious human birth.

Kailas was blessed to have visits from many Rajahs and Maharajahs. Our Rajah Saheb of Vizianagaram visited Kailas several times with his family. The Rani Saheba of Bobbili and her sister Smt. Saraswati Devi, the *zamindarini* of Chikkavaram also came to Kailas and gave us the rare pleasure of their inspired music. Smt. Saraswati Devi is a true Saraswati as she plays on the *Vina* and sings divinely. Santi Ashram is blessed to have Smt. Saraswati Devi as one of its Life Trustees and Committee Members. Ofcourse, our Sri Tenneti Viswanadham, the oldest friend and well-wisher and our President came many times to visit and helped the

improvement of Kailas and Waltair Ashram in all ways. His wise counsel, great love and devotion and strength of purpose have been the inspiration of my life. May God bless our Sri Viswanathji with health and Peace, always, to continue his devoted life of service.

Many eminent Government leaders, officials, lawyers and doctors visited Sri Kailas Ashram. Lady Rajakumari Amrit Kaur, one of the close associates of Mahatma Gandhiji and also Health Minister came and spent some time with me and remained a loyal and devoted friend of the Ashram throughout all the closing years of her life. She highly appreciated the silent service of Santi Ashram and blessed God's work with her love and prayers. Dr. G.V.S. Murthy, a noted Physician and Superintendent of King George Hospital, with his devoted wife Kamalamma were also frequent visitors. Dr. Ramani, Superintendent of Gosha Hospital, the daughter of my boyhood friend, Dr. C.K.Prasad Rao, has ever been a silent friend of Ashram, helping us in many ways.

Dr. K.Satchidanandamurthy of the Philosophy Department of Andhra University, Dr. K.Ramakrishna Rao, of the Psychology and Parapsychology, department, who spent several years at Duke University in America, Dr. Narayana Murti M.A. of the Telugu Department and numerous other devoted professors from Andhra University, Waltair, came to Kailas with the highest appreciation for my life of Silence and Service. Even now our Dr.K.Ramakrishna Rao longs to help Kailas in a practical way. Sri Paramatma Prakash M.A. was first brought to Kailas during the years of *mouna* (Silence), by friends. Later on, he was sent by Government to foreign lands-Germany, Russia and England to represent India and its culture in responsible positions. He made radio broadcasts to such faraway places as the U.S.A. and Canada. Currently, he is a professor at the University of Munich where he teaches Hindi and lectures on Indian culture and philosophy, thus paving the way to world understanding and Peace. As our Dr. K.Ramakrishna Rao brought us a costly camera from America, so also the devoted Sri Paramatma Prakash gave Santi Ashram a German tape recorder. He also recorded some Ashram Peace messages along with my

voice on his tape for the purpose of broadcasting, sharing God's Presence with all aspiring souls in the East and the West. Dr. T.M.P.Mahadevan the oldest devotee and friend of Santi Ashram, who had spent some time in Thotapalli Hills, along with Sri Swami Rajeswaranandji, also came from Madras and spent some time on the holy Kailas.

Without wasting any more time let us turn to our Peace Journal and read the Ashram news of those years on Kailas.

Distinguished Visitors:

The highlight of the month was a visit from His Holiness Sri Swami Ramdasji of Anandashram, Kanhangad, accompanied by Mother Krishna Bai and Sri Swami Satchidanandaji. Sri Swami Ramdasji is well-known in India as a great, divine Saint of eminence. In his presence, one feels transported to the region of the Almighty.

Sri Ramdasji and party were met at Waltair Station on 20-12-51 by many prominent citizens of Visakhapatnam and escorted to Sri Santi Ashram where prayers were conducted in honour of his visit. An Address of Welcome was also presented to him by the ashramites. The party visited Sri Swami Omkarji at Kailas Ashram and spent the night in silent and sublime atmosphere there.

Upon arrival, the Swamiji embraced each other. Both were overflowing with joy and ecstasy at their meeting. The members and devotees of the Ashram present held the usual prayers and there was some music in praise of the Lord. Some of Sri Swami Omkarji's recent messages were read on the occasion.

OM SRI RAM JAI RAM JAI JAI RAM OM!

Welcome Address to
His Holiness Sri Swami Ramdasji Maharaj
Anandashram, Kanhangad
Your Holiness,

We, the members of Sri Santi Ashram, the Mission of Peace, consider this day as one of the happiest days of our lives, to welcome you, Srimati Mataji and Sri Satchidanandaji into our midst, as well as into our hearts.

As the Founder of Anandashram, you are *Ananda* itself, the Bliss Absolute, bathing the world of devotees in the ocean of your infinite love and curing all their ills with the invaluable panacea of Ram nam. We are blessed and Sri Santhi Ashram has been sanctified by your sacred visit. We have nothing to offer you as you are complete in every way, within and without. Accept our hearts' homage to you and our fervent prayers to the Almighty to bless your holiness with a long life of health and peace, so that you may continue your consecrated task of selfless service to humanity. It is also our earnest prayer that your stay in Kailas with our revered Swami Omkarji will be ever memorable in the annals of the history of both Anandashram and Sri Santi Ashram.

May Peace abide in the East, West, North and South. May all be peaceful and happy and may your holy blessings be upon us all so as to make us more worthy than ever to walk in your holy footsteps. This is the prayer of the members,

Sri Santi Ashram.

Hari Om Tat Sat Om.

OM OM OM

(Peace, Dec 1951)

SRI SWAMI RAMDAS, Anandashram

A Tribute

Sri Swami Omkar is a great spiritual luminary, well-known

in India and abroad. We had the supreme blessings of paying a visit to his Ashram in Waltair. We climbed up the 'Kailas' hill and stayed with him for a day. He was all kindness and grace. His ardent devotees and disciples live and move in the Ashram in the spiritual effulgence radiated by him, Ramdas met his disciples also in Europe and America. They look upon him as a Divine Guide and Master.

The messages of Peace which Sri Swamiji is spreading all over the world is the need of the hour. In a world full of strife and unrest, wherein the spiritual values are at great discount, the Swamiji's presence and words of wisdom that flow from him are bound to dispel darkness of ignorance under which the peoples of different countries live and act. Such a baneful influence is successfully counteracted by the healing and elevating light and grace that pour out from God-realised saints of Swami Omkar's type. All Glory be unto Sri Swamiji's great Mission!

Om Sri Ram Jai Ram Jai Jai Ram!

Sri Nanjunda Swamy, a devoted advocate of Mysore came a few years ago to Sanati Ashram in Thotapalli Hills with a large party of dedicated souls. When he told how he had come to hear of Santi Ashram. We all felt deeply touched. They had gone to Ananadashram to see Mother Krishna Bai. She said to them, 'Do you want to see God in human form? Then go to Santi Ashram and see Swami Omkarji.' They all rushed to Thotapalli Hills and stayed for a few days enjoying the beauty and Peace of the Ashram.

May the devoted spirit of Sri Swami Ramdas live forever in the hearts of all aspiring souls and may God bless Mother Krishna Bai with health and long life to carry on her selfless work for humanity. May Peace be unto All:

OM OM OM

(Peace Feb 1964)

Mrs. E.B.Hogan, Mother Jagadamba:

Mrs E.B.Hogan, Mother Jagadamba, the Founder of the

Hollywood Peace Centre, an old friend of Sri Swamiji from California and an ardent well-wisher of Sri Santi Ashram graced the Ashram with her presence. Her stay of one week was a source of happiness and inspiration to all the ashramites and devotees. She spent a good deal of her time on Mount Kailas enjoying its Peace and Silence. Sri Swami Omkarji felt most pleased with the company of this devoted lady, whom he had first met over twenty years ago in America.

Sri Kailas Ashram:

Kailas Ashram, where at present Sri Swamiji is staying and where he intends to stay for some time more, has become an Abode of Peace and Silence. It is a recognised fact that where holy men reside for a long time, the atmosphere becomes surcharged with an inexpressible calm and spiritual beauty. We find this in the famous Monasteries of the West and Buddhist Viharas and Hindu Ashrams of the East. Mount Kailas has now become such a place. As soon as one ascends and enters into its sacred precincts, one feels surrounded by a marvellous state of serenity and calmness. Lured by the call of Peace many a man and woman have gone there and felt refreshed and recreated. To the busy and care-worn men and women of this Iron Age, world of Atom and Napalm Bombs, neurosis and hysterics, Kailas Ashram has a message to impart and an asylum to provide. Welcome, therefore, all ye, who are seeking Peace and in need of spiritual succour!

Visitors:

Sri Mother Anand Mayee of Calcutta visited Waltair Ashram along with a number of *sadhus* and devotees; Mother Ananda Mayee is a great spiritual force and has established many Ashramas all over Northern India. Some of the sadhus, including the well known Sri Hari Babaji of Brindavan and Sri Avadhuta Swamiji of the Punjab visited Kailas Ashram and also had the darshan of Sri Swami Omkarji.

Om Tat Sat Om

(Peace, Oct 1952)

Peace Prayer:

Our hearts rejoice to learn from Sister Irmgard George Schultz, Ganga Mayi of Flensburg, Germany, one of the leaders in the New Thought Movement in that country that our Peace Prayer is being used regularly at the commencement of meditation meetings. May God grant Peace and long life to all the friends in far away Germany.

Jnana Yagna:

We are happy to see that our Peace Prayer for World Peace has been published on the cover page of the recent edition of Yagna Prasad. We offer our heartfelt thanks to Sri Swami Chinmayanandaji for his great service and invoke God's richest blessings upon him and his work. We learn with great joy that the period of silence at the common meditation meetings has been increased to twenty-five minutes. Swamiji writes: 'Indeed it is a Vision Divine to see four hundred seekers of truth meditating together in Silence,' May the *mouna yagna* of Sri Omkarji also help all the seekers of Peace. This is the earnest prayer of the members and friends of Santhi Ashram !

OM OM OM

(Peace March-April 1952)

Our monthly Peace Meeting:

The meeting for the month of April was held on the premises of Sri Santi Ashram, Waltair; Sri Swamiji was present and Sri Tanneti Viswanadham presided. Sri Bhagavan Satyananada Maharshi and Mother Mounamma of Inamadugu, Nellore District, who had come for a visit, were also present. Sri Satyananda Maharshi spoke of the dire need for spirituality study and practice for the good of humanity and the peace of the world. He also highly appreciated Sri Swamiji's silent work and spoke of Sri Ramana Maharshi with whom he had been associated for a long time.

Distinguished Visitor:

Dr.T.M.P. Mahadevan of the Philosophy Department of Madras University visited the Ashram and promised to present a complete set of his works to the ashram library. Dr. Mahadevan is a noted scholar and translator of the works of Sri Shankaracharya, as well as an advaita philosopher. He lived for several years at Santi Ashram, Thotapalli Hills with Sri Swami Rajeswaranandaji, the then editor of Peace during Sri Swami Omkarji's Spiritual Mission to America. Dr. Mahadevan also went to Mt. Kailas and spent several hours there.

OM!

OM!

OM!

After the heart malady, I felt from within that I should return to lovely Kailas where six years, 1950-1956, had been spent, communing with the indwelling presence in silence. Thus, in 1964 the ascent was made to the hill. I was sad to see the dilapidated condition of the holy place. In spite of many requests, published in our Peace and broadcast throughout the world, I am sorry to say that no devoted soul could be found to spend his or her time in peace on that divine ground.

(Peace, April 1953)

Swamiji in Kailas:

Partly against the wishes of doctor friends and other devotees of the ashram, our Swamiji is nevertheless installed now on the lovely and inspiring Kailas hilltop. However, Dr. Ramani, the loyal and devoted friend of the ashram came along in the same jeep with Swamiji to watch and protect him. She had been so anxious over Swamiji's health that she suggested taking along oxygen supply to protect Swamiji's life in case of emergency. As Kailas is far away from the town and from Visakhapatnam, she also proposed that some injections be given to Swamiji in case of danger. She was anxious to teach me or Santi the way of giving injections, trying first on a banana or cucumber. Without the need of Oxygen or injection, by God's grace and the prayers of all the loving devotees our Swamiji is happy, healthy and contented like Shiva enthroned

in Kailas.

We are deeply grateful to Dr. Ramani, Dr. Anjaneyulu and other doctor/friends. A day before coming to Kailas, on the 20th April, Swamiji was taken to the King George Hospital and two X-Rays were taken and also an E.C.G. Only then would our Dr. Ramani allow Swamiji to proceed to Kailas on the 21st April.

The Kailas now:

As if by a magic wand, within three days, Swamiji has converted Kailas, which was practically in ruins, long neglected, into an Abode of the Gods. We are now expecting the visit of Dr. Channa Reddy, Panchayat Raj, Minister, with his devoted family and children.

Kumari Jnaneswari
(Peace May 1964)

OM! OM! OM!

Before this chapter is concluded with a message written during the stay of thirty-three days in Kailas, I have to add at least a few words about Dr. Jnananandaji Maharaj, the Head of the Department of Nuclear Physics during those days. Although Dr. Jnananandaji is no more physically, he is alive in the hearts of all who knew him and for all the students of Nuclear Physics at Andhra University, for he lived selflessly, serving all God's children without distinction. After being a Swamiji for many years, he decided to contribute to the improvement of humanity by studying Physics and helped to found the department at Andhra University. He was a great soul and visited me in Kailas several times, communing in silence with the Indweller of his heart.

May the loving and dedicated spirit of Dr. Jnananandaji ever inspire us all with Love and Selfless Service to all God's children of the East and West.

OM

KAILAS

(My Thirty-three Days Stay in Kailas Ashram)

Kailas is calling me. Kailas is calling you. Kailas is calling all seekers of Truth in the East and West. My doctor friends were unwilling to allow me to come to Kailas for it is on a high hill. But I told them that the Doctor of doctors was calling me to come to Kailas. Hence, I am established now in Kailas. Within these thirty-three days, a miracle has happened. What was once in ruins Sri Kailas Ashram is by God's grace and special blessings now, full of life, Light and Love.

The wood-cutters have cut away the trees for firewood. The thieves have stolen the doors and some of the windows too. Even the front gate and the furniture have gone, all to make a little money. Naturally every wave that goes down must rise again. Thus, Kailas, which was neglected and in ruins, by His grace is now blossoming again, serving the devotees from near and far.

During this short period of a month, two devoted Ministers have come with their families and highly appreciated the Peace of Kailas. Miss Evelyn Dingman, Meera Devi of Canada and our Smt. Betty Forster, Santi Devi of Switzerland have come often to partake of the Peace of Kailas along with other devotees. Our President, Sri Tenneti Viswanatham paid a visit to Kailas the other day and brought Pandit Divakarla Rama Murthy, Professor Pandu Ranga Rao, Pandit Ganapathy Shastry as well as the Municipal Commissioner. They all highly appreciated the beauty and Silence of Kailas.

It was in this holy and inspiring Kailas that I had the privilege of spending six long years in *mouna*, complete Silence. How good has been God and His Kailas to me always. As our devoted Minister Dr. Chenna Reddy said,

It is a miracle that this place, which was once used as a War Base by the British Government, is now being used as the nucleus of a Peace Base for all of humanity.

May Kailas, with its physical and spiritual heights, develop into a Light House for all humanity. May it be powerful Peace Centre inspiring visitors from near and far to feel and realise the presence of God and work for increasing the peace and happiness of the whole world.

May all homage be unto Kailas, the Abode of the God!

May Peace be unto All!

OM

OM

OM

(Peace July 1964)

Chapter 82

SILENCE

Our lives are songs;
God writes the words.
We set them to music at leisure,
And the song is sad, or the song is glad
As we choose to fashion the measure.

We must write the song
Whatever the words,
What ever the rhyme or meter.
And if it is sad we must, make it glad;
And if sweet, we must make it sweeter-

A simple poem like the above one, by the poet Gibbon gives me joy and inspiration and I long to make my life also a song of joy and sweetness.

Silence has been my silent friend and life-companion since my boyhood days. By nature I have been silent and never talkative. Hence, it is no wonder, when I had the opportunity, when I was in Kailas Ashram, that I observed Silence, not just for a few days or months but for six long years! I wonder now with great joy, how those six years passed away like six days. Glory be unto Silence which is none other than God, the Almighty, for all His richest blessings! Verily, He is the soul of silence. In fact they are not two but one. Here are some wise thoughts on Silence that I should like to share with my loving readers.

SILENCE

- * Silence at the proper season is wisdom and better than any speech.
- * Silence is a friend that will never betray.
- * Silence is a solvent that destroys individuality and gives us leave to be great and universal.
- * Silence is better than unmeaning words.
- * Silence is as deep as eternity, as shallow as time.

- * Silence is more eloquent than words.
- * Silence is one of the great arts of conversation.
- * Silence is the best resolve for him who distrusts himself.
- * Silence is the chaste blossom of Love.
- * Silence is the mother of Truth.
- * Silence is the perfect herald of joy.
- * Silence is the eternal duty of man. He won't have any real understanding of what is complete and more than others pertinent to his interest without maintaining Silence.
- * Silence is the element in which great things fashion themselves together; That at length they may emerge full-formed and majestic into the daylight of life which they are thence forth to rule.
- * Silence and repose are the Divine States, par excellence.
- * Silence creates souls.

OM OM OM

It is only a soul of silence, a soul of God-consciousness who can sing cheerfully with Annie Besant the inspiring poem :

Let us be Faithful

If a comrade be faithless,
Let us be faithful to Him.

If an enemy injures
Let us forgive Him.

If a friend betrays
Let us stand by Him.

Then shall the Hidden God
In us shine forth.

OM

MOUNA YAGNA

(The Holy Sacrificial Fire of Silence)

This *mouna yagna* was started on the 21 January 1951 on Mt. Kailas not only for the individual Peace but also Peace of all. It was with the grace of God, following the urge within that the Yagna of Silence was commenced so that people near and far may reach easily and feel God's Omnipresence through Silence, instead of the finite, spoken word. It was the Universal Peace which was sought as the goal. In the Yagna of Silence anyone can take part from any corner of the world, for it is open to all the children of the Almighty God in all religions and nations, be they believers or non-believers. Kailas extends a hearty welcome to all the followers of all the old and new religions to join this *Mouna Yagna*, the Offering of Silence.

The Chief Priest of this *Yagna* is the Ego; Mind is the fire and it is kindled with the help of the fuel (the sticks) namely, Various thoughts, which are kept burning with the ghee of the Breath. The main *Mantram* in this Silent Yagna is *Soham*, the *Mantram* of *Mantras*, the Ajapa, the Holy Word which is all-embracing and too sacred to be uttered by the mouth. This sacred *Yagna* goes on ceaselessly both day and night. The aim of this *Yagna* is to help kindle the Fire of Spirituality in every individual. Peace for all, the establishment of Peace on earth and goodwill among Communities and Nations in the world is the goal of this silent *yagna*.

Of all the *Yagnas* the *Mouna Yagna*, the Sacrificial Fire of Silence is the most potent and powerful oblation and its utility can never be expressed in finite words. It is too holy and sacred for description. It is only to be felt and experienced in Silence, in the sacred sanctuary of one's own consecrated heart where the Supreme Self is shining with the light of 'I' or ego. The tiny, restless and finite ego is to be burnt now in this *mouna yagna*, the Splendour of millions of Suns, the Sun of this holy *yagna* is not confined to Mt. Kailas or to a retreat or hermitage in the East, for its base is the whole world.

Question : When does this Mouna Yagna terminate?

Answer : It terminates only when the ego is completely burnt or consumed in the Fire of Silence, losing its form and name from its very roots.

Dear readers, wherever you are, whoever you are, in whatever work you may be engaged, here is a welcome to you to partake in this Supreme *Yagna* of the *Wise Silence*, the Soul of Peace. Peace for all, is the aim, aspiration and goal of this glorious *Yagna* and it begins with individual Peace. If it is not convenient for you to come to Kailas now, at least join us in this Supreme *Yagna* with your thoughts and from your own place, not only at the sacred hours of dawn and dusk but at any time, whenever you are free, for this *Yagna* is going on ceaselessly from dawn to dusk and from dusk to dawn without any break or interruption.

Pray, kindly accept the *Yagna Prasad*, the Love Universal that embraces all, the Peace Eternal, which is everlasting and the Light which is Infinite and the Life Divine, which is Omnipresent. Above all, please accept the Supreme Silence, the Waveless Silence the Fire of Spirituality which is enveloping and filling your beings now. Verily, Silence is the heart of the individual and it is the *Prana*, the Breath or the Universe.

Glory : Stupendous Glory: Self-effulgent Glory be unto the *Mouna Yagna*, the Soul-Force of the all-consuming Fire of Silence!

Lokah Samastha Sukhino Bhavanthu!

May Peace be unto All.

Om.

OFFERING

As a humble tribute to Sri Swami Chinmayanandaji Maharaj, the divine priest in the memorable jnana yagna of one hundred days conducted at Puna, invoking God's richest blessings on Sri Swamiji and all the selfless workers who helped to make the *Jnana Yagna* a blessing to all devotees, the seekers of vedic

truths and the drinkers of the Nectar of Immortality in the East and the West!

Hari Om Tat Sat Om

(Peace March-April 1952)

The Six Years of My Silence

An ardent friend and an old devotee of the Ashram writes with the request that I relate some of my experiences in Silence during these six long years, for he desires to translate them into German and Russian for the benefit of friends in different countries who cannot read English. This message is the result of his request.

To begin with, the silence of six years has so far passed away like six days. I can hardly believe that six long years have passed away since the silence was started in January 1951. All things are possible only by His grace, especially so, for those who trust in Him, the indwelling light. For the man of the world, it is very difficult to be silent even for a single day. For one who is used to the company of people, if he is left alone in silence, he will go crazy.

To begin with, apart from the inspiration and inner peace that I have had during these Six years of Silence, the greatest help is the time-saving benefit that I had from the people of the world who are fond of arguments, and discussion, finding all their joy in chewing the dry bones of lifeless words. They have left me to my Silence, considering me almost dead to the world, with the thought that they would be wasting, their time if they were to sit in Silence with one who does not talk. Thus, often I have been left to my Silence, as the master of all my precious time. What is difficult, unnatural and impossible for the man of the world is easy, natural and possible for the man of God.

In the first place, what is Silence? Let us understand what Silence is, before we proceed further. Silence is not merely to abstain from talking, I have the status of three monkeys on my table with eyes, ears and mouth closed, teaching the vital lesson of:

See No Evil
Hear No Evil
Speak No Evil.

Silence is more deep and sublime than giving forth outer talk. Hence, sages have taught us that the Voice of God is Silence, *Nissabdo Brahma*. Voicelessness is Brahman. Waveless, Silence, both within and without is the Highest State.

The sage is silent because God is silence, the highest *Advitiyam*, the One without a second; thus the sage can never talk but help with his silence. The one who clings to blood and flesh, identifying with form and name, such a one may be silent outwardly but he is scheming within, thinking and planning, how to annex all the outer things that he desires. *Be dead that ye may live*. One who is dead to the outer life can afford to be silent. What greater tribute can I pay to Silence than what I have already said; six long years passed away like six days. Not only six years but any number of years will pass away unnoticed, without the least worry or strain when one observes silence, for Silence is above time.

Now, coming to the practical side of Silence :

- I. Silence draws all the souls of Silence in all the world towards the centre of truth.
- II. Silence creates souls without the need of a word.
- III. Silent Buddhas and Christs, blessed Krishnas and Mohammads and other world-saviours are the result of Wise Silence.
- IV. What one cannot do with all the words in the world can be done, achieved in no time through Wise Silence.
- V. Silence is not selfishness but selflessness. It is not aloofness but all-pervading love that unites all in the One Spirit.
- VI. Silence is the height of the World, giving our Life, Light and Love without need of words.

VII. Above all, Silence is *brahmabhava*, God-consciousness, which is waveless and excludes none but rather includes all.

Besides serving hundreds of devotees who have come to Kailas, the substantial results of these six years of Silence are, by His grace, one thousand messages in English and Telugu and three volumes of "In the Hours of Silence" (one hundred and eight chapters in each Volume).

My friends, Silence is our soul and goal whether you know it or not, whether you recognize this glory of silence today or tomorrow, it is your birthright; for you have come from Silence, the Great Void, the Incomprehensible Splendour. The sooner you realize this truth of silence and try to practice in your daily life, the better it will be for you.

As an experiment, please try to practice silence once a week, as Mahatma Gandhiji used to do every Monday. If that is not possible, then try to be silent at least once a month. If that is not possible either, then try to be silent even once in a year. Anyway, all of us have to be silent once in life, then life departs. So, why not realise the Glory of Silence while there is yet life in us? Let us wake up while there is yet Light, making hay in the daytime rather than groping in the darkness when it is too late. Remember that one does not lose anything by being silent; on the contrary. One gains everything in silence by being silent both inwardly and outwardly. All power lies in silence. Omnipresence, Omnipotence and Omniscience are the core and heart of Silence.

In conclusion, I love to repeat, that Silence is not laziness or inactivity but is really intense, waveless activity and dynamic power which cannot be under-stood or appreciated by gossipers and talking machines. Time hangs very heavy on those who have forgotten the goal of precious human birth and to whom the fire of aspiration has been extinguished. Words create misunderstandings and troubles often, whereas Silence smoothens all differences and spreads harmony and peace and leads finally to success and bliss in every line of endeavour:

In these six years, a certain wise saying of the seers has been very close to my heart as a source of strength and inspiration. Let me share it with my loving readers and especially with those in the far away West. *maunam sarvathra sadhanam*. Silence is the unfailing way to success in all undertakings.

Dear friends, as one word is enough for the wise let me not disturb this Waveless Silence with any more words but let us now be silent and thus understand the wise silence and assimilate its power and peace and feel it in the very cells of our beings!

Prayer

O Blessed Silence. Bless us all, all the restless people in the East and the West, with a glimpse of Thy Transcendental Glory so that we may be better fitted to be Thy chosen instruments, to discharge our respective duties without much strain or too many words. Let the Sun, the light of the world, who fills the world with Life, Light and Love, without the need of any words from day to day, from the very beginning of creation, be our Living Guru. The Silent Teacher, leading us from ignorance of words into the Light of Silence,

May Silence, the Still Small Voice of God, bless all the seekers of Truth, all the lovers of peace, all over the world, with peace, the Peace that passeth all understanding.!

This is the prayer of your Brother Omkar.

OM OM OM

(Peace Nov. 1956)

Note : Can go through few important chapters (21,23,40,88,92,108)
"In the Hours of Silence"

SERVICE IN SANTI ASHRAM

THE IDEAL GURUKULA:

It was during my years in Swargashram that I visited the ideal *gurukulas* at the Arya Samaj and other institutions. From that time I longed to see in Santi Ashram also a home and school for orphans and poor children established where they would receive not only the usual education or reading, writing and arithmetic but would also receive spiritual education, in living selflessly for the good of all.

The first *gurukula* failed miserably, partly because of inexperience, teachers who themselves did not live spiritually and partly because the Ashram then, as now, was fundless, never knowing from whence would come the next meal. But the dream, the seed of *gurukula* had been planted in my mind and heart and because of the great love and service of our Jnaneswari, Sri Ch.V.Raju and many members, devotees and friends of the Ashram, we were able to begin with a *gurukula* of twenty children. Gradually this number has increased and there are now seventy-five children in all, orphans, poor children and children of devotees who have thought it the greatest opportunity for their children to grow up in the Ashram, receive spiritual education in a holy place.

Many have asked what were the results of the six years of *mounam* on Kailas. In Peace, July 1954 one message was published which tells about the practical miracles of Silence, the Miracles of Selfless Service. Let me include here a portion of that article for the perusal of my loving readers now.

You often hear of the miracles of science and religion but have you heard of the Miracles of Silence? Let me share with all, one or two of the Miracles of Silence, from my personnel experiences. By His grace this is the fourth year of Silence and four years have passed away like four days. The Ashram is progressing silently and steadily day by day, in every way, in spite of my Silence. Many new friends have come to us from all over

India and from across the seas as well, from Europe, U.S.A., Canada, Hong-Kong, Malaysia, Australia, etc.

In Bundi, Rajasthan, a branch of our Ashram was started during the days of silence by Prabhu Dayal Varma, the retired Secretary of the Maharajah of Bundi. The name of the branch is Sri Viswa Kalyana Karyalaya and a Hindi monthly, Santi is also being issued on behalf of the Ashram.

Another miracle of silence is the Peace Centre in Germany. Sri Von Atmanandaji, a German brother, assisted by Smt. Ganga Mayi and Brother Vyasa have been translating our Peace into German, *Friede* and sending it to all German-speaking people. We also have a dedicated friend Srimati Santi Devi of Switzerland and some other friends whom I have never seen physically but whom I see everyday in the moments of silence. How good is God! By ourselves, we can do nothing. May All Glory be unto Him!

The Happiest and Most Helpful Miracle by God's special Blessings and the prayers and good wishes of all of you, soon we are going to have the happiest miracle in the Ashram, the miracle of Santi Gurukula, a Universal Gurukula. Just as universities manufacture or turn out B.As., and M.As., strange as it may sound, it is our fond hope to help to create, by His grace, even a few images of Krishna and Christ, Buddha and Mohammed, Gandhi and Nehru, Vivekananda and Viswanath, on universal lines with a universal basis.

The world is our home and all people are our brothers and sisters and to love and serve them is our religion.

A great sage said: 'If you want to be a hunter, do not hunt mosquitoes and flies but hunt lions and tigers.' If we wish to be dreamers let us dream of great things, universal things which will be helpful to the world of humanity, not only today but forever.

I have been a dreamer all along. I dreamt of Santi Ashram, the forest retreat in Thotapalli Hills and of Waltair Ashram and Kailas Ashram on Rishikonda Beach for the good of all! Here they

are. They are my offering and legacy to you all. Now, here is the seed of *gurukula* one of my long cherished dreams. It is my privilege to offer it to you and it is for you to give nourishment and take care of it until it becomes a great Banyan tree giving shade to all the aspiring children of all religions and nations of the East and West:

OM OM OM

Now our *gurukula* of seventy-five children is the greatest blessing. We have two dedicated teachers, a music teacher, a sewing teacher and an instructor in cottage industries. There is a large school building and two hostels for boys and for girls. Every morning the children rise and bathe and sing spiritual songs. They have breakfast and attend school. They take turns doing various errands and gardening work. Some of the old boys learn press work too from our Ashram printers. There is also a playground for children with swings, see-saw and other games. In the evening, the children have their own *bhajana* and prayers. On special holidays such as Christmas, Sri Rama Navami, Sri Krishna's Holy Jayanti and other sacred days, a special *satsangs* (gatherings) are held, which the children attend. Sometimes, there are special *pujas* for the children and the favourite holiday is, ofcourse, Dipavali when the children stay late and see many coloured lights, shoot firecrackers, etc.

The children are admitted at the age of six and study up to seventh class, for the present. After that, they return to their homes. In the case of orphans, arrangements are made for their future career. Our Kumari Jnaneswari and Smt. Seshamma, one of the oldest devotees, are real mothers of service to the *gurukula* children, making sure that they have clean, well-kept and comfortable clothing. Our Seshamma and the other devoted ladies of the kitchen work hard to see that the children have three nourishing meals a day and special sweets on holidays. Our devoted teachers, Smt. Varahamma and Sri Sarvaiah, the Headmaster work hard-not only teaching the children their lessons but also helping their growth spiritually like real parents.

Simhachala Yatra

We often hear from our Swamiji that real education is not confined to books, does not consist of the number of books that we read but in expanding our hearts with understanding and love for all. All our *gurukula* children and many members and workers of the Ashram were blessed to have the rare privilege of going to Waltair Ashram and spending four days, visiting all important places in and around Visakhapatnam. They paid their respects to His Holiness Swami Jnananandaji Maharaj, Head of the Department of Nuclear Physics at Andhra University, Waltair and he blessed the children with his wise words.

Our children were also happy to visit the Harbour and Aerodrome where the officers were especially kind and attentive and showed all the ships and planes to the children. It was a happy day also when the children paid a visit to the sacred Simhachalam and the priests were very kind and took good care of the children and Ashram members, not only with the Darshan of the God but also by offering Prasadam to all the children and members of our large party. We also happily spent an evening in the lovely home of Dr.G.V.S. Murthy and Sister Aamamma who have been Life-Members and great devotees of the Ashram.

On Sunday morning, the Prayers and especially the *bhajana* of the children was most inspiring and we all felt the Presence of God. Many friends and devotees came to take part and listen to our Swamiji's Message of Peace. The prayer hall and verandah, were over-flowing with devotees and friends. The visit to the Prema Samaj and the kindness shown by the Secretary, Sri Ramana, will ever remain fresh in the hearts of the children and workers. In the evening , Sri Ramana came with Prema Samaj children to pay their respects to Sri Swamiji. Swamiji gave a helpful and inspiring message to all the Prema Samaj children and to our Ashram children and other devotees present. It was very kind of Sri Ramana to have arranged a cinema show, showing films which gave lessons on the glory of selfless service, dignity of labour, cleanliness etc. May God bless the Prema Samaj to continue their noble work:

OM OM OM

When I see our *gurukula* children happy, hard-working, serving, the Ashram and growing day by days spiritually. I wonder who has done all this? Not I . A thousand times not I! All this has been done by God, by His grace alone and we are but His chosen instruments. Many thanks to all the devotees, members and friends of Sri Santi Ashram for near and far who have contributed so generously not just their money, but their love, sympathy, labour and prayers to make the dream of the ideal *gurukula* a practical reality.

May Peace be unto All

OM OM OM

SERVICE TO MAN IS SERVICE TO GOD:

As all are the living images of God, so Santi Ashram was not content with serving the children, the orphans and the poor with its *gurukula*. I dreamt also of serving the aged, the sick and depressed who had no children to care for them. Somewhere in the Scriptures we read that all aged men are the embodiment of Lord Shiva and all ancient women are the very manifestation of the Goddess Parvati. Thus, we longed to establish an Ideal Aged Home in Santi Ashram to serve the devoted grandfathers and grandmothers. Today there are twenty-five aged men and women and they are cared for lovingly by all the members of the Ashram. Some of our aged ladies help in the kitchen for an hour or so daily, cutting vegetables and being real grandmothers to our *gurukula* children; they are the greatest blessing to Santi Ashram! May God bless all the aged men and women, both in India and Foreign lands with Peace! Some of our aged men and women stay in the Ashram for a while establishing Peace in their hearts and then go to stay with their own children and grand children to spread the Peace to them. Thus, in a silent way the work of the Ashram reaches many devoted hearts. Let me now, instead of wasting more time with these words, print here a message written a few years ago, which tells about our Home for the Aged.

HOMES FOR THE AGED

How blessed it is to have Homes for the Aged, the helpless and the poor who have been the life of the world during their own youth! In this world, we often see that so long as people serve us, they are loved and worshipped but when once they become old and disabled, no longer able to work or earn money, even the nearest and dearest to us, are forgotten and neglected and even considered a burden to Mother Earth. As we all become old sooner or later, as we all must one day or other sail in same boat with aged people, let us give some serious thought towards their care and future, if only for our own comfort and consolation. Our aged brothers and sisters are also the children of the Almighty God.

In foreign lands, especially in the U.S.A. we see many homes for the aged in all the important cities. Yet, we do not see many homes for the aged in India, the so-called land of spirituality. May there be more homes for the aged and the helpless, is my prayer.

There have always been many devoted aged people visiting Santi Ashram and staying here. Elderly Mother, Suramma of Chendurthy, aged nearly eighty years has been staying from the very beginning in the Ashram. A strong wish from within arose to start a Home for the Aged, helpless and poor. As this good thought came from within, I am now trying to express it for the consideration of all the friends and well-wishers of the Ashram in the East and the West. As the Ashram itself is poor and 'aged' the thought comes that perhaps I am running after two hares,. Sometimes, I wonder whether I am not running after not only two hares but many of them. Yet, it is my joy and consolation that the seeds that we sow will certainly germinate, sprout and grow into tall trees someday, especially if we nourish and water them.

It is not necessary to confine ourselves to sowing one particular seed alone. In the Santi Ashram lands, we not only sow paddy seeds but also the seeds of maize, black gram, green gram, red gram and even ground nuts. Thus, each kind of seed gives its own crop in its own season. So, as we have sown seeds of *Gurukula*,

Printing Press and other good works, now it is my joy to sow the first seeds for the Home of the Aged, now alone for I am one of those who believe that today alone is ours and not tomorrow. So let us begin by doing our good deed today alone and leave the results to God.

Even if this body were to depart from the world today, or any day, the seeds that have been sown now for the Home of the Aged will surely be watered and nurtured by some philanthropic soul and this will be the greatest help and service to the poor and weak in Andhra Pradesh and India. Anyone can take care of the strong and healthy, our relations and friends, but we need a few devoted souls who long to take care of the neighbours, the so called strangers, the sick and the poor, the disabled and the aged. It has been said that God comes to us in the form of the poor and aged and it is our privilege to take care of them, worship them with love and affection. Verily, in serving any of the least of His children, we are only serving Him, anywhere in the world, for the world is an emanation of God.

In Santi Ashram in Thotapalli Hills, there are some brothers and sisters who have been living in the Ashram and serving the cause of Peace for the last forty years. Now, some of them have become too old to do any physical work. One brother cannot see at all. Another is stone-deaf. Another sister who joined the Ashram recently is helpless and lonely and cannot walk at all. What shall we do with all those disabled people? Is it not sinful to throw them out or neglect them because they are no longer useful to the Ashram? It must be our loving and cheerful duty to take good care of them, giving them more attention than we would to the healthy and the strong selves. Anyone can love and help people who are helping them but we are to love and serve more of those who are helpless and have no resources for their maintenance, even for daily bread and clothing. We should consider this service as the greatest service, the God-given opportunity of our lives. No one is useless in this world. Whether young or old, each has his part to play in the divine plan of God.

You will be surprised to hear that these aged brothers and sisters are doing the greatest service for Santi Ashram. Is not chanting that holy name of God for the Peace of all, wishing Peace of individuals and Goodwill among nations, the highest service? In Santi Ashram *ekaham*, the ceaseless chanting of the name of God, non-stop repetition of the holy name goes on, all throughout the day. Our old and disabled engage themselves for one or two hours at a time in this holy service, day after day. The repetition of God's name for a long time, absorbed in Him, inspires them and also those who are blessed to listen. Their singing of the divine name is something to be experienced personally and not described in mere words.

Strange as it may sound, it is a wonderful coincidence and I consider it also an auspicious omen that I should receive a loving letter today, of all days, as I am engaged in writing this message on Homes for the Aged, from a Home for the Aged People in the far-away Philadelphia, U.S.A. from an old and faithfully devotee of the Ashram. In this little incident, I feel the touch of God's Presence and His Blessings on the future of the Home for the Aged in Thotapalli Hills.

In God's divine place, in His Kingdom of Peace, whether it is in Philadelphia in the far West, or in the Thotapalli in the far East distance and space do not exist, for the wide world is the Home of God. It is our life's duty to have homes for the helpless and the aged, to serve God's poor and sick children wherever there is great need. God has blessed some of His children with untold wealth. Here is an opportunity for some of them to serve the poor and sick. It has been said that whatever is ours will come to us. God's money will certainly be spent in God's works. As it has been said, not a blade of grass moves without His Will.

May He, the All-compassionate and All-merciful Father, who is the heart of everything, beginning with the tiniest atom and encompassing the biggest planet move the devoted hearts of some of His children to be the instruments of a lasting and permanent service to the disabled and helpless in the name of humanity. God

gives and multiplies our gifts. No gift is ever lost. The giver is ever blessed. Let me close now with the inspiring poem of *dana*, Giving.

DANA

Give, Give, Give.
That which you hold will turn to dust.
Give while you live.
Give, for you must.
Else what you hold tightly in your hands
Will vanish through your fingers and be lost.
Give and there flows a mighty fountain through the land.
May Peace Be Unto All!

An Offering of Love

To all the Aged Sisters and Brothers
In both the East and the West
With prayers for their
Welfare and Peace.

OM! OM! OM!

(Peace Dec. 1958)

Why Don't You Make the Ashram Your Child ?

The Mission of Peace, Sri Santi Ashram has been a source of joy to thousands of seekers of Truth and lovers of Peace. The Ashram has been a great blessing to the poor and sick, giving medical aid and succour freely, in our humble way and the Ashram has been an Abode of Peace to pilgrims of Truth, irrespective of caste, creed, colour and nationality. Why don't you adopt the Ashram as your own child, or at least as one of your many children?

Dear friend, how many children do you have? Pray, make the Ashram also your child. Let this be your spiritual child. Through this spiritual child, realise your highest ambitions and try to do some good for the world. These precious forms, the human bodies are given to us for service, for doing good to our fellow men in some way or other.

Love of man is Love of God.
Service of man is Service of God.

Let your spiritual child help you by leading you to the happiness of selfless service. Broadcast Peace to the four corners of the earth through your child, the Mission of Peace. The world badly needs Peace. Peace is the birthright of every man. It is your birthright too. Assert it Now and Here by adopting a spiritual child, Santi Ashram as your own.

Your spiritual child does not need constant care like your other children. It does not need any expensive ceremonies and marriages, etc. All that it needs is only a little of your care, devoted love and whole-hearted sympathy for the welfare of mankind in the cause of peace and service.

Please do not neglect or ignore your spiritual child who looks up to you for care and protection. Do not allow him to shiver in nakedness and starve in poverty. If you help him or her, now, even to keep alive, you will be proud of your adoption someday; for the Ashram has a glorious future in bringing heaven and earth together, uniting man with God, nay, in establishing Peace on Earth and Goodwill among Nations. May your spiritual child be the joy of your present life and the solace of your old age. May the Almighty, the All-knowing God bless the members and devotees of the Ashram with health, success, prosperity, long life and Peace to serve all His children in the East and the West.

OM OM OM

(Peace Jan. 1955)

Chapter 84
SHASTIPURTI
MY HUMBLE TRIBUTE

The Shastipurti Celebrations of Sri Swami Omkar were celebrated from day to day from the 21st to 31st January, 1956. These are not so much necessary for souls such as Sri Swami Omkarji who are immortal; as he often says, *Swami is dead and Omkar is alive*. Yet, for the benefit of us, the erring mortals and for our Peace, exhilaration and uplift we have to celebrate such functions. During that week at least let us hope that we shall feel the Spirit Universal and the Peace that passeth all understanding, which is so greatly in demand in this world of conflict in the present day. War is ever looming on the horizon at every moment and may burst forth at any time. May the celebrations of that Holy Week add to the strengthening of the Peace Mission of Swami Omkar, whose message to the world is the Message of India.

Advocate,
D.D.Ross, Kakinada

OM OM OM

(Peace Aug. 1956)

THE DIAMOND JUBILEE OF OUR SRI SWAMI OMKAR

By God's blessings and your prayers and good wishes the Diamond Jubilee, the *Shastipurti* of Sri Swamiji was a grand success. During all these forty years in the annals of the history of the Ashram, this was the first time that huge crowds of people came in continuous procession throughout day and night, with great reverence and devotion. In all the ten days, more than forty thousand people were fed. During those days *ekaham*, *bhajans* and prayers were chanted with at least a thousand devotees taking part, singing the name of God ceaselessly, through the twenty-four hours of the day. The newly installed life-size statues of Sri Krishna, Lord Christ, Bhagvan Buddha and Mahatma Gandhiji were an added attraction giving inspiration and joy to all the devotees.

Nearly a hundred Mahatmas, Professors, Swamijis and other

learned lecturers took part in the spiritual celebration, giving their wise messages, coming from near and far. The audience were thrilled with the *harikathas*, *burrakathas* and various music parties as well as with the music of several musicians who played on *veena*, violin, etc. There were also *bharata natyam* performances and classical music by our Manager, Sri Dada Bhai, B.A. We are deeply grateful for all the telegrams, messages, gifts, etc. received from America, Canada, Europe, China, Malaysia, Australia, Germany and other parts of the world and from devotees of the Ashram in every part of India.

The *kotipatri puja* was a great spiritual blessing to the thousands of people who attended. More than fifty couples took part in the *maha kratuvu*, the great *puja*, in which for all the ten days of the Shastipurti Celebrations the Universal Symbol was worshipped with a million “*Bilva* “ leaves. On the last day, the *puṇahuti*, the day of complete self-surrender, burning away the ego in the fire of wisdom, the oblations were offered by *purohitis* to all the celestial beings and *devas* of all the worlds. After the *havan* the sacred ceremony of Offerings, the poor were fed.

It has been said in the sacred scriptures by the rishis that when the Gods, the *devas* are pleased at the end of such holy *pujas*, their blessings will be showered in the form of rain. These are not yet the rainy days of the monsoon. But out of the clear blue sky, after the fire, *havan* ceremony and feeding of the poor, rain suddenly descended and kept on pouring for an hour, It was a sight to see the devotees standing in the pandals, listening to the various messages of the closing day, in spite of the pouring rain.

Glorifying God for all His blessings, the various functions ended on a joyous note with all the devotees feeling the presence of God. Nearly 150 photographs of various important functions were taken and some will be printed in the future issues of Peace. More than thirty helpful and inspiring old and new messages of our Swamji were read out to the devotees in the prayer gatherings and public meetings.

OM

OM

OM

Kumari Jnaneswari
(Peace, January 1956)

What Do I Expect From Those Who Stay With Me?

I expect alertness, activity and one hundred percent awareness of God's Light within and without. It makes me sad all ill to see a lazy person wasting God-given precious life with idleness and lethargy. There is only one restriction for staying in the Ashram. That demand is that one should feel God's Presence in each and every moment of his stay here.

I expect from the friends of the Ashram, its well-wishers and all visitors the repetition of the Peace Prayer and the feeling of God's Presence in each and every moment of their stay here, forgetting all their outer worries and mundane work.

I expect every moment to be utilised in deep meditation or in selfless service, for every second is precious. The moments that are wasted consciously or unconsciously in idle dreaming, gossiping and useless talk are very harmful and dangerous for spiritual life. It makes me feverish to have any people around me who are wasting their precious lives and time. Lazy and selfish people do not have a home in the Ashram nor a place in my heart. I am afraid of drones and gourmands. Indiscriminate eating, nibbling between meals and overeating lead to sleep in the daytime, lethargy and laziness of every kind.

I expect, not despondency and gloominess, with long faces, but buoyancy and cheerfulness, with smiling faces and contented hearts, saturated with God-consciousness. It is laziness that created sleep and lethargy deadens enthusiasm and leads to impurity. Tiny naps or lazy moments are always dangerous. How true, wise and potent are the words in the following poem.

A thousand years a poor man watched
Before the Gates of Paradise.
But while one little nap he snatched.
They opened and shut !
Ah, was he wise?

Such are the harmful effects of lazy lives of forgetfulness or inadvertence in any form. How true are the words that *an idle man's*

brain is the devil's workshop. So let us be busy, when not engaged in prayer or meditation with some useful and selfless work that will help our fellow-man in a positive way. Work is worship, for it drives away forms of laziness.

Work kills none but worry and laziness kill multitudes.

I expect from all the blessed souls who are with me, not only active service but Love Universal, the Love that expects not any reward and the Love that excludes none but includes all. All those who are selfless, devoted and consecrated are my blood relations and others who are selfish, running after the shadows of passing clouds of name and fame are blood-suckers, even if they are blood relations. I bow down my head in deep adoration, be they blood relations, or soul relations, be they young or old; to those selfless and dedicated souls who have risen above the worship of Mammon and who are no longer slaves of praise or blame, running after the bubbles in the mirage of the world. Such consecrated souls consider every moment invaluable, priceless. Indeed, every moment is a life in itself for it contains eternity in its tiny bosom.

I expect from those blessed souls who are privileged to stay with me in the Ashram one hundred percent efficient and selfless work and one hundred percent deep meditation in Supreme and Waveless Silence.

May Peace be unto All!

(Peace Jan. 1956)

Chapter 85

PEACE CENTRE IN KOTAGIRI

We are very glad to announce that Sisters Lalita Devi and Anna visited both Santi Ashram in Thotapalli Hills and the Mission of Peace, Waltair and also Bobbili on the invitation of the Rani Saheba during the third week of March last and felt very happy to enjoy the calm and peaceful atmosphere prevailing in the Ashrams. They were so much impressed with the ideals and spirit of the Mission, especially the sanctity of the OM breath that they are forthwith arranging to open a Peace Centre under the Mission's auspices in their cool and serene surroundings of Kotagiri, a hill station in the Nilgiris. They are ardent devotees of Swamiji Maharaj. May God shower His choicest blessings upon them!

- Honorary Secretary

OM

OM

OM

(Peace May 1957)

Thotapalli to Kotagiri

God's Ways are incomprehensible. He unites kindred souls in a strange and mysterious way to serve His children. Ever since the visit of Sister Lalita Devi to Thotapalli Hills, from her Kotagiri Hills, she has been writing to me with the persistent request that I should visit the Nilgiris as there are many devoted and aspiring souls who are ready to receive my message, the Message of Peace and Love.

As I wish to go more and more within in meditation and Silence, leaving the outer Peace Centres to others, in a mood not to stir out of Santi Ashram to the Nirvana Mandir, I requested her to excuse me for the moment saying that I would certainly fulfill her earnest desire in six months time. Several times Sister Lalita wrote requesting me to come and start a Peace Centre in Kotagiri; but each time I delayed pleading for the work of the Ashrams in Andhra and the desire to go within.

At last sister Lalita wrote and asked me: ‘If a man dying of thirst asks a drink of water, will you turn him away with the suggestion that he might come again next year?’ When I read of the great thirst of the aspiring and devoted souls in Kotagiri, I thought, it was high time to do my part and fix the date of my departure from Thotapalli. A date was fixed, 11th September but due to a little scratch on the foot which caused swelling, the trip had to be postponed until 16th.

Even then, although I woke early, I found myself afflicted with a bad sprain of back. Will it be postponed again? Was I to disappoint Sister Lalita Devi and other friends at various places along the way who had been informed of my journey? The friends from Pithapuram brought a station wagon to take me to Tuni station. As there was no way to delay any longer, we tried to foment the sprain with hot water compresses, etc, and gradually got ready to leave. I had final prayer with all the members of the Ashram and got into the wagon, the big car, at 10.30 a.m. with Sri Swami Nityanandaji and his Sister.

Due to heavy rains, the roads were very bad, with big hollows filled with water. It was dangerous and slippery, as though the narrow and rugged road was leading us to Heaven itself, for truly the path to Heaven is always filled with pitfalls and mirages. My readers will be surprised to hear of the strangest phenomenon, for, with the bumping of the car because of the bad road, my sprain completely disappeared by the time we reached Tuni, our destination where we were to take the Mail to Madras. Several friends met us at Tuni and we had prayers and meditations. A little boy named Krishnaji led us all into meditations, repeating the Peace Prayer. Blessed are the childlike and the innocent for the Kingdom of Heaven belongs to them.

All along the way, passing by Pithapuram, Samalkot, Rajahmundry and Vijayawada Stations, many friends of the Ashram came to the platforms to meet us with offerings of fruits and sweets. Sri Jagadish and Sri K.S.R. stayed with me up to Rajahmundry and helped to distribute the fruits and sweets among the various

devotees and fellow passengers, along with copies of the Peace Prayer and other Peace literature.

At Vijayawada station two aeroplane pilots entered the train and sat with me in the compartment. After offering their pranams they began to discuss the world situation and then requested my permission to allow them to smoke, for they had acquired that bad habit. Thus, along with the conversation about this President and that Prime Minister, this dictator and that king they smoked once cigarette after another, filling the whole compartment with smoke. After a while I too felt that I had smoked at least one cigarette for I was inhaling all the smoke. It seemed after some time that the smoke had a mild fragrance. This is how one becomes used to bad and good habits in the company of others.

At the Madras Railway Station, Sri Swami Rajeswaranandaji of the Upanishad Vihar received us and made us comfortable from the moment of our arrival until our departure on the Nilgiri Express. Several other friends also came to see us with garlands of flowers, to welcome us. During our short stay at Madras, we paid a visit to the lovely home of Rani Saheba of Bobbili and had prayers and meditation there. It was so still and peaceful with sacred vibrations that our visit to the Rani Saheba was like a pilgrimage to a holy shrine.

Sri Gopalaswamy Iyyengar, Dr.T.M.P.Mahadevan and other friends were all love and devotion towards us. We took the train 'Blue Mountain' at Madras, and again with the help of Swami Rajeswaranandaji started for Kotagiri. In the course of conversation Swamiji told us that his journal, Call Divine has 4,500 subscribers. I felt sad and ashamed of the poor circulation of our Peace in spite of its life of 25 years. May God, in His infinite mercy help Peace to spread Peace far and near, to all its readers in the East and West.

In my compartment, there were two new devoted friends who became well-wishers of the Ashram, even memorising the Peace Prayer. Sri Swami Nityanandaji was all devotion and attended upon me, looking after all my comforts. At Coimbatore Sri S.K.D.Iyer,

with all his selfless and dedicated workers and members of the Spiritual Healing Centre came to the station with garlands of flowers, bouquets, fruits, etc. And gave a lovely welcome address. I was surprised and happy to hear some of his members repeating the Peace Prayer while the others followed in a chorus.

At Mettupalayam Station a car was waiting to take us and our luggage, consisting of Peace Literature, fruit baskets, etc. to Kotagiri. Mettupalayam is the Gateway to the Nilgiris. The lofty Blue Mountains were inviting us, extending to us a hearty welcome. A letter of welcome was in fact awaiting us from Sister Lalita Devi and was delivered to us by the driver of the car which she had kindly sent to take us up in comfort to Kotagiri.

A little incident on the station platform touched me deeply. A poor woman with her child was begging and little girl followed after me calling, ‘swamiyar, swamiyar’. I thought she wanted a few pies. Instead of *pisa*, I was surprised when the child requested instead: ‘O Swamiji, I want some of your flowers. Please give me a few flowers.’ I was deeply touched at her simple desire and offered her the bunch of beautiful flowers that were in my hand. You ought to have seen the happy smile of contentment on the sweet face of that innocent little child. It was a smile of heaven and I was moved to tears of ecstasy. It was a sacred moment of communion and a touch of His Presence. How true are the words that God comes to us in the form of the sick and poor and it is our privilege to serve and worship Him in all His various manifested forms! Indeed, the way to be happy is to make others happy. Love of man is Love of God.

May all Homage be unto all His Manifested Forms in the human as well as in the animal, vegetable and even the mineral kingdoms of Life!

May Peace be unto All
OM OM OM

(Peace Oct. 1957)

Opening of the Peace Centre, Kotagiri, Nilgiris!

Deeply attracted by the spiritual teachings and messages of Sri Swami Omkarji Maharaj the Mission of Peace, Sri Santi Ashram, Thotapalli Hills,

1. That all religions of the world are but different expressions of the same Truth or Reality;
2. That we justify our existence only by feeling God's Presence within and without, here and now; that to be happy we should be filled with God-consciousness instead of body-consciousness with which is associated misery;
3. That we should constantly carry on (Breath) meditation for controlling and stilling the mind and renunciation of ego and thus bring about individual Peace and through such Peace, Peace and Good-will among nations;
4. That Self-realisation or perfection through service to humanity (according to Swamiji is only when man realises God that he can do selfless service);
5. That one should abandon the delusion of abject dependence or helplessness and realise his own Divinity;

A small community of devoted souls at Kotagiri, Nilgiris, consisting Principally of Sister Lalita Devi, Sister Anna, Sister Maria, Miss J.E. Collins and a few others have been for some time pressing Sri Swamiji Maharaj to inaugurate a Peace Centre here. In response Sri Swamiji left for Thotapalli on the 16th and passing through Mettupalayam arrived by car in Kotagiri on the 18th. On the way, advantage of Swamiji's visit was taken by Sri K.S.D.Iyer of the Spiritual Healing Centre in Coimbatore who arranged a *satsang*, spiritual gathering at the station and has also requested Sri Swamiji to preside over the celebration of their Eighteenth Anniversary Function on the 4th of next month.

May	Peace	be	unto	All!
	OM	OM	OM	

Lakshmi Villa Peace Centre, Kotagiri

As our Swamiji often repeats, not a blade of grass moves without God's will. It was His will that made the Rani Saheba and Rajah Saheba of Dasapalla give us their valuable estate in Kotagiri at a concessional rate for doing God's work of spreading Peace from heart to heart, all over the world.

Lakshmi Villa has a main building consisting of four bedrooms, each with dressing room and bathroom, a reception hall, two verandahs and a dining hall as well as a special attached kitchen and also a cottage with bedrooms and adjoining bath, a sitting room and kitchen; along with servants' quarters for six families. All the rooms are furnished with valuable furniture, lamps, etc. Lakshmi Villa also has its own lands, six acres ninety cents and also a garden of pear trees.

We long to make this, our Peace Centre of Kotagiri, a true Abode of Peace for all the seekers of Truth in the East and the West, for it is the common property of all the seekers of Truth of all religions and nations. We shall begin this work with:

A library of spiritual books.

A Free Reading Room.

A Shrine for Silent Meditations.

Weekly Spiritual Discourses

All the devoted public are welcome to take part in the activities of the Centre bringing with them their friends and dear ones for partaking of Peace, the Peace that cannot be bought for any amount of wealth in any worldly market. Aspiring souls of all religions are welcome to worship God in their own way, as all paths lead to the same goal, just as all rivers eventually reach the same ocean.

Live in God and Help Others to Live in Him has always been the ideal of Santi Ashram ever since its founding over forty-five years ago. All are welcome irrespective of the man-made differences

of caste, creed, colour and nationality, for hath not God created us all?

The Nilgiris are considered to be the California of the East, a healthy place both for the sick and the well. As our Swami Omkarji often says:

If you want to live long, blooming with health, without sickness then come to Kotagiri, for this is the proper place for you. You can bask in the seclusion, in the warmth of the Sun, meditating on the Sun of Suns within.

We are grateful to our Sri Swamiji for creating another Abode of Peace in the cool Nilgiri Hills to serve all the aspiring children of God and especially the foreign devotees and retired persons who wish to spend their closing years enjoying health and peace, serving God's children. How blessed it is to establish Peace in our hearts,

Inhaling and exhaling Peace with every breath, for it is the Individual Peace that paves the way to Universal Peace.

We request our devoted Sisters and Brothers of the East and West, the well-wishers of Santi Ashram, the Mission of Peace, to offer their silent prayers and to extend a helping hand in all possible ways for the steady progress of Lakshmi Villa Peace Centre.

The Peace Centre extends to you a hearty welcome to visit the Abode of Peace. You will be happy in this silent retreat of Peace which you can use and consider it as your own spiritual home. Any contributions towards the maintenance and improvement of Lakshmi Villa Peace Centre will be gratefully acknowledged. May God grant all the devotees in the Nilgiris and all over the world the Peace that passeth all understanding.

Kumari Jnaneswari
The Peace Centre, Kotagiri
(Peace Aug. 1957)

IN MEMORIAM SISTER SUSHILA DEVI

An offering

To Our Beloved and Dedicated Sister Sushila Devi

Thousands of devotees of the Ashram all over India and abroad will be sad and shocked to hear that our devoted Sister Sushila Devi is no more. She is no more physically. In Spirit, Sister Sushila Devi is alive now, more than ever. She has dedicated her young life to the Cause of Peace and to Mother India, whose sick and suffering children she served. Year after year she laboured, offering her free services cheerfully, working with famous surgeons such as Dr.M.C.Kini, Dr. C.K.Prasad Rao, Dr. Mahadevan and Dr. Ramana Murthy as well as other doctors, assisting in the Peace Clinic of Waltair Ashram. When she received a call, a telegram from America, she went to nurse her ailing mother, intending to return to her home in India. But God willed otherwise.

For years she tried to come back to India in order to resume her silent work. But as someone or other was often sick in her home, she looked after them. Finally she resolved to come this year without fail and tried to get necessary papers from the Indian Embassy, the Visa and also the Passport from the United States Government for the Journey. With her only brother she returned one evening to her home in New Jersey after attending a meeting in New York. We were shocked and stunned to receive the following message from her sister Charlotte:

Dear brother Omkar,

Greetings. Sorry I have such very bad news to write to you. My beloved sister and brother were killed last night on the boulevard right near home when they came from New York. A doctor ran into them with terrible force. They were hit by the car and immediately killed. I am still so dazed, I just sit and weep.

Claise, Sister Sushila had such a Happy Birthday. She received your letter of Birthday Greetings and had planned to visit

you this winter. I will miss them dreadfully. The funeral is on November 19th. Thank you for all your kindness to my Sister when she was in India.

Lovingly,
Charlotte

* In reply to the above fateful message, the following telegram was sent to Sister Charlotte in her great sorrow.

Deepest Condolences from India. Thanks for both the letters. Be brave, Feeling God's Presence. Letter follows.

- Omkar

The birthday was celebrated on 9th November both in her home in the U.S.A. and in our Ashramas in India. Sister Sushila Devi mailed her last letter on the 13th June at 8 p.m., writing in it that she was getting ready to leave for India. On the very next day she had the accident with her dear brother Frank, on the 14th night. The funeral took place on the 19th November. Everything was over in the short span of ten days!

How frail is the finite, outer life of the body! But how Infinite and Eternal is the Inner Life of the Immortal Spirit! The ways of God are incomprehensible. Not our will but may His Will be done Now and Always!

To all of us in the Ashram the sad accident, this great tragedy has been the most cruel and dreadful. It is heart-rending and an irreparable loss for the Ashram to which her whole life had been dedicated, from beginning to end. It is a loss to Mother India too. When distinguished people such as Dr. Mahadevan, the Chairman of the Philosophy Department of Madras University, the engineers Sri G.V.Narasimha Rao and Sri K.K.Nambiar and several others used to visit the U.S.A., Sister Sushila was their hostess, receiving them at the airport and inviting them to her home during their stay in America. She had been a real friend of Mother India, ever wishing its progress and welfare and with great admiration for Mahatma Gandhiji, Lady Amrit Kaur, Sarojini Devi, Pundit Nehru and all the selfless daughters and dedicated sons of Mother India. During

her stay in India, she travelled all over the country, from Rameswaram to the Himalayas, visiting all the important places and sowing seeds of Peace in the devoted hearts of all the children of God, irrespective of caste, creed, colour and religion.

In the spiritual world, Sri Swami Narayan, the chief disciple of Sri Swami Rama Tirtha, Sri Swami Bodhanandaji of the Ramakrishna Mission in New York, Sri Swami Yoganandaji Yogoda, H.H. Sri Swami Sivanandaji, the founder of the Divine Life Society, Sri Swami Ramdasji of Anandashram and H.H. Sri Swami Rajeswaranandaji of Upanishad Vihar and many other sages and saints had the greatest respect and veneration for her dedicated life of selfless service with added zeal and inspiration, as she was about to return to resume her great work. Now this terrible and dreadful tragedy has happened.

Alas! No more will we see the lovely form of Sister Sushila Devi who was hailed as the most precious gift of Mother America to Mother India. The tragedy was so cruel and unbearable. Tears do not come; neither do they help her or us. I stare into the vacant space looking for the great spirit of our Sushila Devi. I feel closer now, in close touch with her loving spirit. Instead of mourning, I rejoice, for her spirit of love, service and compassion has entered me now more than ever. We are told that we do not live where our bodies are, but that we live truly where our minds are. Although Sister's body was in the U.S.A. her mind, heart and soul were in India with her great work of service to dumb animals and to the poor and sick children of God. We are also told that the spirits of free souls enter into God when they leave the body.

Question: Where is God?

Answer: God has other body on earth than ours.

Hence, as it is natural, her spirit has entered into all of us now.

Sister Sushila's life of selfless service and Love Universal reminds me, unconsciously of the life of Suka Deva. It seems that Suka Deva left home and went into the forest to do *tapas*, austerities. His old father Vyasa was very much attached to him and went after

his son calling his name, Suka, Suka, Suka. He was surprised to hear the hills and dales, the trees and shrubs, responding to his call. Every creature and object answered him for Suka was no longer confined to a particular body but was living a life of love. Universal, feeling for all, loving all, seeking himself in the whole world. Such has been the simple and dedicated life of Sister Sushila Devi. Whatever she had she shared with the less fortunate, with the poor and sick, without allowing the left hand to know what the right hand did to alleviate the sufferings of her fellow beings. She tried to live as Love, feeling for all. Her love excluded none but included all!

In my heaviness of spirit, as I look around the world, I see Sister Sushila's love and presence in the hills and dales, in the trees and shrubs, in the songs of the birds, in the fragrance of the flowers, in the cry of a kitten and in the smile of a babe. I feel Sushila's presence and love. Has she not entered into all of these forms? Are we not told that a free soul, when it leaves the body becomes free and formless like a bubble merged in the Ocean of God?

While she was alive she worked, breathed, lived and dreamt of service to God's helpless children. While in death, in the so-called change of the body also, she is still dreaming of her unfinished great service.

How shall we perpetuate her loving memory now?

The Mobile Medical Unit is about to begin its work. There is a Peace Van for spiritual propaganda from village to village town and town to establish Peace in the hearts of individuals and to help the devoted people, convert their homes into heavens. Let this Van be named in memory of our Sister, the Sushila Peace Van for it was Sushila Devi who sent us Rs.2,500/- to buy it, wishing to extend the progress of the Ashram. The hospital which is to be constructed soon will also be named Sushila Hospital. As Sister's American name was St. Clair Nowald, it is our hope to have also a St. Clair Maternity ward in the Sushila Hospital. As she is with us now,

more than ever, she will rejoice to see her dreams fulfilled by her dear and devoted friends.

Poor and naked we came into the world.

Poor and naked we leave the world.

It is only what we do for others that

Follows and helps us in the long run.

May I appeal to all the devoted friends and well-wishers of Sister Sushila Devi to send forth ardent prayers for the early materialisation of her fond dreams of practical service.

Let this Sushila Hospital, which has been a great need and long-felt want for the sick and the poor in these lovely hills, where medical aid is totally absent, be a monument to the dedicated life of our beloved Sister Sushila Devi in India.

Now our Sushila Devi is with us and she is alive with us, more than ever! May All Glory be unto God! May Peace be unto all His children in the East and the West!

OM Shanti Shanti Shanti

CHAPTER 87

SOHAM LEADS TO FREEDOM

Once in Santi Ashram, Sushila Devi said “You Know, Swamiji, the sum of all your teaching for me is right on the cover of our Peace magazine”. When I asked Sushila to explain further, she replied, ‘whenever I see the words INHALE AND EXHALE PEACE: I feel there is nothing more to be said or read’. So, if we follow the *SOHAM*, the inhalation and exhalation of breath, inhaling Peace and exhaling Peace, inhaling Light, exhaling Light we shall easily reach God, the Indwelling Light, the Soul and Goal of our precious human birth.

As there are scientists in the West who have dedicated their lives to research, the study material objects, the elements of nature so also in the East, there are Divine Scientists who are called *Yogis*, who have renounced the material world of name and form, retired into the solitudes of the forests, where they concentrate and meditate, day and night, and give out their institutional experiences for the benefit of the less enlightened. Just as the scientists of the Atomic Bomb have been busy with their tests, so these Yogis the Scientists of the *atmic Bomb*, the bomb of soul force are busy with their own tests of inner life, in pursuit of God-realisation.

The *yogis*, the spiritual scientists of the East have found from personal experience that man inhales and exhales 21,600 times a day. Their conclusions have been found to be absolutely correct by the modern scientists. Thus, *SOHAM* is present in every man, woman and child, nay, even in bird, beast and in the plants too, for it is the primal energy, the All-pervading truth, the inherent power of all manifested world. It is not the monopoly of the yogis of India but the Common Birthright of all the children of God in the world, irrespective of differences of caste, creed, colour of nationality. How wonderful it is to have something so close, so near and so inseparably and eternally one with us, which is the Life of our lives and the divine heritage of all for it connects and unites us with the universal whole.

When you inhale the sound *So* is made and when you exhale the sound of breath is *Ham*, *So* means *That*, the Divinity, the Godhead. It represents the Sun of suns. *Ham*, *Aham* means 'I am'. It represents the manifested.

In each and every breath, both day and night, everyone unconsciously or consciously repeats *SOHAM*, the Divinity I am, By dropping the 'S'. 'H' and 'A' we have OM or AUM, the 'I am THAT'. The essence of *SOHAM* is thus contained within itself in the form of the sacred syllable OM which covers the past, present and future, represents the waking, dreaming and sleeping states, which finally leads one beyond time, space and causation. There are deep truths, vital thoughts and important facts which can be understood only by the scientists of soul culture, the inner life and not by the students of matter, the outer life. Yet, the one great consolation is that as truth is eternal, as God is Omni-present, anyone can feel and realise Him by only constant observation.

The scriptures teach that the Highest, the Transcendental, by whatever name you may be pleased to call it, is beyond the Known and Unknown; It can only be realised by His Grace with the help of *neti, neti*, 'Not this, Not this' or intuitional discrimination, rising above all objects of name and form.

Dear readers, as you read this chapter now please close your eyes for a moment and observe calmly the sound with which the breath is flowing in and out. Just watch the inhalation and exhalation in every breath. See how there is *So*, *That*, divinity, in the inhalation and *Ham*, *I am*, in the exhalation. I am repeating this thought again, deeply to impress on your minds, the great Truth, the essence of this chapter, nay, of existence itself.

SOHAM is considered the *Mantram* of *Mantras* for it is the most potent and holiest of affirmations for it comes from within, without the least effort from anyone. Hence *SOHAM* is called *Ajapa Gayatri*, the *Mantram* which repeats itself without any effort. It is the ever-present natural *Mantram*. This holy *mantram* is not confined to *yogis* and *Jnanis*, the men of wisdom alone. It can give

comfort and solace even to the most ordinary and simple minded devotees of every religion for they can remember the names and feel the form of the *Ishta Devata*, the chosen deity or ideal in the inhalation and exhalation of every breath. For instance, if one worships RAMA he can meditate on RA in every inhalation and MA with every exhalation until he merges into RAMA Himself, the LIGHT of Lights. Similarly the votaries of different religions may substitute the name they worship such as SHIVA, JESUS, KRISHNA, ALLAH etc., and feel the Holy Presence in the breath itself. Verily, the scriptures of both East and West teach us that God is the Breath of the breaths.

Going a step further *SOHAM* can be experienced even by the worshippers of the elements of nature and even by those agnostics and atheists who do not believe in any God whatever. They too want Peace, Love and Light. They can meditate on the word Peace or any other helpful thought with each and every breath. Thus, they too can try to reach the goal of precious human birth in their own path or mode of life.

How blessed and wonderful it is to feel God's presence so near, so close nay, so inseparably One with Us! Yet, one in ignorance of this life-giving reality struggles for life like a fish on dry land. As there is not the least necessity for the fish in the ocean to die of thirst, so also there is no need whatsoever for man to suffer with thirst or hunger for the divine life when he is ever filled, saturated and One with *Sat, Chit, Ananda*, the Existence, knowledge and Bliss Absolute, the One, Indivisible Presence.

Since ancient times, volume after volume has been written by great *rishis* and *sages* of India on this vital and important theme. But no amount of study of these volumes will avail anything without actual practice. What one needs is constantly to dwell in the oneness in daily life, now and always. But how to begin and how to proceed to do so?. All that you have to do is to be still and watch the *SO-HAM* in your own inhalation and exhalation without any break like *tailadhara*, the oil poured from one vessel into another.

Be still and know that I am God. It is in stillness; in the Silence of your soul that you will realise that you are divinity, *THAT I AM*, the living Truth which is being proclaimed both day and night, unceasingly with each and every breath. You are nothing but the Truth, the Reality, the LIGHT of the world, nay, the Sun of suns, the Godhead Practise. Only a little bit of daily practice will make you happy, perfect, and enable you to drink deep the Nectar of Immortality in this very life, for it is your true birthright.

The process of *SOHAM* is so natural and simple that it is harmless and can be felt by anyone, even by children and aged people; it is an effortless meditation. All strain is only infinite effort or in restless struggle. As this meditation is harmonious and peaceful, effortless and natural it gives health to the body, rest to the mind and peace to the soul. In the higher stages of this sublime observation, as the aspirant advances, he realises that he need not push forth any conscious effort but remain as a silent witness only of his own breath, which is drawing the whole Universe into itself and merging like a wave in the ocean, in complete identification with the Transcendental Truth, the Self-effulgent Supreme self.

This message of *SOHAM* would be incomplete without Paying homage to Swami Rama Tirtha, the Apostle of Freedom, the God-conscious soul who has written a masterly message on *SOHAM* wherein he says:

<i>So am I</i>	—	<i>THAT am I</i>
<i>GOD am I</i>	—	<i>Divinity am I</i>
<i>One am I</i>	—	<i>Power am I</i>

In conclusion I wish to share with my loving readers one short verse that has helped me from early days, for it contains the essence of all religions in the world and it is the climax of this deep and vital message. This short verse is to be memorized and repeated often, for it helps one in a practical way to reach the Heights of Divinity.

Deho devalaya prokto jivo deva santhana
Thyajedagnana nirmalyam Soham bhavena pujayet
This body is the Temple of God jiva the Individual
self has always been the *Brahmam*, the Eternal
renouncing the ignorance of separation from
Reality, worship Him with *SOHAM* consciousness

Let us worship Him with each and every breath. Let us be in Him, ceaselessly, now and always. He is there in your every breath, awaiting your recognition Now for He is the Breath of your breath. If ever the world is to be united in bonds of Love and Brotherhood if ever Peace is to be established on earth, bringing goodwill among individuals and nations, it is to be achieved only through the silent practice of this *mahamantram*, the holy affirmation of SOHAM, THAT I AM. Verily, SOHAM is All-embracing and includes all and excludes none.

The Breath that you feel in your home or in the silence retreats of the East, or in the busy West, is the same universal breath, the ONE SOHAM that your fellow sisters and brothers are inhaling and exhaling all over the world. Whether one in the east or in the west, in church or office, in meditation or in activity. *SOHAM* is there, ever-present, eternally present, uniting all into one homogenous whole in the name of One Creed, One Religion, One Humanity, One Cosmic Soul.

My dear readers! May *SOHAM* lead you to freedom now, filling your hearts with Inner Peace and thus establishing Peace of Earth and Goodwill among communities and nations. This is the Prayer of your Brother, Omkar.

May Peace be unto All!
OM OM OM

CHAPTER 88

PEACE PROPAGANDA

Peace Propaganda... Happy News:

God, in his infinite mercy and wisdom has given a peace van with a microphone and loud speaker to Sri Santi Ashram as well as a Mobile Medical Unit so that we may do spiritual propaganda work “spreading along with medicine for health and the Message of Peace and Love from village to village, town to town among the friends and devotees of Santi Ashram.

As we have a Peace Centre now in the Nilgiris, at the request of its members and friends, our Swamiji is planning to leave the Ashram in the first week of April, 1958 in the Peace Van with some devotees and workers of the Mission of Peace. Any devotees and friends who live in places lying along the route to the South, and who wish to invite Sri Swamiji and party to their town to take part in the spiritual feast are asked to write to the Manager of the Ashram in advance, so that they may be included in our itinerary of the Peace Tour.

The probable stay in each place will be 24 hours and this will include;

1. *Bhajana* and music by the Ashram members and children and the chanting of the Peace Prayer.
2. Sri Swamiji's Message of Peace and Love to the devoted audience.
3. Repetition of Peace Prayer by all and group Meditation.

As our Swamiji believes that it is the individual peace that paves the way to Universal Peace, he longs now to help individuals to establish peace in their hearts and homes by memorising and repeating the Peace Prayer which helps all to feel God's Indwelling Presence.... Thus, Sri Swamiji's one aspiration is to help the devotees to convert their homes into Abodes of Peace. Paradises on Earth.

We appeal for the cooperation of the devoted public to help us with their sympathy to spread the Message of Peace from heart to heart, first by establishing Peace in their individual hearts and homes.

Om Tat Sat Om

Peace Propaganda

Kumari Jnaneswari

Forty Days Peace Tour

Yesterday's Buds:

How true are the words that yesterday's buds are the flowers of today! It was during the silence of six years that our Swamiji used to muse thus:

Question: If ever you break your silence and begin to speak, what are you going to do? What is your one desire or aspiration?

Answer: I long to spread the Peace Prayer, which has been a real Talisman to many of the devotees of the Ashram in the East and the West, from heart to heart, in the villages and towns all over the world. Verily, the world is our home and all people in it are our sisters and brothers and to serve them is our real religion.

This was the aspiration; nay the very words of our Swamiji, expressed in silence during his fasting days. By his grace, the silence of six long years is over and it is most inspiring to see now that our Swamiji is sowing the seeds of Love and Peace in the hearts of Ashram devotees near and far, spreading the Peace Prayer from soul to soul, sometimes moving thousands of people to repeat it in a chorus.

May all glory be unto God and long life of Peace to our Swamiji!

OM OM OM

(Peace Nov. 1957)

Peace Propaganda

In Our Sushila Peace Van

It has been said by men of wisdom that there are two kinds of people in the world:

- I. Those who are alive eternally even though they may be dead physically.
- II. Those who are dead spiritually even though they may be alive physically.

While alive, Sister Sushila Devi lived only to do good, sowing seeds of Peace and Love in the devoted heart of God's children in both East and West. Although disembodied now, she is still doing good through her Peace Van, serving the children of God irrespective of the man-made differences of caste, creed, colour and nationality. The Peace Van is the special gift of our Sister Sushila Devi and so we have naturally named in it the Sri Sushila Devi Peace Van.

Sister Sushila made many gifts to Santi Ashram, the Cause of Peace, which has been ever dear and near to her heart, besides offering her very life for a period of twenty-five years. We have a Sushila kutir in Waltar Ashram. It is in the spacious Sushila Mandir in Totapalli Ashram, that the fast of forty days took place, upstairs and now many devoted guests, especially the foreign devotees, stay there in comfort. Her last memorable gift before leaving this world is the Peace Van.

With respect to her sacred memory, we started on the Peace Tour in the Sushila Peace Van on June 8 with a party of twelve members, including our music teacher and six children, reached our destination, the Kotagiri Peace Centre in the Nilgiris. We covered a distance of nearly one thousand miles and by God's grace sowed many seeds of Peace and Love along the way.

Other Places of our visit:

We were happy to contact many new devotees in places such as Konetipuram, Donepudi, Moparru, Alapadu, Mandur, Pedapudi, Tenali, Emani, Chilakaluripeta, Karamchedu, Vinjanapadu, Nalluru etc., sowing seeds of Peace along the way. Our Swamiji often repeats:

Today alone is ours and not tomorrow; so let us do our good deed today, right now!

We were able to visit the famous Nagarjuna Sagar and made new friends there also. The Peace Prayer was spread and photos were also taken. As it was also the time of the holy Sri Rama Navami days, our Swamiji exhorted the devotees not to allow Sri Rama Navami to pass without having our hearts touched by the splendour of Sri Ramachandra. In memory of Sri Rama Navami, blessed are they who can establish Rama's presence in their devoted hearts instead of forgetting Him in the name of outer festivities and rituals. Verily, all this world is Ramayan, every thing is pervaded and permeated by Sri Rama.

Madras:

During our stay in Madras with Sri Rajah Kumari of Pithapuram, H.H.Swami Rajeswaranandaji Maharaj, the Editor of Call Divine was very kind and often visited us and helped with the Ashram work. One morning he took all the children to the Upanisad Vihar for breakfast and showed them the Zoo, Museum and other places of interest in Madras. All the members and children felt deeply grateful to Swamiji for his help, sympathy and blessings.

Sri Rajah Kumar, Thammu spared no pains to make us and the children comfortable until the last moment of our stay. He took the children and members on outings and even provided our party with plenty of food to serve on the way until we reached our destination, Kotagiri.

Dr. T.M.P. Mahadevan:

Every sunday morning at his home, Shankar vihar in Madras, Dr. Mahadevan gives spiritual discourses. At his request, Sri Swamiji attended the *puja* and *Parayana*. Dr. Mahadevan gave a learned discourse on Panchavati and then spoke for some time on the essence of philosophy of Sri Shankaracharya before the great advaita saint's beautiful and imposing portrait which is prominently displayed in the meditation hall. Sri Swamiji also addressed the learned and devoted gathering and told them never to forget that Sri Shankara's spirit is alive now, more than ever, for he is in the heart of Dr. Mahadevan and all the devoted and dedicated souls who follow the teachings of Sri Shankaracharya.

Some results of our Pilgrimage:

Our Swamiji often says that all the wealth in the world belongs to him and all are the hands of God. Thus God takes care of his selfless works by some hand or other, in some way or other. May all glory be unto God!

During our Peace Tour of Forty Day's we had 22 Public meetings and 34 gatherings in homes and gardens of devotees. over rupees 4,000/- were contributed to help various activities of the Ashram. Devoted parents in Pedapudi also offered a little boy named Chandra Sekhar to our *gurukula*.

Our grateful thanks also to the so-called inanimate Peace Van which took over us over a distance of 1,000 miles. Whenever any garland of flowers or khaddar was given to Swamiji he would offer it to our Sushila Peace Van. Once Swamiji said that as the Peace Van was the parting gift of Sister Sushila Devi, in garlanding the parting gift, we are only garlanding our Sister Sushila, who was the life and soul of Santi Ashram, with her great heart of Compassion and Love.

May Peace be unto All

(Peace Nov. 1957)

Peace Propaganda Service in Kotagiri Peace Centre

Paropakaratham idam sariram. This body is given to us only for the blessed privilege of service. This is one of the greatest sayings which portrays the glory of selfless service. How blessed are they whose lives are dedicated to the service of the whole world; who care not for the false distinctions of caste, creed, color and nationality? Anyone can serve all the world, considering it as his home and all people as his brothers and sisters. It has been said that the real service is to help awaken in others, spiritual recognition. God-consciousness is the only changeless reality. We may feed a man and he will be hungry again by evening. We may clothe a man but his clothes will become torn again in the course of time. We may educate a man, make him a B.A. or an M.A. but it will not make him happy and peaceful. The outer education often makes a man egoistic and self important and devoid of feelings for humanity.

The education that makes one egoless, humble and full of love for all the world is the best education. The education that has God as the spiritual basis is the highest education. How blessed it is to live in God and help others to live in Him. To consider all people in the East and West as our own, for all are the children of the One God, the images of the One Light. To live in God and help others to live in him: has been one ideal aim and aspiration of Sri Santi Ashram, the Mission of Peace, since its founding forty years ago. Now our Sushila peace van is fulfilling this ideal of highest service through peace propaganda. May all glory be unto God and Eternal Life to our Sushila Devi and Peace to All!

Service in Kotagiri, Nilgiris:

Besides having two meetings a week in our Peace Centre, Lakshmi Villa in Kotagiri we have been invited to various homes of members and devotees for prayers and *bhajans*. We have had the joy of holding meetings in the homes of Dr.M.S.Rao, Sri Arjuna, the Karnam, Sri Chettiar, Thangavelu, Sri Bhojan and several other dedicated souls. We are happy to have had the privilege of serving

Sri Perumal Chettiar and his family. Mr. Bhansali and his friends and several European sisters and brothers such as our Sister Lalita Devi, Sister Anna, Savitri Devi, our German Sister, Professor Eknath Easwaran and Sister Chistine, Mrs. Freda Padman and many other loving seekers of Truth.

Our Visit to Mysore:

As there were many devotees in Mysore requesting us to come and visit them for a few days and as our Sri Bellie Gowder and Sri Chettiar were helping us in so many ways and following us like shadows, eager to take us to Mysore and bring us back again safely to Kotagiri, we at last arranged to visit that city of parks and palaces. The most memorable moments of our few days stay was the after-noon when we visited the famous Brindavan Gardens. Our Peace Van had to cross a big bridge over the rushing waters of the river Cauvery to reach the famous gardens. The rushing falls reminded me of the gigantic Niagara Falls in the U.S.A. For a moment, I went back to America and sat at the foot of Niagara Falls and remembered the message of sharing and giving. The lesson of the Falls is the Law that the more we give the more we receive, like the ceaseless out-pouring torrents of waters from the mighty falls.

Our devoted guide told us that one dip in the holy river Cauvery leads one right to Heaven. It seems that in a particular month, the Gates of Heaven are not closed but remain always open. Our people listened to his words of wisdom with awe and open mouths. I too began to amuse myself with the thought that one slip into the river at this season of high floods might mean Eternal Rest even for a noted swimmer. How finite and insignificant is the so called highly educated man before God's manifested and unmanifested splendour in spite of all the learning and wisdom! The more I looked and gazed at the running rapids of the holy river, I realised the evanescence and insignificance of human life. Unconsciously, without the least effort on my part, I was lost in a deep meditation, facing the beauty on the right and left and in front, listening to the roaring music of the sacred syllable OM in the

rapid flow of the running waters of the holy Cauvery.

OM OM OM

Back in Kotagiri Peace Centre:

One day, as I basked in the balmy rays of the sun in front of our Lakshmi Villa, without proper clothing for I was soon to go in and take bath, I was surprised by the visit of Roman Catholic Father. As he came right over to me I had to receive him I was unconventionally dressed in the open sun before our Lakshmi Villa. A chair was brought for him and after he had been made comfortable, I greeted him with my usual question:

What can I do for you, Father?

It seems that he had studied cosmic flashes and Cosmic Fast and was very much interested in my thoughts on fasting and silence. We had a spiritual discourse and silent communion for over an hour and ended with the repetition of the Peace Prayer and Meditation.

As the books which our Father had been reading were loan from someone, I gave him a set of Ashram publications and he expressed his thanks profusely. His secretary also had attended some of our Peace Meetings with high appreciation for our silent work.

Miss Mary Barr, author of the book *Bapu* and a close friend of co-worker with Mahatma Gandhiji for many years also came for a visit and was very sympathetic towards our work of spreading peace and compared the Mission of Peace with the teaching and work of her years with Gandhiji. I was also surprised once with the visit of an English doctor and his wife who were Missionaries in Orissa. Thus it was my privilege during our stay in Kotagiri to meet people of all nations and religious denominations and to exchange thoughts and hearts at their own standard of understanding, for I always endeavor to meet people at their own level.

I always tried to avoid the little points of difference, the

non essentials and encourage and emphasize the essentials, which are the same in all religions: Love is God, Where Love is, there is God. We are all the children of the One; indivisible God and we have come from him as different rays from the One Sun. We live in Him and we are bound to go back to Him. Instead of enjoying the morrow, why waste precious time chewing dry bones. Instead of making a buzzing noise I prefer to sip honey in silence and share it with all aspiring souls, whether they belong to this religion or that religion or to no religion at all.

May God Bless All with Peace,

His Richest Blessing!

OM

OM

OM

CHAPTER 89

THE SPLENDOUR OF SERVICE IN SRI SANTI ASHRAM

Our readers will be delighted to learn that the East Godavary District Board has been pleased to sanction a generous gift of Rs.14,000/- for the construction of a hospital at Totapalli Ashram. We are deeply grateful to the Board for its most practical help. The Ashram on its part must now raise an amount of Rs.3,500/- only, a fourth of the gift amount towards the construction of the hospital. We earnestly appeal to all our friends, sympathisers and well wishers to generously contribute to this great work of selfless service to help the sick and poor.

OM OM OM

(Peace March 1958)

Welcome Address

to Sri Pratap Reddy, District Collector

East Godavary District

Dear Respected Sir,

Our hearts rejoice at the opportunity to extend to you a hearty welcome not only into our Abode of Peace, Sri Santi Ashram, but also into our hearts which aspire to spread the Peace in East and the West. As the Representative Head of the entire District, it is most kind of you to have come to our Ashram in the wilderness of Totapalli Hills from Kakinada to lay the foundation stone for our Sushila Hospital and also to inaugurate our Mobile Medical Unit, so that we may begin our silent work of service among the sick and the poor of this area.

It has been said that not a blade of grass moves without God's will and it is He who has brought you amidst us to do these good deeds of laying the foundation stone and starting the Mobile Medical Unit. May the lonely and poor villages who have known more than their share of hunger, exploitation and poverty, experience at least medical care to which they have previously

been strangers.

In this world of great dimensions, where is the East and where is the West? It was from the far away West and Sister Sushila Devi came and dedicated twenty-five years of her devoted life towards the building of this Ashram in a forest retreat. She offered her very life for the Cause of Peace and Mother India. We are now trying to perpetuate her memory by doing something very near and dear to her consecrated heart.

Thus, it is most kind of you to have come to help us in laying the foundation stone for the Sushila Hospital which will ever remain in the sacred memory of Sister Sushila Devi who loved and served all the sick and poor with her life's energy.

It has been the ardent wish of our Sri Swamiji to do selfless service in silence, without the least advertisement. His one prayer has always been:

Dear God, make others great and famous, but keep
Us always humble, insignificant and unknown.

Our swamiji believes that future progress of the Ashram lies in the complete selflessness of its workers and devotees. Like the mango seed, we must be prepared to lose form and name in order to yield abundant fruits. Some of the ideals of Santi Ashram are:

Deserve, No need of Desiring

Live in God and help others to live in him.
He who does not work has no right to eat.
He who does not pray has no right to live.

It is by God's special blessings alone that we have been able to do this humble work, far away from the towns, in these lonely hills. The Ashram is the common property of all seekers of Truth in the World and we feel that what we have done so far is nothing compared to the great work that lies ahead for the service of humanity.

It is the individual Peace that paves the way to Universal Peace. Hence, to help and serve all the aspiring children of God, to establish Peace in the world is a stupendous task which needs the help and sympathy of all the friends and well-wishers of the Ashram.

Once again we take this opportunity to offer our thanks to you, with great joy on behalf of Swami Omkar, the Founder of Santi Ashram and Sri Tanneti Viswanandham our President and all the members and workers of the Ashram throughout the world.

May God's richest blessings ever be upon our loving Brother, Sri Pratap Ready and his dear ones and upon all God's children, rich and poor, sick and healthy, in the East and West. May all feel God's Interpenetrating Presence Now and Here! This is the prayer of the members and workers of Sri Santi Ashram, the Abode of Peace.

May God Bless All

(Peace April - May 1958)

OM OM OM

The Ashram has constructed a Hospital Building and the Panchayat Samiti is running a medical service therein. It caters to the needs of about 20 to 25 surrounding villages. To facilitate treatment of inpatients, the Ashram has undertaken the construction of two wards, one for males and the other for females with ten beds in each ward. They are now nearing completion. The villagers who are not in a position to come to the hospital are given medical aid through a Mobile Medical Van which brings the doctor and medicines to their homes.

OM OM OM

(Peace October 1959)

MOBILE MEDICAL UNIT

God comes to us in the form of sick and the poor. So have said our sages of ancient India. He may come in the form of a stray dog or a hungry kitten. As God is Omnipresent, all forms of creation

are his manifestations. He is throbbing in all hearts, sparkling in all eyes, expressing Himself in all His Creation, He prayeth best who loveth well, bird, beast and man. Every being is a moving temple of God, blessed are they who can see Him in every face!

Yes! God comes in various forms and He is prevading and permeating the very cells of our beings, as well as the whole universe. Is there a place or space where God exists not? Blessed are they who serve God when He comes to them in the form of the sick and poor! Still more blessed are they who help the sick and the poor in their very homes, serve them and relieve them of their hunger, sickness and poverty.

Apart from the physical needs, the spiritual needs also have to be satisfied. Real knowledge is the knowledge of the Infinite, knowledge of the Soul – *atmavidya*. He who helps a fellow human being to come closer to God, rising up from the life of the senses to the Supreme State of Super-consciousness, is rightly blessed.

It has long been the aim of the Mission of Peace, Sri Santi Ashram to set up a *Mobile Medical Unit* to render medical help to the many sick and poor people inhabiting the villages around the Ashram in Totapalli Hills. At last, this wish has been fulfilled. The Central Social Welfare Board has been kind enough to sanction a grant of Rs.15, 000/- towards the purchase of a van for this purpose. The engine has already been bought with this money and a suitable body is to be built out of funds donated by devotees. The Mission has been fortunate to secure the services of a dedicated medical officer who has kindly offered his services to the Cause of Peace without any remuneration.

On entering a village the children accompanying the van will sing songs in praise of God. This draws the attention of the villagers. The doctor and nurse then attend to the needs of the patients who come forward for medical care. Any case needing special attention, hospitalization is taken by van to the nearest hospital. The children in the van then go round the village and clean it with the help of the villagers themselves. The doctor and

nurse also talk with and instruct the villagers on the importance of and methods for proper sanitation, for keeping bodies, homes and village street clean.

Lectures may also be given on preventive medicine so that many a common illness may be avoided and the general health of the people improved. After attending to the medical and health services, meetings are arranged in some central place in the village. Some of the messages of Sri Swami Omkarji Maharaj are read at these gatherings. When time permits there is singing of devotional songs. The repetition of the Ashram Peace Prayer concludes each meeting.

The mission has been rendering this selfless service without expectation of any reward. But nothing can be done without the active cooperation of the generous public. More and more funds are required, not only for the medicines and other equipment for the medical service but also for patrol and running expenses and repairs to the van. The salaries of the driver, cleaner and compounder and also of the nurse, cost a considerable amount of money. The mission looks to the generous help of all those who are interested in the welfare of humanity to contribute their mite towards this cause and thus partake in the glorious service through the operation of the Medical Mobile Unit. Manufacturers and distributors can also serve the cause by contributing medicines and drugs. Any help in the form towards the Medical Mobile Unit may kindly be sent in the name of the Secretary, Sri Santi Ashram.

May the Almighty God Shower His choicest blessings on all those who help in running this noble service! May peace be unto all!

- Secretary

OM

OM

OM

(Peace May 1959)

Fields of Selfless Service

There are many unexplored Fields of Selfless Service that do not have any advertisement in the newspapers. The heroes of these silent fields of selfless service are contented to serve and be unknown to the world. Often their prayer has been:

Dear God, make others great and famous but keep us insignificant and unknown.

To the egoless belong Peace on earth, the Peace that passeth all understanding. *Samsara*, worldliness begins with the ego, *ahamkara*. It ceases with the annihilation or destruction of the ego, the root cause of worry and trouble in the world. Blessed are they who have conquered the ego and run no longer after the passing clouds of name and fame in the mirage of the world.

Santi Ashram of Totapalli Hills is a forest retreat. It is in the wilderness surrounded by hills. There are many small villages scattered here and there throughout the hills and valley. The first service started in the Ashram was of medical care. That was nearly forty years ago. As pilgrims from far and near had begun to come in, the Government laid a Santi Ashram road for nearly five miles and granted funds also for a rural dispensary to take care of the helpless sick and poor in all the nearby village. Sometimes we have been blessed with selfless doctors; and sometimes the patients used to run away from the doctors, who were more interested in extracting money from the poor than in caring for their medical needs.

A real doctor should concentrate more on the pulse of the patient than on his purse. When a doctor loves his patient, half his disease is cured. When a doctor demands exorbitant fees even from the helpless and poor instead of administering the medicine and begins to bargain with the patient, then the temperature of the patient rises unconsciously. One feels with the heavy heart that there is no limit to selfishness.

But we can equally say that there is no limit to selflessness too. My heart goes out in deep homage to all the selfless doctors

who are blessed with the spirit of selfless service and wish the welfare of the patients considering them as their own children. If you consider sick people as your own dear relations or children, you do not demand anything from them. Do you demand or bargain with your mother or father or life partner or with your children before you give them medicine?

It is only when there is within, a Universal Outlook that the outer service has any real value. Our Dr. Markandeya is blessed with a great heart of love and compassion and he is no longer a baby doctor but an experienced doctor with a long patience of nearly forty years. He loves his patients and his patients love him. When everything else fails, it is Dr. Markandeya's love and the touch of his hand that revives the patient and gives him hope and a new lease of life. Whether it is day or night, midday or midnight, he is always ready for any call, to go anywhere, without bargaining or expecting even any visiting fees.

He has a dispensary of his own in Gollaprolu where he helps and serves the sick and poor in the mornings. He is posted as the Rural Medical Officer to the Chebrolu dispensary. Thus every day he travels to Chebrolu, as the place is surrounded by many villages; he is taken out to some village or other everyday to see the patients. He often does not return home until the midnight hour. In the absence of a Rural Medical Officer in our District, the Government has posted him to be in charge of our Rural Dispensary also and he visits it two afternoons a week on Mondays and Tuesdays.

The patients used to come in carts from near and far just to get their medical treatment from the loving hands of our Dr. Markandeyulu. Once the devoted doctor, despite the pain of his own illness walked five miles in the darkness of a moonlit night, without even a battery or kerosene light to attend to a sick person in our Ashram. The ashramite who was to have met him with a light and a bullock cart had forgotten all about him. Late in

the night our Dr.Markandeyulu arrived and instead of resting he immediately attended upon the sick ashramite. Such has been his devoted life of service!

How blessed is the Ashram now to have such a devoted and dedicated doctor in charge of the Mobile Medical Unit which is now to be started!

OM OM OM

(Peace May 1958)

Further Progress at Mother Ashram and in Waltair Ashram: Peace Prayer:

Our hearts rejoice to learn that our peace prayer is spreading from heart to heart, even in jails, among the prisoners for all are our own.

The Government has requested our Peace Mission to represent the Ashram at the jail in Vishakapatnam and give spiritual instruction to the prisoners. Our Manager of Waltair Ashram, Sri. B.V.Ramana Naidu has offered his free service to help and serve the prisoners. He has started classes with the Peace Prayer, thus beginning with peace in the heart and spreading it not only throughout the jail but to the whole world.

Imagine our happy surprise to learn of the great interest of the prisoners and how they are drawn towards the Peace Prayer! Some have had it framed and are putting it around their necks with their number. Others have hung it on the walls of their cells how good is God!

Stone walls do not make a prison. We can make a prison into a heaven by changing our minds. May all glory be unto God and Peace and long life to the devoted prisoners in the Vishakapatnam jail!

Om Tat Sat Om!

(Peace Dec. 1962)

Good News:

Our devoted friends and well wishers will be happy to hear that a *gurukula* is soon to be started at our waltair Ashram. It will be a residential institution run along the lines of the *gurukulas* of ancient India, with spiritual training. The method of teaching will be that of Montessori. As most of our readers know, we have been running a Residential Gurukula in Totapalli Ashram for the last ten years with sixty boys and girls in attendance.

OM!

OM!

OM!

(Peace Mar. 1963)

Bus Route to Santi Ashram:

We are deeply grateful to the District Collector, District Superintendent of Police and other well-wishers and devotees of the Ashram for granting us a bus route. As the Ashram is in the wilderness, amidst hills, far away from towns such as Kakinada the devotees of the Ashram have been feeling great inconvenience from year to year for want of any bus service from Kathipudi Junction to the Ashram. The bus will make two trips a day between Kakinada and Santi Ashram, stopping at villages and towns, such as Pithapuram, along the way. More details will be published in our next issue.

* * * * *

Miracles do happen even now. The friends and well-wishers of Santi Ashram consider this bus route a miracle. May peace be unto all, both to the good and the bad, for all are the children of the One God!

When the Ashram was founded over forty-five years ago in 1917 there was a harijan, named Venkatesu who used to stay with us. At that time our Thotapalli retreat was a forest wilderness, where wild beasts such as bears, wolves, cheetas, etc used to roam even in daytime. As there was not even a hut, I used to live under the cool shade of the only Mango tree and sleep in a hammock-swing. The place was full of scorpions, centipedes and snakes of every kind. I used to meditate sitting at the front of a big snake mound. Those were carefree days of Peace and Freedom. In one of

those lovely blessed movements, I was surprised when Venkatesu, the so-called uneducated man said:

Swamiji, as years roll on, I see the vision of the Ashram's bright future. There will be cars and buses running to and fro bringing pilgrims and visitors to the Ashram.

How the words of Venkatesu have come true! During these forty-five years, roads have been laid, buildings of every kind have sprung up for our Gurukula, Hospital, Printing Press, Library, Prayer Hall, as well as *kutirams* for meditation, guest houses, etc, How good is God! In the beginning when there was not even a path, the bullock-carts used to tremble and people would be injured. Now, by his grace this wilderness has become an Abode of Peace with electricity and all conveniences, vast gardens, gurukula children and other members. Let us cling to God more than ever rather than running after material things in the passing world. Let us aspire to reach the goal of our precious human birth before the Light Goes Out.

OM

OM

OM

(Peace May 1963)

CHAPTER 90

MY PUJA, THE WORSHIP OF THE ALMIGHTY

As individual peace leads to universal peace, so also individual worship leads to Universal worship. However self-centered a man may be from the outer world, he cannot be aloof and disinterested in the Universal worship just as the wave can never ignore the ocean. In the individual worship, 'I' the ego occupies a prominent place whereas in the Universal Worship, the ego or 'I' is absent. Although the individual worship begins with the ego, leads finally to Universal Worship where the finite ego dissolves or melts in the universal whole or *paramatman*.

When I use words individual and universal worship, I do not mean exactly the worship of the individual or the universal. I am trying to give the two aspects of worship, the individual *puja* and the universal *puja* and how they are to be carried out within in the individual as well as without, in the universe. This chapter is not intended to deal with the elementary forms of *puja*, the worship of idols with flowers, incense, camphor etc. This deals more with the mental side of *puja*, with the highest aspects of evolution in man. Let me share now with my loving readers some of my personal experiences.

It was only three days ago, at the very hour of dawn, while it was still dark that I felt like taking a little walk, feeling the Presence of God, I began to walk towards the gate, remembering that the *Shakti*, energy moving the body, is the God-Force. Every step leads me towards God. It is His Shakti the soul-force in the very movement of the body. Thus I wended my way, almost floating in the air. God's air towards the hills.

Unconsciously I walked in ecstasy, nearly a distance of two miles where there is a spring of water flowing out of a rock on a hillside and falling on a lingam, the symbol of Shiva, Mallikarjuna. This spring is called *Mallikarjuna Dhara*, Shiva's Spring. As all is God, no wonder man cannot do away with the idol or image worship in some form or other. He has to realise his ideal through the idol.

If a learned man says that he is so educated and cultured that he does not care for the worship of idols, then, he is most likely worshipping his own idol of flesh and blood, his physical body, his brain power. We do not speak here of the *jivanmuktas*, the Liberated – in – life who are above body, mind and world. May all homage be unto them!

As God pervades and permeates the whole universe whether in the individual body of flesh and blood or in the mightiest planet of light and life, we cannot but feel His presence, either in the individual worship within or in the universal worship without. Verily, that which is expressing itself within the same light which is manifesting itself without.

Now, let me come to my personal experiences. In the days of blessed Silence I take joy in the individual puja in the following three ways. Physical, mental and spiritual. Let us examine these one by one.

I. Physical Worship

One cannot always remain like a stone, without motion. Even a sannyasin who has renounced the world has to move and engage himself in some movement or activity, in his daily acts of washing, eating, drinking and talking. Thus, whenever there is motion of the body, it is helpful to offer all movements to God, the Lord of Motionlessness.

Thus, If I walk I am doing *pradakshina* to God, walking in Him and towards Him. All my movement of the body, eating or playing, walking or working, are my offerings to Him, the Lord of creation. Every movement of mine, be it great or small, is an offering to God. This is Physical Puja, the Worship of Offering of the motion of the body.

II. Mental Worship

When I am not working or moving, when the body is steady and relaxed, there is yet the mind working constantly, planning and scheming to do something or other. I am not discouraged by

its many thoughts, for I consider every thought, a Prayer to God, My thoughts are supplications, prayers to the Almighty.

Thoughts are like the aroma, the fragrance of incense, ascending higher and higher. Dissolving in the ether but filling the atmosphere with its fragrance. One can light the incense stick considering them as symbols of God's Omnipresence, Omnipotence and Omniscience. What wonderful offerings are these thoughts to the Almighty! As clay is the source of all earthen pots, as gold is the source of all ornaments, so also God is the source of all thoughts and mental vibrations. Not only is God the Source, He is also the Goal as well. Hence, let us offer all out thoughts, be they weak or strong, to the Indwelling Presence of our hearts as well as of the universe.

III. Spiritual Worship

This is the Highest Form of Worship. The body no longer moves and the mind no longer wanders within or without. In this sacred worship, all the waves in the lake of our mind subside. There is only one vibration of *SOHAM*. The worship is natural and it goes on automatically, both day and night. All that you have to do is only to remain as a Witness of this most natural and highest worship which goes on, not only during the waking state but in the sleeping and dreaming states as well. In Silence you repeat, or rather the still, small voice of God within repeats, with every breath, *SOHAM, SOHAM*. The divinity I am, the light I am, I am the Existence Absolute, Knowledge Absolute!

OM OM OM

Universal Puja

Musing with such precious and sublime thoughts, I sat in the presence of *Mallikarjuna* all alone, facing the little spring and listening to its sacred music in the ceaseless flow of water which poured down through and over the rocks of the steep hillside and came out in one place in a torrent.

The Sun was not yet visible from the spring for it is in a deep valley. But the light of the Sun was slowly spreading itself at that hour of daybreak, in all glory and wonder. The grandeur and natural beauty of the rocks, hills, tall trees and shrubs, flowers and foliage all around, the chirping of crickets, singing of birds and above all, the soothing sound of the spring reminded me ceaselessly of the holy vibrations of the mystic syllable OM, all were simply soul-entrancing, captivating to the heart and inspiring to the mind.

No wonder for that the time being I forgot the Individual Puja in the Great Universal Puja where flowers bloom for Him and everything and every form expresses His glory! In that Universal Puja, Worship, I saw the hill people of the Totapalli village cutting their wood and some women carried pots of the water. The boys untied their cattle to allow them to graze. Is not all this Universal Worship by man, woman and child as each unconsciously does his duty as an offering to God?

The wafting of the cool breeze, the radiance of the bright Sun, the dancing of the rolling waves in the ocean and the twinkling of the stars in the sky, are not all these the expressions of the Worship Universal? Thus, I became silent, allowing the individual to merge, forget itself in the Universal for a long time. When I opened my eyes again, it was the happiest moment of my life to see hundreds of birds and to listen to their sweet, music, the most natural worship in different tunes and with various notes.

Man can learn so much from the birds of the air. How carefree, happy and natural they are! As the blessed Christ said: "They neither sow nor reap nor gather the seeds into barns, not worry for the morrow! Yet the Heavenly Father takes care of all His Children, be they men, beasts and birds, or so much as even the tiniest creature of the earth". What man badly needs is faith, the faith of even a tiny mustard seed, in God, the Indwelling Presence.

As I was sitting at only a short distance, a few feet from the spring, as it was inviting me I felt drawn to take a bath. As the running stream of water descended on to my head, there was only one thought, one prayer and I wish to share it with the dear readers.

As the water in a gushing stream, unbroken and ceaseless so let the minds also flow towards the Highest in one continuous, unceasing flow, until it merges in the Universal Whole. May this breath of life be an Offering, my *Puja*, to the Breathless One, the *Akhanda Satchidananda* the Existence Absolute, Knowledge Absolute and Bliss Absolute.

May there be Peace within and without, in the heart of the individual as well as in the Universe, in the Microcosm as well as in the Macrocosm! May harmony and Goodwill abide among individuals as well as nations, nay among all creatures of the Universe.

May Peace be unto All

OM

OM

OM

CHAIN PRAYERS FOR WORLD PEACE

Happy News

Peace Propaganda in the North

God in His finite Mercy and Wisdom has given Santi Ashram a Peace Van to do spiritual propaganda work, spreading the message of Peace and Love from village to village, town to town and among the devotees of Santi Ashram. We are also happy to see our Mobile Medical Unit going to neighboring villages, serving the sick and poor thus silently spreading Peace.

At the request of the President and members of the Rama Tirtha Pratisthan in Sarnath, near Varanasi, our Swamiji is leaving in the last week of October, in the Peace Van with some members of the Ashram to convey his Message of Peace on Rama Tirtha Anniversary Day. Swamiji will be sowing seeds of Peace all along the way in the devoted hearts of the children of God. Those whose place lies along the Pilgrimage route in the North are requested kindly to write to the Manager if they wish to see Sri Swamiji during the pilgrimage.

The probable stay in each place will be 24 hours. During the stay, there will be:

1. *Bhajana* and Music by the Ashram members and children, with chanting of the Peace Prayer.
2. Swamiji's Message of Peace and Love to the devoted audience.
3. Repetition of the Peace Prayer and Meditation by all.

Our Swamiji will also be visiting Rajasthan to revive, Santi, the Hindi monthly of our Peace journal at the special request of Sri Prabhu Dayal Warman, its Editor and founder of the branch Ashram in Bundi.

As our Swamiji believes that it is the individual Peace that paves the way to Universal Peace he longs now to help individuals to establish Peace in their hearts and homes. Memorising and

repeating the Peace Prayer is a link between man and God and helps one to feel God's Indwelling Presence. Sri Swamiji's only aspiration is to help devotees to convert their homes into Abodes of Peace - Paradise on Earth.

We appeal for the cooperation of the devoted public to help us, with their sympathy in spreading the message of Peace from heart, first by establishing Peace in their individual hearts and homes.

OM OM OM

(Peace Aug. 1959)

At Lucknow we met many devotees, Our Sushila Peace Van was serviced and minor repairs attended to. A tyre was supplied. With the love and devotion of all the friends we left Lucknow on 12th November. On the way, at the request of Sri Ramji Varma we stopped at the Civil Engineering School where our Swamiji gave a message once before. We hurried through Kanpur and reached Bilhaur the same night. The next morning Swamiji met Sri Suraj Bhan Srivatsava who is a good devotee.

Leaving Bilhaur on the 13th, we hurried our way through Etah and Aligarh and reached Khuraja where we stayed for the night. The next morning we started at 9 a.m. on our journey through Meerut, Muzafarnagar and Roodkie and were about to reach Haridwar when one of the tyres burst and we were delayed for an hour. After replacing the tyre we proceeded and reached Sivanandanagar, Rishikesh on the 14 th November, 1959.

At Sivanandanagar we were welcomed and entertained at the Ananda Kutir by His Holiness Sri Swamiji Sivanandaji Maharaj and his selfless and devoted disciples. Swami Paramanandaji Maharaj one of the main pillars of the Divine Life Society, who spent several months in our Santi Ashram some years ago took special charge of looking after the welfare of our party. Though H.H.Sivanandaji Maharaj was indisposed, he enquired after us hourly and sent many fruits, biscuits, books, medicines etc. Some old friends of our Swamiji also came to see us. All the swamiji's

of the Divine Life Society were very kind to us and bathed us in their Divine Love.

On the 16th and 18th our Swamiji gave two inspiring messages in the Satsang Hall of the Divine Life Society. The messages were highly appreciated by all the mahatmas, souls of illumination, selfless workers and disciples of H.H.Sivanandaji Maharaj and the various devoted visitors from Germany, Africa etc who also attended the meetings.

From the time we reached Ananda Kutir Sri Swamiji Srinivananda Saraswathiji, one of the ardent disciples of Sri Sivanandaji Maharaj was so devoted to our Swamiji that he requested him to visit his kutir. Mother Kamala Devi and a party of devotees from Kanpur also joined us at Rishikesh. We also made visits to Laxman Jhula, Swargashram and other holy places. At Swargashram we were met by Sri Sundara Prakashji, the present Mahant who had been with Viswamitra, Kasyapa and Tara at our Santi Ashram 39 years ago as young boys.

When the meeting took place between our Swamiji and H.H.Sivanandaji Maharaj Cosmic Bliss fell upon all. Though indisposed physically, when Sivanandaji met our Swamiji the two were so closely connected for so many years that after embracing, they forgot everything, including the indisposition and conversed about the olden days when Sri Sivanandaji Maharaj had stayed with some other Swamijis at Santi Ashram. All felt inspired to be in the presence of two such holy souls, bathed in Divine Love, with peace flowing everywhere.

OM OM OM

(Peace Dec. 1959)

Our Seventy Two Day's Pilgrimage In Northern India

In the blessed moments of God-Consciousness or absorption I wonder whether I really left the lovely Totapalli Hills and Nirvana Mandir in the Peace van and covered five thousand miles; whether I really saw all the Mahatmas and holy places of worship and pilgrimage.

Our meetings, the large gatherings in the different cities of Northern India helped thousands of devotees to chant the inspiring and helpful Peace Prayer. Was it all a dream or a reality? Even in the seventy two days pilgrimage had been a dream it was a pleasant dream of service and love with added experiences in all planes, physical, mental and spiritual. What a rich dream it has been!

In the first place, seventy-two days passed away like seventy two moments, whether dream or reality. I would not exchange or forego all my rich spiritual experience, the new contacts with devotees for all the wealth in the world.

As not a blade of grass moves without His Will, it was He who took us and made us help and serve His children, protecting us days and nights as the eyelid protects the eye. He alone has brought us safely back to the Abode of Peace with many new and powerful spiritual experiences. May all glory be unto God, the indwelling Presence of our hearts as well as of the Universe!

If there is any special credit to be given, it is our Sushila Peace Van which took us everywhere patiently and lovingly, in spite of the flat tyres and breakdown on the road, from Rishikesh to New Delhi. Overall the good and rough roads we covered a distance of nearly five thousand miles. A lot of credit goes to our Rajaji who drove the Peace Van in the crowded streets of Lucknow, Delhi, and Calcutta etc. although an inexperienced driver. Our original driver felt homesick and deserted us, left us stranded in northern India.

The remaining credit for our successful meetings goes to our Swami Guruvandaji, Kumari Jnaneswari, our music teacher and other members and children of our party; especially to the little boy Chanti, Satya Kumar who made the whole trip lively with his sunny disposition and playful attitude, as the youngest member of the party, only nine years old. As it was the winter season, Swami Guruvandaji and other members suggested that young children should not be taken on the Peace Tour to the North. But Chanti had by then got ready with such enthusiasm, had even

fixed an OM Peace Flag on the bonnet of the Peace Van, that we could not refuse him. I often wonder whether it was this innocent little boy's Holy Flag of Peace which took us safely to Sarnath and the Himalayas and brought us back again to Totapalli. Anyway, Chanti was our leader, enjoyed the pilgrimage well and lead us all towards the homes of devotees and to the temples of God. He also sang sweetly accompanied by the violin of our music teacher and received from Sri Swami Sivanandanji Maharaj a spiritual name and Certificate of Merit: *Sangeeta Sudhakara*.

Thus the credit for the success of the Peace Tour, all 100% has been given away, beginning with the Peace Van, then its members and ending with little Chanti; and I feel free and happy to remain a zero, doing my service in Silence more than ever. My only object in writing this message is to share some of my spiritual experiences with the devotees and members of the Ashram and with our loving readers. Our pilgrimage was a pilgrimage to God. Haridwar, where we had the happy privilege of facing Him in the Holy Ganges, Sacred Himalayas and above all in the Mahatmas, Swamis and Yogis in all the old and new ashramas and maths. Our peace pilgrimage was blessed to have the special blessings and the unbounded love and tender care of His Holiness Sri Sivanandanji Maharaj, the dynamic living saint and sage of the Holy Himalayas.

Another saint and philosophic sage whom we were privileged to meet was Sri Swami Shantanandanji Maharaj who stays in a cave under patronage and love of Seth Birla, the great philanthropist. When Sri Swamiji heard that we were staying in the Birla Dharmasala in Delhi, he paid us a surprise visit. He has been all over the world propagating Peace and has also been close to many Governors and Presidents of Mother India. We felt deeply grateful to his Holiness, Sri Swami Shantanandanji Maharaj, the God intoxicated saint, for all the love he showered upon us.

Another moment of ecstasy came when I was requested to give a message at Kharagpur with two elderly Swamijis, each seventy-five years of age, on either side of me. I felt in fact that it was they who spoke and thrilled the audience with ecstasy, making

all to feel the Presence of God.

By His grace every meeting at every place, whether in a College, School, Ashram or Market place, or in a temple was a glorious success. I long to glorify God and the simple Peace Prayer when I remember the thousands of people who repeated our Peace Prayer with joy, feeling God's Presence. The Peace Prayer had been translated into vernacular languages and we distributed it everywhere freely, in every meeting for it has been my aspiration to spread Peace and Peace Prayer from heart in all the villages and towns of the world.

Another moment of ecstasy came when I had the privilege of addressing twice, not students and teachers or householders but Yogis, Swamis and Mahatmas, the men and women of God realisation in the Himalayas. It was then that I offered my other prayer to God, the indweller of our dedicated hearts:

Dear God, today I want Thee to speak to all these Mahatmas, help them all, each and every one, to feel Thy Presence consciously, for Thou art here, inter-Interpenetrating the very cells of our beings.

The God, the all-knowing and all merciful God really spoke through this humble instrument and made all his children to feel His Omnipresence. How good, understanding and tender is God! He is more tender and affectionate than the tenderest mother or father, for God is All-tenderness and All affection and All Love. Verily, God Is Love and Love is God! May all homage be unto Him!

It was another moment of Divine Bliss when I went to all the lovely and lonely places where I meditated as a young boy, living life in solitude in the Himalayas and especially in Swargashram, nearly forty-eight years ago. It was an indescribable ecstasy to sit alone by the Holy Ganges and to lift one's eyes towards the lofty mountains, the Holy Himalayas! I was no longer on earth but in the holy lap of God, bathing in His stupendous grandeur and beauty.

Our pilgrimage was a pilgrimage towards God and it was a Pilgrimage in God for we were filled and surrounded by His love on every side and in every place. How blessed it is to live in his Omnipresence!

We are in God

And

God is in us

We are filled and surrounded by God's Omnipresence. His Omnipotence is working through us in each and every moment of our lives. Where is the moment of separation or aloofness from God, either in the past, present or future? How blessed, nay, life-giving and soul-awakening it is to feel that we are eternally centered and abiding in God in every moment of our lives! How can the hand move, the eyes see or in the mind think without God's will or presence?

May All Glory be unto Him

OM

OM

OM

(Peace Feb-Mar 1960)

Chain Prayers for World Peace

During our recent Peace Propaganda Tour in the Nilgiri Hills, I heard for the first time the words "Chain Smoking". As I did not understand their meaning, I asked one of the Swamiji's in the Ashram for the meaning. He said that 'Chain Smoking' means smoking one cigarette after another without stopping. It is ceaseless or non-stop smoking.

This expression came to light when I asked the above Swamiji about a certain devoted spiritual soul who has sacrificed many things and lives in seclusion and who yet smokes. Our Swamiji replied calmly that the spiritual friend is a chain smoker and this made me very sad and disappointed. My friend said that I need not feel sorry for there are many noted Yogis and famous Swamiji's who also smoke. How strong is *maya* - the delusion!

The *Gita* teaches that *maya* deludes even the wise. It is too bad that some people can give up anything but not little habits such as smoking and drinking.

Thus they ruin their health and slowly poison their systems digging their early graves with their own hands. Such people thoughtlessly set a bad example to others, to their children, friends and followers. May God bless and protect His weak and deluded children too!

But we are not really concerned with chain smokers as much as we are interested in *chain prayers*. Who are people engaged in chain prayers? They are holy, God – consecrated souls who pray ceaselessly both day and night. *In Garland of God, every prayer is a link*. Each link connects with another link and the garland is completed. God is the *Sutra Atma*, the universal thread or chain which unites all the beads, the links, which are none other than the *jivas*, souls. How blessed are the people who are engaged in *Chain prayers*!

In H.H.Swami Sivanandanji's Ashram in Rishikesh and in the Sita Rama Kshetra, in Guntur, Andhra, the ceaseless chanting of the *Hare Ram Mantram* has been going on day and night, uninterruptedly for many years. In Santi Ashram also we have started the ceaseless chanting of the name of God during the day-time from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. and on full moon days, once a month. What a great blessing are such holy places to the world of devotees!

Did you ever receive a threatening Chain Letter? In the letter you are asked to do certain things, to copy the letter and send it to your friends or else you will be cursed with loss, misfortune and damnation. In the name of God it is horrible to threaten people with curses and to create fear in their innocent hearts. These cruel letters are called Chain Letters for the one who receives it, must not break the chain of letters by failing to send a new letter on. And so the chain of letters goes on and on, each one afraid to stop it, lest some evil should befall him.

In my weakness and love for the Peace Prayer I too want

to see a Peace Chain where the Peace Prayer will be ceaseless Universal Chain, a Golden Link uniting individuals with Universal, the One Interpenetrating Presence. As it is individual who paves the way to Universal Peace, let me request each one of our devoted readers to copy the Peace Prayer and send it to three friends this month. By doing this every month, you can spread the Peace Prayer to thirty-six people, thus helping to bring about Universal Peace.

In their turn, each of these thirty-six people can send three Peace Prayers to new friends and this will give one hundred and eight people repeating Peace Chain of Prayers, this Chain of Peace Prayers may spread from heart to heart, village to village, town to town and all over the world, in both the East and West. All things are possible for those who trust and believe in the Omnipresence of God and the marvelous efficacy of the Peace Prayer. The Glory of the Peace Prayer is that it makes anyone who repeats it feel God's presence just in the repetition itself. Verily, God is the heart of the heart, the breath of the breath and the soul of the soul.

Many devotees of the Ashram are benefitted by the simple repetition of the Peace Prayer, be they in different religions and nations, for it is a prayer that transcends narrow religious creeds and nationalism. A friend from Germany writes Peace Prayer has been his *talisman* through all tests and trials. Some others in India write that they are able to taste the Nectar of Peace *Samadhi* by repeating the Peace Prayer 108 times. It was our sister Sushila Devi who used to say that the Peace Prayer is the golden link, uniting the *jiva*, the individual with God, the Universal. May All Glory be unto God and Peace unto all His children:

By His grace the Peace Prayer has been translated into all the major languages of India and some of the languages of the world. Free copies may be hand by writing directly to the Ashram. The simple and shortest way to be happy, now and here is to make others happy. If you want to be miserable think of yourself; if you want to be happy think of others. So let us help and serve others by spreading the Peace Prayer, let us each be a link in the Universal Chain, the *Sutra Atma*, the Garland of God. In serving others we

are only serving ourselves, the One, Indivisible Self, the Self-effulgent *Atman*. Let us join now as precious links in the Golden Chain of Peace Prayer and thus bring Peace on Earth and Goodwill among nations.

Today is our day of rejoicing

Today we are very happy

Our anxieties have departed

For today we have met God

Today spring is in our hearts

Because of Peace Prayer

May Peace be unto all.

OM

OM

OM

(Peace Nov-Dec 1959)

Chapter 92

THE ROCKEFELLER OF TOTAPALLI HILLS

Rockefeller of America is considered one of the richest men in the world and one of the most charitable too.

Question : Who is the Richest Man in all the world?

Answer : The Richest Man in the world is the one who is free from all desires and who is contented with Self, the God within.

Often, as I sit on the terrace of the Nirvana Mandir, facing the blue mountains all around the Ashram, listening to the song of the birds, basking in the balmy rays of the Sun, the visible God, feeling His Presence in the cool breeze I feel that I too am a Rockefeller, of Totapalli Hills for I am so happy and contented.

Sister Sushila Devi, when she was alive used to send to the Ashram not only funds to keep the selfless activities alive but also the latest books and magazines to keep us in touch with the world's progress. In one of these noted magazines sent by Sushila Devi as I glanced one day over its pictures, I happened to see the abridged life of Rockefeller. During my several visits to America, I had become familiar with his name and great charities and I used to go when I was free to one of the huge churches that he built at the cost of millions of rupees, to sit in Silence and Meditate.

Rockefeller's charities consist of not thousands or lakhs but millions of dollars and were given for the progress of America and the Peace of the world. His father was charitable. His sons are charitable. The saying 'As father, so is the son' is justified in this famous family. Such ideal people who give of their wealth, time and talents are the greatest blessing not only to their country but the whole world. Rockefeller has contributed millions for charity and for world Peace too. As I read of his devoted life my thought was, what has been your contribution to World Peace, to humanity?

Although I do not have millions of dollars, great funds such as Rockefeller has, I have infinite love for humanity, for the poor and helpless in the East and the West as well. Rockefeller plays with millions, helping many institutions and organisations. I too am playing with *naya paisa* and pennies in my own humble and simple way, trying to create Peace in the individual hearts as well as in communities and the nations of the world, ever centering on the firm and rocky foundation of spirituality, the Godhead that includes all and excludes none.

Only a visit to Totapalli will give an idea of the silent work that has been going on for forty-three years for the good of the World, without any of Rockefeller's millions. All is due only to the special blessings and grace of God. As I look at our Universal Symbol, our Sushila Hospital in progress, the Medical Dispensary, the Mobile Medical Unit, the Gurukula Residential School for sixty boys and girls and other humanitarian work in these lonely and lovely hills, far away from the bustle of the world my heart rejoices, gives thanks to the Almighty, the giver of all these innumerable blessings to serve His helpless children as well as the seekers of Peace in all religions and nations.

No wonder, facing beauty and glory on every side, with our doctor and nurse going in the Mobile Medical Unit to help the sick, and poor, in our Sushila Peace Van, broadcasting the Message of Peace and spreading the Peace Prayer from heart to heart, in villages and towns that I too feel like a Rockefeller, of not only Totapalli Hills but of the whole world. It has been said by worldly wisemen of Andhara: *dhanamuula midam jagat*; money is the source of this world. Hard cash is essential for one to live in this world. Without money nothing can be done. Although this saying is true to a certain extent, yet there is a kind of money which is incorruptible, never to be stolen by thieves, eaten by moths or rusted with the passing of time. That money is spiritual wealth of God, the heart that feels for all beings, that serves others, placing service before self.

Blessed is the one who is blessed with the imperishable

wealth of spirituality, the Love Universal which excludes none but includes all, and whose heart throbs for the welfare of humanity; who keeps breath in the body only to help his fellow sisters and brothers without the man-made distinctions of caste, creed, colour and nationality.

Some of you may have heard the lovely story from the life of Alexander the Great. He was an emperor with insatiable greed who tried to conquer the whole world. Naturally, immersed in desire for power, greed, avarice, he was happy. Once during his travels in India, he was struck by the beaming face of a sadhu, almost naked except for a loin cloth, basking cheerfully in the balmy rays of the effulgent Sun. Look at the faces of the two men, the Emperor and Sadhu. On one side stands all the wealth and power of the outer world, name and fame, pomp and ceremony. On the other side stands utter poverty, but with glowing detachment, selflessness, beauty and glory. As you look at both of them, see for yourself who is the richest man, the happiest man in all the world!

Alexander offers his wealth, beauty, fame and power to the Sadhu and requests him to follow him to Greece. The Sadhu simply laughs and refuses to go, saying that all wealth, beauty, power and glory are within himself. When the Emperor becomes furious at his independence and draws his sword to behead the Sadhu, the Sadhu laughs heartily and says that no sword can slay him, fire cannot burn him, water cannot wet him, for He is the *atman*, the Living Spirit. At these wise words of fearlessness and knowledge the sword falls from the hand of Alexander and he falls down and bows his head in adoration at the feet of the simple Sadhu. Such is the wide gulf, the difference between the outer wealth of the material world and the inner wealth of the spiritual world.

What is That by knowing which everything is known? What is That by realising which everything is realised? Realise and know it now and be a blessing to all the world!

Dear loving readers, do not feel envious with the thought that I alone am the Rockefeller. You too can become a Rockefeller

today alone, only by changing your view, your thoughts from the real to the unreal, from the mortal to immortal, from the perishable to the imperishable. What is more, all that I have belongs to you. Santi Ashram, the Mission of Peace is *My Legacy to You* and to all the aspiring seekers of Peace. It is with us now to be the richest people in all the world, rising above all desires. My heart rejoices to repeat that one can be an Emperor or a Rockefeller without the need of a million dollars, although money can be made good use of, for the benefit of every seeker of Truth, and for all the poor and the suffering.

The spiritual wealth, the divine birthright of every man and woman on the face of this earth is within themselves, waiting to be recognised. It is with you now take a firm hold of this Divine Heritage and express it in all your thoughts, words and deeds and thus be the Rockefeller of the Rockefellers, shining as a blessing to other world of humanity.

May God Bless You All!

May Peace be unto All!

OM

OM

OM

I am a Success

I am a success though hungry, cold and ill-clad

I wander for a while, I smile and say:

It is but for a time; I shall be glad

Tomorrow, for good fortune comes my way

God is my Father, He has wealth untold

His wealth is mine: health, happiness and gold

Om

Tat

Sat

Om

(Peace April 1960)

CHAPTER 93

SOWING SEEDS OF PEACE IN KOTAGIRI

Peace Meeting in Our Peace Centre:

The meeting was held on 15th June the 1960 at Lakshmi Vihar, Peace Centre, Kotagiri under the auspices of our Sri Swami Omkarji.

The meeting started with a short speech on “Thoughts are Things” by Sister Lalita Devi, President of the Peace Centre. She said that it was wonderful, as Sri Swamiji expresses it, to see in this Abode of Peace all children as God assembling and exchanging their thoughts of love and Peace. Today we are realising this beautiful thought materialised for there a number of sisters and brothers from both East and West gathered in the name of God. It is hoped that this centre will flourish and spread Peace from heart to heart, all over the world.

Next brother Vajrabodi, Mr. Josef Pistor of Germany who is a Buddhist Monk from Ceylon spoke on ‘The Buddha’s Eight Fold Path of Nirvana’. He said there is no Nirvana in sorrow and no sorrow in Nirvana. The cause of all suffering and sorrow is the ego. As long as man thinks that he is separate from others he continues to suffer. Selfishness is the root cause of all ignorance in this world; it is the cause of all misery and pain. By surrendering to the Lord of the Universe, the Supreme Master of our being, we can eradicate the ego sense and have Enlightenment, Eternal Peace and Joy.

Sri Swamiji’s message ‘Perceiving the Highest’ was read by Sister Phiroza. Perceiving the highest is the supreme purpose in life. Perceiving the highest is trying to recognize the divinity in those we love and who love us and also in those who deny us. In the All-consuming Fire of the Sun we cannot expect to find even a speck of darkness; similarly, in the Flaming Fire of God-consciousness of Universal Love we cannot have even a little bitterness or exclusiveness. Every one is the manifestation of the One Presence, all the sparks of the One Divine Flame. All the

emblems of the One Indivisible Love, images of the One Universal Spirit, may all glory be unto those blessed souls who can perceive the Highest under any circumstances. Then only are we centered in that Great Truth, that in loving any one we are loving God and in hating anyone we are hating the One Presence, God.

Lastly, Sri Swami Omkarji thanked all for making the meeting successful, saying that in his creed there are neither religions or nations, neither disciples nor gurus, near ones or foreign ones, friends or foes, for the whole creation, animate as well inanimate is all God. There is nothing but different manifestations of the only Reality, or Truth, which is inseparably one with the Self. Hence man cannot help but perceive the Highest in the Indivisible Truth. Before you begin to perceive the Highest in the Indivisible in others, set apart a few minutes in the morning and evening to see the Highest within yourself. Try to be alone and fill your whole body, every cell with the vibrations to the sacred syllable OM. In that state, when you feel that you are a mass of Light, a Flame of God; resolve to perceive the same in one and all as you engage yourself in the duties of daily life. Be true to your resolutions.

The meeting ended with the Peace Prayer in German, Hindi, English, Telugu and Tamil and with the chanting of the sacred syllable OM by the audience and the distribution of prasad in His Name.

OM OM OM

(Peace Sept. 1960)

Impressions of Visitors

Sri K.S.D. Aiyer, Honorary Secretary, Spiritual Healing Centre, Coimbatore writes:

Sri Swamiji has converted the place into a real Kailas and villagers from far and near rush daily to hear the words of wisdom from Sri Swamiji's lips. He has spiritualised Kotagiri. This is what

I saw during my visits.

Om

Tat

Sat

Om

Our Farewell Meeting held at Lakshmi Vihar 22 June 1960

The meeting was largely attended by distinguished residents of Kotagiri. It was the last function of the summer session and proved an unforgettable experience for our Peace Mission.

The programme began with bhajans by the gurukulam children. The worthy President, Sister Lalita Devi opened the meeting with a short speech and good wishes. She said that in the present time of strife and conflict we cannot take the place of politicians or offer advice to them for the world situation is a shaky and unbalanced at this juncture. The best course to help world affairs is to form such groups as the present one and send Peace Vibrations through our Peace Prayers from heart to heart, nation to nation and thus turn the individual minds to the inner self so that they can feel the emptiness of life without God and thus search for Real Happiness, the Light within, the goal of all mankind.

She wished the Peace Centre, Swami Omkarji and party all the best in life and expressed her desire to meet them soon in the near future. Next, Swami Omkarji's thought provoking messages from 'Cosmic Flashes' and 'Hours of Silence' were read. After that a beautiful discourse, 'Make the Present Moment Permanent' was read by a devotee and was highly appreciated by all. In Sri Swamiji's message 'The Two Precious Moments' that come in each individual's life are when he becomes attuned with God, realises that he and his Creator are One and thus sees Himself in everyone, when 'I' consciousness ceases. The other moment occurs when a person acts in the spirit of selfless service without expectation of any reward, fame or gain, even if that service is so high as the offering of a bone, blood, sight or the very life itself. To the enlightened, nothing is a burden; it is all the joy of sharing, for nothing belongs to us.

Sri Swamiji spoke of *Brahman and Shakti*, two aspects of the One Reality. *Brahman is Shakti* in motion and *Shakti* is the manifestation of *Brahman*. Loving friends, I behold the same light in you, whoever you may be for you are all the manifestations of the One Indivisible Light or *Brahman*. What is it that speaks in me and listens in you? He who tries to see *Brahman in Shakti* and *Shakti in Brahman* is the wisest amongst the wise because Peace belongs to the one who sees the One in various forms and names.

Separation is death, unity is life and differentiation is never freedom. Brahman is the ocean, Shakti is the wave. Brahman is the Sun and Shakti is the ray. Can you separate the ocean from the waves? Can you separate the Sun from its rays? It is all one and the same Light, for Brahman is the only abiding Reality and all else is a mere delusion. May Shakti worship the Brahman in Silence until it realises that it is none other than Brahman. Verily, there is only one Existence Absolute, Knowledge Absolute and Bliss Absolute.

Swamiji thanked heartily one and all for their kind co-operation and thanked the Managing Committee for giving their whole hearted support and loving help. The meeting ended with the Peace Prayer in different languages and with the chanting of OM, wishing Peace, Love and Happiness to all.

OM OM OM

The Handiwork of God Love Inspires Love

There are loyal hearts, there are spirits brave,
There are souls, who are pure and true,
Then give to the world the best you have,
And the best will come back to you.
Give Love and Love to your heart will flow,
As strength in your utmost need;
Have faith and a score of hearts will show
Their faith in your word and deed.

- In Tune with the Infinite

Our Lakshmi Villa Peace Center in the Nilgiris has been the handiwork of God, for it is intended to serve all His children of different religions and various faiths. It has been said that not a blade of grass moves without God's will, yet many things are done by human effort and certain things by Divine Effort, God's blessings. When things are done by human effort with selfish motives, there is struggle and strain. But when good works are done by God's grace, there is perfect ease and happiness. Hence human effort is compared with the struggles of man on a hot summer day, trying to fan himself with a palmyra fan to cool down. Whereas God's grace is like the life-giving breeze, *malaya marutham*, the divine breeze that fills one with coolness and blows freely on one and all without the least strain or effort.

Sri Balasundaram the great devotee of Sri Bala Yogi was the District Collector in East Godavary District and a sincere friend of Santi Ashram. That was ten years ago. Now, as the home of his father-in-law is in Kotagiri he is here for a visit. When he heard that I was in Kotagiri, he was surprised and could not believe it until he came to visit me. He exclaimed: "Where is the far away Totapalli and where is Kotagiri? How could our Swamiji have come here from such a long distance? After spending a few hours in the Lakshmi Vihar he remarked: 'God has brought Swamiji here for the Nilgiris needed a universal Abode of Peace'.

In fact, I was unwilling to come here even when Sister Lalita Devi came to Totapalli and requested me, saying "The Nilgiris need your Divine Message. It has temples, churches, mosques etc. everything but a Centre of Peace which includes the votaries of every religion in the East and West. In order to satisfy Sister Lalita's wish I promised to come next year and then the following year. Then she wrote to me: "If a man is dying in thirst and asks you for a drink of water, will you say next year?" After reading the appealing and pressing letter I realised that God wanted me in the Nilgiris to serve His Divine Purpose.

God's ways are inscrutable and incomprehensible to the finite, human mind. How he uses us as His chosen instruments! In

the first year of the Lakshmi Villa was taken only for one month, rent free from the *zamindarini* of the Dasapalla Estate on the condition that it would be vacated exactly at the end of one month. In the second year it was taken for two months to serve His children. In the third year it was taken permanently to serve as a Peace Centre for the benefit of all the aspiring children of God.

When we were to buy the beautiful and peaceful Lakshmi Villa and its land the generous *zamindar* of Dasapalla said: ‘Swamiji, as you are doing God’s work we long to give you the Villa and land free but unfortunately cannot do so. If you can just pay us a token amount for all the costly furniture, beds, tables, dishes etc. we will be satisfied. ‘A certain date was fixed upon as the deadline and we had agreed to pay Rs. 20,000/- by that time or else completely renounce any intentions to buy or lease the lovely and peaceful villa for ever more. When we made appeals to all the wealthy and devoted friends of the Ashram in both East and West, I am sorry to say that not even one came forward with that small amount or any part of it. At the last moment, when the deadline had almost had been reached we sold a small cottage and a few acres of land on the property and also an old Ashram car and thus raised the amount for the Peace Centre, Spiritual Home for all God’s children from East and West. The Kotagiri Peace Centre has given spiritual succor to many aspiring children from both India and East and to aspirants from Germany, America, England and foreign lands. Professor Eswaran, who used to attend our meetings and conducted the meditations while I was in Totapalli is now in California teaching meditation. We hear that his friends have brought an Ashram, *Ramagiri* in the far away Tomalas, North California and his sister Christine and many devotees are living there, meditating and serving God’s children.

My life work of over forty-four years, all the Ashramas and their properties have been registered in the name of a committee consisting of well-known, selfless and dedicated souls. Nothing belongs to Swami Omkar. Indeed Swami is dead and only Omkar is alive, expressing itself in all. The Peace Centre in Kotagiri is

also registered in the name of this Philanthropic Committee and it too is the common property of all devoted brothers and sisters of different faiths and nations. Even my name is not included in the Managing Committee. I long to be free and happy like a bird for nothing belongs to me and everything belongs to you all! *Swami is dead and Omkar is alive in all of you!*

The Nilgiri Hills are blessed with a bracing climate and with great beauty and silence. Kotagiri is not only a healthy resort but a place of peace. This lovely place, our Peace Centre and Kotagiri town have everything but a prayer hall, a place of congregational worship, for the use of God's children in all religions. The need is for a *Viswanatha Jyoti Prarthanalayam*, a Prayer Hall of Universal Light. On the auspicious day Sister Lalita Devi laid the Foundation Stone for the Prayer Hall of light Universal in the presence of the devoted public of Kotagiri. We had *puja*, bhajans, Prayers etc. and invoked God's richest blessings on this great work. When the Prayer Hall is completed it will have a seating capacity of nearly six hundred. The unique feature of the Universal Temple is the Universal Symbol, representing various important faiths in different coloured lights, infusing joy, faith and inspiration into the hearts of all devotees. The Universal Prayer Hall also has four small adjoining rooms where sadhus and spiritual aspirants may stay. There is also a spacious Library and Medical Clinic attached to it. May the Universal Symbol in all its many-coloured lights bring Universal Light to all God's children, the sadhus, the house-holders, the educated and uneducated, the rich and the poor, the healthy and the sick.

The Prayer Hall is estimated to cost twenty-five thousand rupees by the time it is completed. I am one of those who consider all the wealth in the world as my own. As we do God's work He alone will help us with all that we need. If all the devotees of the Ashram in the East and the West were to offer one month's salary or a part of their income to God, one rupee or one dollar, in order to help and serve His children, then not only one Prayer Hall but a hundred Prayer Halls, Universal Temples could be easily

constructed in no time at all.

Lakshmi Villa is now filled with devotees. I had to offer my office room to accommodate devotees from Hyderabad. More are expected from Bombay, Madras and Andhra. When the Prayer Hall of Universal Light is completed, there will be more facilities to serve spiritual aspirants. May all the children of God extend a helping hand so that Viswanath Jyoti Prarthanalayam may be soon completed and be a great blessing, creating Universal Peace in the hearts of individuals and thus spreading it far and near in the Universe.

At present all the Ashrams in Totapalli, Waltair and Kailas are forgotten. By God's blessings the present work for the Prayer Hall shall be completed at any cost for your use. If the call comes I would be happy to close my eyes but only after the completion of this God-ordained work. Poor and naked we came into the world and poor and naked we leave. It is only what we do for God and His children that helps and follows us in the long run.

It was good of Sri V.V. Giri an old friend and well wisher of the Ashram, who is now Governor of Kerala to kindly promise to come here and inaugurate the Prayer Hall of Universal Light. Everything in this world passes away except what we do for God. The way to be happy is to make others happy. Our real joy is in giving, for the more we give the more we get.

Dear friends, Lakshmi Villa Peace Centre of Kotagiri, Nilgiris, extends to you all a hearty welcome. It needs your prayers and sympathy for the successful completion of the *Viswanatha Jyoti Prarthanalayam*, the Prayer Hall of Universal Light, of all religions, to be a real blessing to the followers of all faiths.

May Peace Be unto All !

OM OM OM

(Peace June-July 1961)

Kotagiri Peace Centre

To translate his cherished ideal 'Truth is one, men call it by various names' into material form, Sri Swamiji has conceived an idea which has crystallized into the construction of a Universal Prayer Hall which will give room for prayers by all faiths.

It all started with a scratch.

Swimming against heavy financial odds and despite indisposition, he has personally supervised the construction work. A library has also been erected adjoining the prayer hall. The Manager of Peace Centre, Mr.T.Bhojan and Mr.K.Subbarayudu have put forth their efforts to see the completion of this noble work. Blessed are the masons and their assistants who worked hard, undeterred by intermittent rains.

The Governor of Mysore, His Excellency Sri.V.V.Giri has kindly consented to inaugurate to Prayer Hall and Library. The inauguration Ceremony has been fixed for the 17th August 1966.

May Peace be unto All!

(Peace Aug. 1966)

OUR JNANESWARI

In this mundane world of duality it is blessed to have even one real disciple who loves and understands us fully. I have never been after disciples from the very beginning nor even after Gurus, Masters, for I consider all as the images of God. I always take joy in seeing the One in the many, for all is Brahman. Verily, all the world is filled with Isa Iswara: *Isavasyam idam sarvam*.

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. I am not here now praise and extol her fine qualities for this does no good either for her or for me. It is just one of her noble traits that she does not like anyone to praise her.

Now I should like to relate a heart-rending incident which occurred yesterday and let our readers judge for themselves her utter selflessness and great fortitude as well as her sense of duty to the work in hand. It was a dark night and raining heavily too. Dr. C K. Prasadrao, the Retired Dean of the Madras General Hospital, one of the boyhood friends and well-wishers of the Ashram has been staying in Totapalli enjoyed its peace and the hospitality of Kumari Jnaneswari.

She was carrying food to Dr. Prasadrao in the pouring rain. Whether it is day or night, hot or cold, rain or shine, duty comes first for Kumari Jnaneswari. It was 7 p.m. when she was bitten in the darkness by a poisonous reptile. In spite of the poisonous bite, she took the food and placed the dishes before Dr. Prasadrao and waited until he had finished his meal. Then she brought back the empty plates, washed them and never said a word about the snake

bite, even to the doctor himself all the while patiently bearing in silence the evil effects of the poison. Even in pain and suffering Jnaneswari never thought of herself but only of others.

Where are the people in this world who can think of others and forget their own sufferings? How rare and blessed are such noble souls! Jnaneswari came to my place with empty plates and asked for water to wash her feet. Then she told us leisurely that something had bitten her and she did not see what it was in the rain and darkness. We poured cold water on her foot continuously, vessel after vessel and Jnaneswari said that her mouth was getting bitter and numb. We put her on a bed and she became unconscious. For some time she did not open her eyes or respond to us. She was not in our world and she was even beyond suffering. It was a sad and lovely moment of utter loneliness and helplessness yet God, the indwelling presence of our hearts is the only Refugee, the Soul and Goal especially now, for our Jnaneswari in her greatest trial and suffering.

After a time she opened her gentle eyes and began to moan. We wanted to send for our Dr. Prasad. Even in her pain she sensed and understood our intentions and made a sign not to disturb the doctor for he was observing silence and meditating. As Jnaneswari's condition was serious, we sent nevertheless for our Dr. Prasad Rao who was all attention and kindness and took great care of her with wise and experienced suggestions! We also wanted to call our Dr. Markandeyulu from Gollaprolu, sending our Peace Van for him. Rajaji wanted to go to Durgada Railway Station and phone to a certain Station Master about the snake bite. It is said that as soon as the Station Master, a *Tantrika* receives any message about snake bite he chants some *mantram* from the station itself and tears the cloth or towel that he is wearing into two pieces at the same moment and immediately, whoever the patient is, where ever may be, he is completely cured of the poisonous snake bite and recovers completely. This is not a story from books but a practical and helpful demonstration which has gone on for may long years and has helped people from near and far who have suffered with snake bite. This

is a gift of God to the Station Master and it is unique and helpful to suffering people. May God be praised and may the Station Master live long for good of all!

But we did not take our Jnaneswari anywhere, nor did we send the Peace Van to get our Dr. Markandeyulu or any other doctor nor did we call upon the devoted Station Master. Our Dr. Prasad's presence was soothing and we resorted to the nature cure method and applied mud compresses and used some Ayurvedic tablets given by well – known Dr. Palanki Suryanarayana of Pithapuram, a friend and well wisher of the Ashram. All these gave relief, by God's grace. Jnaneswari was more concerned about all the trouble she felt she was giving to us than about her pain. She requested us all to go to sleep and said that she was feeling better but there was still pain and suffering, swelling of the foot where she had been bitten and this lasted until the early hours of morning. By Gods great grace, jnaneswari's life was saved for she has greater work to do for children of God in both the East and the West.

Recently I heard that three palmists had scrutinized her palm and said that her life is completely dedicated to the service of God and His children all over the world. They predicted that she would visit foreign lands also. Jnaneswari never mentioned this good news to me for she is always thinking of others and never of herself. When she reads aloud any letters or messages and proofs of Peace and Santi journals, whenever her name appears in the matter, she omits it unconsciously and automatically and continues to read the message. Such noble and utter selflessness is a gift of God and cannot be found often in the world of duality. Whether I call Jnaneswari my disciple or my Guru, my Sister or Child, I feel happy and contented, blessed ever to have a single, noble and selfless soul who works, lives and breathes not for herself but for the welfare and Peace of others and for the progress of the Ashram, the Mission of Peace.

Although Santi Ashram has been blessed to have hundreds, nay thousands of followers of and devotees in all religions and nations of the East and West my readers, the friends and well-wishers of the Ashram will be happy to learn that I wrote in my will long ago that when I close my eyes, when the Call comes that it is to be only our little Jnaneswari who is to succeed me as the next Spiritual Head of the Institution which is the common property of all aspiring children of God all over the world. I am writing this now, rather disclosing what I have written in my will with the purpose, the wish that all the brothers and sisters near and far, in India and in foreign lands may send their blessings and prayers to our Jnaneswari so that her devoted and simple life may continue to be the greatest blessing of the Ashram verily she has offered and consecrated her noble life to the Ashram, the Mission of Peace from the very day she joined as a mere child of nine.

As the great Shakespeare said: “ All the world is a stage and all men and women are merely actors”. We come and go, playing our parts as ordained by God. We are not here to stay permanently, clinging to the earth plane, however much we may love it. In all these nearly fifty years, half a century, I have done my best, solely by God’s blessings to serve you all by creating an Abode of Peace for the good of mankind , to serve as a permanent home of Peace for all children, young or old, not only now but in the future. It has ever been my great joy to repeat that the mission of Peace, Santi Ashram belongs to you. It is your spiritual home ! It belongs to you all as much as it belongs to me.

Jnaneswari is here, there, everywhere, always helping and serving someone or other. She is here with the children; there in the kitchen or with the patients; everywhere with the devoted visitors. This message about our Jnaneswari would be incomplete without the lovely poem on others. How blessed it is to dream of others, live for others only, in life and in death! May I request the silent prayers of all my readers now to be with our Kumari Jnaneswari in her noble work of selfless service, loving and helping all. May her simple, consecrated and unostentatious life continue

to be a blessings to all the devoted children of God, by God's blessings and your ardent prayers. This is the prayer of one who loves you all as his own.

(Peace July-Aug. 1962)

Others

Lord, help me to live from day to day
In such a self-forgetful way
That even when I kneel to pray
My prayers will be for others.

Help me in all the work I do
To ever be sincere and true
And know that all I do for you
Must needs be done for others

Let the self be crucified and slain
And buried deep and all in vain
My efforts are to rise again
Unless to live for others,

And when my work on earth is done
And my new Work in Heaven begun
May I forget the crown I've won
While thinking still of others.

Others Lord! Yes, others.
Let this my motto be
Help me to live for others
That I may live like Thee

OM OM OM

Now, to complete this chapter let me add the words that Kumari Jnaneswari has herself written and which were published in our Golden Jubilee Volume in January 1967.

What I Learnt From Swamiji

- Kumari Jnaneswari

1. I learnt from Swamiji that GOD IS LOVE AND LOVE IS GOD and WHERE LOVE IS, THERE IS GOD.
2. I learnt from Swamiji that RELIGION AND LIFE ARE NOT TWO BUT ONE. Hence, God is equally present when my eyes are closed in meditation or when my eyes are open while typing a message or doing any other work.
3. I learnt from Swamiji that WORK IS WORSHIP. Every thing I do is an offering to God
4. I learnt from Swamiji the PRECIOUSNESS OF TIME. Every moment is precious and HE WHO WASTES MOMENTS WASTES ALL HIS LIFE. Anything lost can be gained again but not the precious and invaluable time.
5. I learnt from Swamiji that laziness is a dangerous disease and a lazy man harms himself and others. Indeed, he who is lazy and does not work for his living has no right to eat.
6. I learnt from Swamiji that CLEANLIENESS IS GODLINESS. He who is clean within and without is the true child of God.
7. I learnt from Swamiji that Purity is the very foundation and basis of spiritual life. Blessed are they who are pure in thought, word and deed.
8. I learnt from Swamiji to INHALE AND EXHALE PEACE with each and every breath. This is the simple and natural Pranayama, the breathing practice that exercises and purifies all the *nadis*, the nerves within and this alone helps in the long run to awaken *kundalini* the latent Shakti, making one God-conscious without any need of secret, mystical exercises which are complicated and may be dangerous and harmful, especially without proper guidance.

9. I learnt from Swamiji the simple way of Lord Christ: TO LOVE THY NEIGHBOUR AS THYSELF ; the direct way of the Blessed Krishna : TO FACE HIM IN EVERYONE considering all the world as Brahman; the compassionate way of the Buddha: to respect all life and to be kind and merciful.
10. I learnt from Swamiji the UNIVERSALITY OF ALL RELIGIONS; to respect and adore all Saviours, Avatars and Prophets of every religion and to assimilate all that is good from every source, never comparing religions or their teachings and Prophets or Saviors,
11. I learnt from Swamiji that I should never be a little frog in the well of ignorance but should be broadminded and wise, considering the wide world as my home and all the people in it as my sisters and brothers. How blessed it is to love and serve all without expecting the least reward in any form. This is my Highest Religion.
12. I learnt from Swamiji the PRACTICE OF FEELING THE PRESENCE OF GOD, not now and then but always, in each and every moment of one's life. This is the secret of success and God-Realisation.
13. I learnt from Swamiji the GLORY OF SELF-RELIANCE; to rely no longer on outside props, on the big forms and names of the world but to rely only on the LIGHT within.
14. I learnt from Swamiji that TROUBLES ARE GOD'S RAIN ON EARTH. One should never be troubled by trouble until the trouble comes to us.
15. I learnt from Swamiji that FORGETFULNESS OF GOD IS DEATH and the perpetual awareness of His Presence is Life Eternal.
16. I learnt from Swamiji that SPEECH IS SILVER AND SILENCE IS GOLD. *mounam*, Silence is the ornament, nay, the crown of Spiritual life. Too much talking leads to troubles and misunderstandings. Silence leads to Perfect Peace; SILENCE CREATES SOULS.

17. I learnt from Swamiji that I should be kind and forbearing in all the test and trials of the world as they are mere passing clouds. Verily, tests and trials are always for the brave and life in the world is not a bed of roses. The world is not like a sweet rice pudding.
18. I learnt from Swamiji that 'when wealth is lost nothing is lost; when health is lost, something is lost; but when character is lost, all is lost'. Verily, character is the heart and soul of God-life.
19. I learnt from Swamiji that as the *atman*, the soul within is ever complete, there is nothing to learn from outside and one should rather unlearn and forget all that he has learnt. Real peace does not belong to the book-worms but only to those rare souls who have risen above duality of every kind. In the highest stage, sages consider books as firebrands although they are helpful to beginners.
20. I learnt from Swamiji that I should never be satisfied with chewing dry bones, the empty words of others nor be contented with counting all the cows in the world. Better to have a small cow of one's own that gives a few ounces of fresh milk. It is personal experience that counts and that helps us in the long run. Those who are blessed with personal experience are the salt of the earth. They are the Beacon "Lights" of the world and lead us from the unreal to the real, from death unto life and from mortality to immortality.

May All Homage be unto Such!

May Peace be unto All!

OM OM OM



**Sw. Ramananda Thirta, Sw. Omkar,
Sister Shanta & Sister Jnaneswari**



**Sw. Chidananda, Sw. Omkar, Sri Sanaka Rama Rao
& Sri Tenneti Viswanatham**

**IN MEMORIAM - THE MAHASAMADHI OF
HIS HOLINESS SRI SWAMI SIVANANDAJI MAHARAJ**

In Memoriam

Great souls like His Holiness Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj never pass away from the world with the demise of the physical sheath. Only selfish people of the world are dead, even while they are alive physically. Selfless souls such as H.H. Sivanandaji are ever alive, now more than ever. As disembodied beings they pervade and permeate the whole universe. Even if we are Swamis and Yogis there is still a human side to us for there is ever a heart that feels and loves. The shocking news of the demise of Sri Swamiji has been very sad for all the ashramites.

In bearing this sorrow it is a comfort to have with us now in Peace Centre, Kotagiri Sri Nityananda Vibhuti Swamiji, a close friend and companion of Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj and he also was stunned at the heart-rending news. I was sitting in the prayer hall of our Lakshmi Vihar in the Kotagiri peace Center, taking part in the spiritual study of our Sri Ram when the sad news was brought to us by Brother Bhojan, the Manager of the Ashram here. I was shocked for it was all so unexpected and sudden. It was only recently, last week that Sri Swamiji had written a letter to us with thanks and appreciation for the basket of pineapples sent to his Abode in Himalayas from our Mother Ashram Totapalli Hills.

As I heard this saddest news I unconsciously closed my eyes and tried to feel Swamiji's Presence. The very thought that his great spirit of compassion and service and love has entered into me now is my comfort and consolation, joy, strength and inspiration. I feel Swamiji's great love for me and all devotees now more than ever. How blessed and inspiring it is to feel his presence and love now and here. This is the only real way to overcome any sorrow or depression.

Swamiji and I have never been two but one in our aspirations for nearly forty years. How we loved each other, how Sri Swamiji

loved me cannot be expressed or described in these cold and finite words. Santi Ashram was blessed to have Sri Swamiji Maharaj even before he started his great Mission of Service in the form of the world famous Divine Life Society. I still see the small *kutir* in Santi Ashram, Totapalli Hills where Swamiji Maharaj used to do *tapas*, penance and make intense study too. He was very much interested in the ‘Philosophy of Pain’, one of the messages written while in the USA. I can still see him praying ceaselessly, meditating deeply, with closed eyes during his stay of several months with his chosen disciples, Swami Paramanandaji, Swami Atmanandaji and Swami Svarupanandaji who still cherish happy memories of their stay in Santi Ashram. We were taken to the palace of Lakshmi Narsapuram Rani Saheba and we had a wonderful meeting with *bhajans*, inspiring messages etc. The Rani Saheba gave donations to Santi Ashram as well as to Sri Sivanandaji Maharaj and he at once gave his share to Ashram, for he has always been too generous.

We were also taken to the homes of the Ex-Vice Chancellor, Sri Lakkaraju Subba Rao and some other *zamindar* devotees of the Ashram and Swamiji Maharaj conducted wonderful and inspiring *bhajans* with his melodious music. Swamiji’s great love and admiration for the American Sister, Sushila Devi cannot be described. In their great love and admiration for each other, they used to spend several hours every day in spiritual study, exchanging their great thoughts. Now Sister Sushila is no more, for she passed away suddenly in U.S.A., having done service for the Ashram until her last breath. Sri Swamiji Maharaj has also passed away suddenly, ever loving his own Santi Ashram deeply. Have they both really passed away? No, a thousand times No. Their great spirits of compassion, service and love are ever alive, now in the Ashram and in all of us more than ever. Because of their presence we are able to do our humble work, feeling their great inspiration in our lives, in little things as well as in big things. May all glory be unto the great and exemplary lives of those selfless souls who live and serve humanity with no thought of self.

Now, coming to the personal side, I wish to share some of my personal experience which have been gained during my close contact with Sri Swamiji Maharaj. Many years ago Sister Sushila and I paid a visit to the Himalayas. We visited Swamiji Maharaj during his stay in Swargashram, opposite to the Divine Life Society on the other bank of the Mother Ganges. How can I describe the love and the attention which were paid to us by Sri Swamiji Maharaj and which made our stay memorable and happy ! I recall now one holy scene with great joy. Swamiji Maharaj arranged a great meeting in one of the spacious halls of a Swargashram building. It was not in a town where a meeting would draw people of the world but in a great Ashram Sadhus, Mahatmas, Swamis, Yogis of every kind and stage have attended. I still see with great ecstasy Sadhus, Swamis and Yogis of all sects, some with shaven heads, some with matted hair, all flocking to the meeting place. Swamiji introduced Sister Sushila and me to the holy audience in a most inspiring and touching way and told some of his happy experiences during his stay in the Totapalli Ashram. Then we gave our message to all the Mahatmas and expressed also our deep gratitude for all their sympathy and the deep love of Sri Swamiji Maharaj.

Even now, when I recall with great joy that happy day of the holy gathering of all the chosen great Mahatmas, I feel that it was a Convocation called not on earth but in Heaven itself, with all the *devas* and *devatas* in attendance. Truly, the meeting was held in Swargashram, the Abode of the Gods, by the side of the Holy Ganges, under the auspices of Sri Mahamandaleswar Sri Swamiji Maharaj, the Presiding Deity, Lord Shiva Himself, When such was the occasion, how else could be the meeting, except a spiritual feast for both the layman and the adult.

Again, after several years, when Swamiji had firmly established and organised his great work, we paid a visit to Rishikesh with Miss Moti Mankeji, Jnaneswari and some other members and children of the Ashram. Even though Sri Swamiji's health was not good, he took wonderful care of us all, both day and night and had special devotees taking all measures to make

our stay comfortable and happy. Almost every hour, Swamiji would send us gifts of apples, oranges, books, medicines, garlands of flowers, biscuits and tins of many other foods. He was drowning us in his great love and even had special Andhra preparations made for us. This great love of Sri Swamiji's reminds me for a little personal incidents which happened many years ago during his stay in Totapalli. Once he asked me, for he always considered me as his own and never separate or different from himself: 'Swamiji, let us have some Andhra preparations, especially idleys, today'. He was child-like always with, infinite love and great compassion. For our little service, almost insignificant service rendered to Sri Swamiji Maharaj when we were blessed to have him in our Totapalli Santi Ashram we have received his love and service a thousand-fold multiplied. He showered all his love and affection, his blessings on us during our stay of nearly ten days with him.

On the last day of our stay, before departure in spite of his ill health, he saw us all, lying on a bed and asked the children to sing the songs which had been sung when he had been in Santi Ashram. It was touching to see how thoughtful Sri Swamiji was, so considerate that he even gave expense money, for our return journey along with several of his inspiring books and medicines, Himalayan honey, etc. separately to each and every member of the Ashram and even to our *Gurukula* children. The two meetings held in the spacious hall of the Divine Life Society were wonderful and inspiring and will ever remain fresh in memory. During the ten days of our stay Sri Swami Paramanandaji, Sri Swami Madhavanandaji, Sri Swami Venkateshwaranandaji and other Swamijis and Mahatmas showered their love and care on us. Sri Swami Srinivasanandaji was extra devoted to us and took us to his *kutir* where we had Peace Prayer and *bhajans*.

Out of my deep love for His Holiness Sri Sivanandaji Maharaj, it was my happy privilege to preside over the All-India Divine Life Society Conference and All-Religions Conference held in Mysore during my stay in our Kotagiri Peace Centre in 1960. Sister Lalita Devi and other members of the Peace Center were also present and took part in the conference, which lasted for ten hours at a time with

five thousand people, devotees of many faiths in attendance.

Sri Swamiji's ideal life has been the greatest inspiration not only to me but to countless aspiring souls in the East and the West. Here is the soul-awakening and inspiring foreword he kindly wrote to a booklet on *Soham*.

To gild refined gold is a ridiculous waste. His Holiness Sri Swami Omkarji has beautifully said all that is necessary to be known about the mystery and glory of *SOHAM*. This little booklet shall certainly prove to be the great inspiration and a good guide to every aspirant.

May the Almighty bless His Holiness Sri Swami Omkarji Maharaj and every one of the readers of this soul-elevating booklet with health, long life, peace, happiness and prosperity and most of all, *kaivalya*, liberation.

Like *kama dhenu* or *kalpa vruksha* Sri Swamiji always fulfilled or granted any of the least of my requests. He was, but I do not wish to use the word was, let me say rather that he has been like a doting mother to her little baby, always so full of compassion and love, always taking wonderful care of me. In his great love, the distance between Totapalli and Rishikesh disappeared and we both lived in heaven on peace and love, forgetting Santi Ashram and Sivanandashram, the outer symbols of our service. The Ashram disappeared and only the deep love which is one without a second, which includes all and excludes none remained in both our lives. I begin the day with Chavanaprash, a health giving tonic of Sri Swamiji's, with Brahmi Oil for the brain and with the reading of a few words from one of his inspiring books as spiritual food for my soul. How can I ever forget him and be alone or separate from Sri Swamiji, who is all Love !

Strange as it may sound, I have had a photo of Sri Swamiji in my room in Lakshmi Vihar for the last two years and on the day of his *Mahasamadhi*, before I learned of it I took the photo from the wall and put it in the adjoining room of a devotee from Andhra Pradesh. On the day of the *Mahasamadhi* of Sri Swamiji it was as if Swamiji's great spirit entered into my being and as there was no longer any reason for it, the outer photo was shifted into another place. Since then, in spite

of heaviness of heart I feel Swamiji's real strength and God's Omnipresence. Omnipotence and Omniscience more and more I am a new being now with the added strength of his love and inspiration.

Dear loving readers of Peace and all devotees and admirers of Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj in the East and the West, how can I tell you in these finite words of the great ecstasy and bliss of ever remaining in the holy embrace of Sri Swamiji! During our long contact of many, many years I was then and am now more than ever privileged to be in Swamiji's embrace. But is it only then and now? No, for I am blessed to be in his Eternal Embrace, never to be separated. Verily, we are all in his sacred embrace.

There are no longer the days of words, the days to run after the passing clouds of name and fame. These are precious and priceless days of living deeds and selfless service. If we really love Swamiji Maharaj, let us express him in our daily lives, ever walking in his sacred footprints with great compassion and with deep love of humanity. Let me close my humble offering to Sri Swamiji Maharaj with the Peace Chant for it has ever been near and dear to his dedicated heart of service.

The Peace Chant

May there be Peace in Heaven,
Peace in the Sky,
Peace across the Waters,
May there be Peace on Earth,
May Peace flow in the herbs, plants and trees.
May all the Celestial Beings radiate Peace!
May Peace pervade the Four Quarters!
May Peace be unto All!

OM OM OM

An offering to all the ardent disciples and admirers of His Holiness Sri Swamiji Sivanandaji Maharaj all over the world, with Prayers for their Illumination and Peace!

OM

(Peace Aug. 1963)

CHAPTER 96

IN MARY LAND

As our loving readers of **Peace** and **Santi** in the East and West will be anxious to know of the welfare of Sri. Swamiji we shall try to give some details of his sudden sickness now. In the first place it is a blessed privilege to serve him in sickness and receive all the distinguished visitors who have come from near and far to see Sri Swamiji. To begin with the name of Swamiji's illness is *Myocardial Infarction or Coronary Thrombosis* and it is due to the heavy work and great responsibilities of the Mother Ashram in Totapalli Hills, Waltair Ashram and Kailas in Visakhapatnam and the Peace Centre in the Nilgiri Hills.

The following letter was written to the Ashram devotees as soon as Swamiji was admitted into the Mary Land, the Nursing Home of St. Joseph's in Visakhapatnam.

Due to the heavy work of the Ashram, Sri Swamiji's heart has been affected. Doctors have rushed him to the hospital for complete rest. Swamiji says that he is now in Heaven enjoying God-given rest and peace. He requests me to send you his love and wants you all to feel God's presence ceaselessly.

Thanking you for all your sympathy and love.

During his short stay in the Nursing Home, the Mother Superior and all the nurses and Sisters loved Swamiji so much that Swamiji himself felt that he had become one of the Nuns with a Rosary in his hand. An interesting message of his experience was written in the *Heaven of Mary Land* during his stay there. As devoted visitors came and as Swamiji was not allowed to talk he wrote the following letter which the visitors were happy to read. They would then meditate for a few minutes in Silence. It has been Sri Swamiji's one aspiration and ardent wish whether healthy or sick that no one who comes to him should go away with an empty heart. He requests us to feel God's Presence Now and Here and carry the Presence with us. Here is the message that Sri Swamiji

gives to all the friends and devotees who have been coming daily to see him in the hospital.

Dear Ones,

Peace and Health

Happy to see you. I am not allowed to talk by our doctors but I can see God in all of you for He is Omni-present and you are all His Living Images. Please help me by feeling His Presence Now and Always! This is the prayer of your Brother, who loves you and longs to see your peace, the goal of precious human birth.

- Omkar

Forget the Swami but feel God's Presence Ceaselessly.

OM OM OM

As several doctor friends have also often been visiting Swamiji, he wrote the following points for their enlightenment about his heart

To: My Doctor Friends,

- I What is the action of the heart when I move?
- II What is the reaction of the heart when I speak?
- III How is the heart when I do not talk but remain silent outwardly?
- IV How is the heart when I am silent within also, centered in Waveless Silence where thoughts are absent?

Once, when some doctors were examining Swamiji's heart with a stethoscope he asked them to see whether his heart is repeating the holy word OM or not and he further said that it is his wish that every heartbeat of his should throb only and only for his Creator.

Distinguished Visitors:

We were blessed with a visit by Dr. Jnananandaji, the Head of the Nuclear Physics Department of Andhra University who came as soon as he heard of Swamiji's sickness. Swamiji felt happy with his kind visit. On the same day Sri P.V.G. Raju, the Minister for Education, Rajah of Vizianagaram came with the artist, Sri. Chitra and spent some time in peace, wishing the welfare of Swamiji and the progress of the Ashram. The Rani Saheba of Bobbili, the ardent devotee and well-wisher of the Ashram also visited our Swamiji with her loving daughters and read Sri Swamiji latest message. There was *bhajana* too. Smt. Saraswati Devi, *zamindarini* of Chikkavaram came with her devoted daughter-in-law on two different days, played the vina and sang her sacred songs and these were enjoyed even by the sparrows and squirrels who are Swamiji's constant companions now in the comfortable quarters of Dr. Ramani, the talented daughter of Dr.C.K. Prasad Rao late Dean of Madras General Hospital. We all felt deeply grateful, to Dr. Ramani who is the Superintendent of Gosha Hospital in Visakhapatnam for bringing Sri Swamiji to her lovely quarters at the Hospital from the Nursing Home so that she could take personal care of his recovery.

When Swamiji receives telegrams and many letters from India and abroad saying that there is no anxiety for him and that all the devotees are praying for his welfare, he smiles, for he never thinks of his present sickness or of himself. Once he said to the visitors: "You all look so sad to see me in bed but I feel sad to see you, especially the people who forget and deny the Light within. Please make me happy and healthy by feeling God's Presence Now and Always".

From his sick bed here is another vital question that Sri Swamiji is asking of the visitors:

How can we feel God's Presence in this present moment Now and Here without the need of any prayers or meditations ceaselessly?

Please meditate deeply and let me have the reply from your personal experience.

The visit of His Holiness Sri Swami Chinmayanandanji Maharaj with his disciples will ever remain memorable. Swamiji has been an old friend and well-wisher of the Ashram and our Peace journal and has published his learned articles from time to time. He was pleased to read aloud the Peace Prayer in Sanskrit and blessed our Swamiji and his silent work.

OM OM OM

(Peace Jan 1964)

MARY LAND

Mary Land is the land of all Marys. Mother superior is a living Mary with a great heart of compassion and love. As the Master is, so are his servants. Hence all the other Sisters also walk in the footsteps of Mother Reine, considering service as their greatest reward, never expecting any reward in any other form. How blessed are they who are privileged to live in this Mary Land of selfless love and dedicated service. I am privileged to remain for three days in the Mary Land, accepting the hospitality and the selfless services of Mother Superior and all the devoted and dedicated Sisters.

I feel from within that it is my good *karma* that has brought me here to have a peep into the sacred lives of the members of Mary Land. You can never feel that you are a patient staying in a Nursing Home for St. Joseph's Nursing Home is a Holy Place of Prayer and Meditation. They have prayers in the morning, afternoons and evenings and also midnight prayers too. On Sundays they have special prayers more often and one feels their prayers are ceaseless, wishing the welfare of their patients and humanity, irrespective of the man-made differences in caste, creed, colour and nationality.

These ardent prayers come from dedicated hearts and are so effective that I feel the patients do not need any outer medicines.

Out of the fullness of my heart, when I said to the Mother Superior and the Sisters that God was abiding in their dedicated hearts of service and love each and every one of them said that God is not only in their hearts but that God is in all the hearts of His children. How true are the words that *God is everywhere* for He is Omnipresent. Where is the place where He exists not? Either within the body or without, in the world there is not a needle point of space where God exists not.

Blessed are they who can see Him everywhere and feel Him in every sound. Verily, all are the images of the one, 'Indivisible God, in the Mary Land, from my bed, I can see the ocean praying ceaselessly, repeating: "Why don't you pray, O Man?" The ocean is praying ceaselessly, both day and night. Let us pray also, *Every wave is a prayer*. Let every thought of ours also be a prayer. The ocean is turbulent and surging, creating restlessness sometimes. When it is calm and restful it gives great joy, repose and peace of mind. May our lives also be like the peaceful, calm ocean, giving out love and harmony, beauty and joy to all.

During my short stay here, I was blessed with many personal experiences of the ever-present Presence of God. Once at the midnight hour the Sister who was on night duty came with a flash light and was surprised to see me awake. She asked: 'Why are you not sleeping, Swamiji?'. As I was in ecstasy I told her: 'When God is awake, how can I sleep?' I also repeated the following touching Cosmic Song of Sri Swami Yoganandanji from his *Cosmic Chants*.

Wink did not touch my eyes.
Without Thee my breath does not want to flow
Thou didst say
That Thou wouldst come
But Thou has not come
Restless is my soul day and night
Wink did not touch my eyes
Ever since I saw Thee.

Only a God-soul can understand the inner mysteries of cosmic experience. I do not wish to make this message long for I am requested by my doctor friends to remain silent because of the heart condition and not exert myself by either speaking or writing. Let me thus close this message with one helpful and inspiring parable which a doctor friend fed to me from the writings of Dada Vaswani. Any good thing that I feel, experience, I love to share with all the children of God in the East and the West. This is a wonderful and illuminating illustration that helps and inspires all aspiring souls.

It seems that once a learned scholar, a great man was sent for initiation, for enlightenment to a poor man. The scholar wished him Good day! The poor man said that every day was a good day for him. The scholar said Good luck! and the poor man said that he was always having good luck and had never had bad luck so far, for all is God to him. The scholar was astonished and said, 'What will you do if God keeps you in Hell? The devoted man, the true servant of God replied, I have two arms, one of love and the other of humility. As I embrace God with these two arms, God has to come to me, even to Hell and stay there in my embrace. With God I should love to stay even in Hell. I would not want to stay even in Heaven without him. How life-giving and soul awakening are these truths!

The living example of love can be understood from the memorable words uttered by Christ on the Cross:

Father, forgive them for they know not what they do!

Let me give here also an example of humility, It seems that some villains wanted to tease and annoy a saintly soul and hence they hung their old shoes in the doorway of the saint's cottage. The saint, as he went in, accidentally touched his head to the dirty shoes and exclaimed in ecstasy: 'How blessed is my life now, for it has been sanctified by the sacred touch of the dust from the shoes of the children of God'. Hearing these words of humility, the ruffians felt ashamed of their cruel deed and fell prostrate at

the feet of the saint and begged his forgiveness.

One of my happiest moments during the stay in Mary Land was when Mother Mary took me into the *Shrine Room*, the Holy Place of Worship where they all offer constant prayers both day and night. She was kind enough to have special prayers offered for my welfare. It was a most touching and inspiring sight to see all the Nuns on their knees repeating prayers with their eyes closed moving the beads of the Rosary in their hands with every prayer.

I too wished to have a Rosary of my own to use, for it helps one to feel His Presence ceaselessly. During my short stay in the Chapel I did not think of myself or the heart trouble but only felt the presence of God as I gazed on the innocent face of the Crucified Christ. Verily, we are crucifying the blessed Christ whenever we are selfish. We glorify Christ whenever we are selfless.

May we be selfless for the Peace of All!

It is my nature to learn and assimilate from all that is good even from a child. My stay in Mary Land and my visit to the Shrine Room made me promise to God that we too would have a separate Shrine Room in our Sushila Hospital. My heart rejoices now from my sickbed as I see in our Totapalli Ashram all the workers, doctors, nurses and patients praying and meditating in the Shrine Room. It will give strength and inspiration to the doctors, nurses, patients and workers and to all the visitors who can go and spend a few minutes alone with God, the silent healer of all the ailments in the world.

India has always been considered the land of spirituality from the very beginning. Even after attaining Independence it is not too late for the leaders of the nation to spiritualise their selfless services, all the new works and institutions, with Chapels and Shrine Rooms so that doctors, patients, workers, staff and visitors may begin their work with a moment of silence, invoking God's richest blessings. Someone once said that God heals and the doctors take the credit. If the patient dies then the doctor says 'It is God's Will' or 'It is the *karma* of the patient'.

If a critic should say: “Why invite a non-believer, an atheist into the shrine Room? my reply would be ‘Even an atheist is blessed to be alone with His creator even if only for a moment, instead of beginning the day with smoking and chit-chat’. May His Will be done on earth and in heaven for it is God who abides in the hearts of His children, the doctors, nurses, patients, believers or non-believers!

In memory of my stay in Mary Land, may I embrace God with one hand of Love and the other hand of Humility!. Dear God let others be great and famous and let me be unknown, insignificant and humble!

An offering to Mother Mary Reine
and to all the devoted Sisters, doctors and dedicated
nurses in grateful appreciation of all their selfless
service, wishing glorious success of their great work
May Peace be unto all!

OM OM OM

My Meditation, these Days

As I look at the ocean I feel that I am a bubble and He is the ocean. This world is only a wave in the Ocean of *akhanda*, *satchidanandam*, the Existence Absolute, Knowledge Absolute and Bliss Absolute. It is ecstasy to see the bubble of the body the tiny ego, merging and dissolving in the Limitless Sea of God. As the Sun comes out over the horizon, immediate on the thought that I am a ray of that effulgent Sun. Is the ray ever separate from the Sun, either in the past, present or future? The ray comes from the Sun. It is one with the Sun. Even when the Sun sets the ray goes back into the Sun. As the ray is eternally one with the Sun, So I am One with the Sun of Suns.

I AM IN THE LIGHT
THE LIGHT IS IN ME
I AM THE LIGHT

The very meditation on these beautiful thoughts of light gives me inspiration.

Usually it is dark when I rise from my bed in the hospital for I often get up between 2 or 3 a.m. I wait patiently for the sunrise in the East. At last my patience is rewarded, for there is the first glimmering of light on the horizon. Slowly the darkness disappears and light fills the world. There is life everywhere. The birds, crickets and other creatures start to sing and fly as the Sun comes out.

Often and often, almost every day, as I see the darkness disappearing and the world being filled with Life, Light and Love the question from within comes thus:

Dear Living Image of God where is your Light? Are you dispelling any darkness from the world? Is your repetition of the *mahavakyams*, the Great Statements that you are the Sun of suns, *Aham Brahman Asmi*, I am Brahman and other *mantrams*, are they all a myth? Will you be satisfied just to repeat them like a parrot! Wake up from thy long slumbers of ignorance and darkness to the full Glory of thy Divine Heritage, the splendour of millions of Suns.

Last of all is my best, highest and happiest meditation on the Inner Rosary of *SOHAM*. One day, while I was in St. Joseph's Nursing Home, Mother Superior came to me with two rosaries, one of pearl and one of sandalwood. She asked me to choose one for my personal use but said: "Swamiji, please choose a rosary but with that promise that no matter what holy name you use you will begin the first bead with the name of Mother Mary". As I have had many mothers of Love and Service in the East and the West and as I have always adored and respected Mother Mary, Lakshmi, Saraswati, Parvati, all as manifestations of the *Parama Shakthi*, the Mother of the World, I felt happy to agree to Mother Reine's

condition.

As sandalwood always gives out a sweet fragrance, I picked that one happily. Thus I used the sacred Rosary often with great benefit. As the days passed by, the Rosary would often slip from my hand and the hand would become numb and inert for indented more and more with the Inner Rosary which is ever present in the form of *SOHAM*. As I follow the inhalation and exhalation of the breadth, the Cosmic, Universal Breath, oceans and continents are covered and the hearts of planets are passed through for *SOHAM* excludes none but includes all. With each breath the manifested and unmanifested world are filled with life and love and Infinite Light.

Thus, I follow *SOHAM* ceaselessly until I reach those Blessed Heights where there is neither inhalation nor exhalation where abides only for the stupendous, self-effulgent splendour of millions of Suns.

Glory! Glory! Glory!

OM OM OM

CHAPTER 97

LEGACIES AND BEQUESTS

The stay in Mary Land with all the devoted Mother Marys brought back to mind the promise that I made to my loving readers that I would have a chapter on Legacies, and Bequests telling about all the mothers I have had and how they have showered me with all love and devotion for these past seventy-seven years.

To begin with, my own mother died, left the body when I was too young to have known her. But the Almighty Father has not left me without the love of a mother. He has instead blessed me with many devoted mothers in both the East and the West. When I went to school in Vishakapatnam I stayed with my Sister Venkayamma and her husband at the noted Rednam Gardens. They were always too kind and looked after me as their own child. My sister was like a mother of generosity and tenderness to me. Later, mother Ratnam, along with her husband Sri. K.Rama Rao called me from the Himalayas to serve all the devotees in Rajahmundry and neighbouring places. They were also like parents and mother Ratnam was a true mother, for, she not only looked after me, anticipating my every need but also made her home into a branch of Santi Ashram, loving and serving the many devotees who came to feel the presence of God. She sent her little son, Atmaram, with me on the second journey to America and she often said she had not two sons but three. When Sister Sushila Devi first came to India mother Ratnam also took wonderful care of Sushila, giving her simple and healthy foods and introducing to her Indian ways. brother Rama Rao spent his last days in Santi Ashram. Totapalli; and our mother Ratnam divides her time between her three devoted children. Out beautiful Prayer Hall in mother Ashram, in Totapalli. Hills was built so generously and lovingly by mother Ratnam and brother Rama Rao. In the afternoons, asharamites gather in to listen and a Pandit speak and read from the *puranas*. In the evenings the *Gurukula* children, aged men and women and other ashramites have evening prayers, wishing Peace for all. The Prayer Hall has been the greatest blessing and countless seekers of Peace who have

come to Santi Ashram.

It was because of the inspiration of the Shrine Room where the devoted Mother Mary in Mary Land that we are now building a second floor to our Sushila Hospital. There will be a Spiritual Healing Centre where devoted souls can pray all the twenty-four hours of the day and night for the sick and suffering children of God, not only in our Ashram and in India, but throughout the world. Our Ashram doctor, nurses, patients and visitors and staff workers may also use the Chapel, just as the devoted Nuns, led by Mother Reine, prayed for the welfare of all the sick in their care and in all parts of the world. By God's grace I feel sure that our Spiritual Healing Centre will soon be completed for it is a Holy Work of Service and all that is needed is a roof. Then prayers can go forth continuously for the welfare and Peace of all.

Our Kamala Mandir in Santi Ashram where many devoted souls have been happy to stay was built by a generous donation and great love of mother Kamala Devi Tombat and her devoted husband Sri Ananda Rao of Madras. Whenever mother Kamala Devi comes to Tottapalli to rest and meditate, she spends her time in the Kamala Mandir. Her gift has been the greatest blessing to countless spiritual aspirants who have stayed in her Mandir and meditated, finding the goal of their previous human birth within, in their own hearts. It was mother Kamala Devi who used to receive me in Madras when I returned from America, along with her devoted husband and three spiritual children, Manorama, Sushila and Sumati. They would offer all hospitality and love and arrange special prayer meetings for all seekers of Truth in Madras. Mother Kamamma has a great heart of devotion and for many years she has lived to help and serve Santi Ashram, with her loving mother's heart. Every year mother Kamala Devi comes to the Ashram for my Birthday Celebrations and usually stays for at least a month, spending her time in prayer and meditation, making us all happy with her beautiful and inspiring *bhajans*. Her devoted daughter Manorama of Bangalore often comes too and thrills us with her holy music on the violin and soul-awakening singing.

As the Annual Ceremony of the late Tombat Ananda Rao, Advocate of Madras fell on Gandhi Nirvana Day, his devoted wife, Smt. Kamalamma observed it in the *Kamalananda* Mandir in the presence of Sri. Swamiji, presented new clothes after garlanding him. After prayers and *bhajan*s by the *Gurukula* Children, *Prasad* was distributed to all.

OM

OM

OM

(Peace Jan. 1969)

Of course, Mother Mariya was one of the greatest mothers of love and she looked on me not as an adopted child but as her very own flesh and blood, a part and parcel of life and she did everything, made every possible sacrifice for my welfare and for the Cause of Peace. She wanted to return to India with sister Sushila Devi and settle permanently in Santi Ashram but when Sushila Devi died so suddenly Mother Mariya gave up the idea. I would like to share with my loving readers the most touching and loving letter from Mother Mariya, written at the time of Sister Sushila's demise.

My precious Omkar: May the Eternal Presence keep you safe for me and may you always know that I live in your dear heart. May God keep you safe from all harm and bless you with His presence. AMEN.

Today I was shocked beyond all that I have ever experienced, for did you know or hear that our darling Sushila has passed to her reward. She is no longer a pilgrim of earth but a Native of Heaven.

We had planned to come to India as soon as possible. We thought of asking you to come to America and then I would see my home and go back to India with you. Oh, Omkar, I am so sad tonight. My lovely darling Sushila will never go with me to India. I pray to God, the Eternal Father to keep her in His care until you and I and all her loved ones all meet again. I miss her lovely letters. God bless her beautiful soul and may she find Eternal Peace in the arms of our Previous Father in Heaven.

I am so stunned I cannot think clearly. I was waiting, keeping her room ready and making her bed, for my Sushila dear, and your Sushila and the world's Sushila, for she loved us all. We can never find another like her. She is my Darling Child.

Dear heart, it is after midnight. I must go to bed for I am sad and weary. Good night, my sweet child..

Always your Mother's Heart,
Mother Mariya.

Mrs. Jean Lilly, our Santi Devi, Mrs. E.B. Hogan, Mother Jagadamba and Mildred Hayward, Jnana Devi were some of the mothers in America who have all hospitality to the Mission of Peace and turned their homes into *santi kendras*, Peace Centres. Santi Devi took great care of me during the time of the double fracture of the hip and she brought peace to the citizens of New York City for many years. Jnana Devi, Mildred Hayward, as well as being a great mystic along with her husband John Hayward, was also a talented writer. Here is an excerpt from a booklet which she wrote several years ago titled, 'Swami Omkar'; Dr. Swami Jnananandaji Maharaj was kind enough to write an Introduction. We also have many of Jnana Devi's books, such as 'Christ Appears' in our Ashram library.

SWAMI OMKAR

- Mildred Hayward (Jnana Devi)

Three years after I started my work in Divine Science, I was greatly blessed to meet His Holiness Sriman Swami Omkar.

Sri Dhan Gopal Mukherji, who has written many brilliant and enlightening books about his native land, India, said in one of his last books 'A son of Mother India Answers' that Swami Omkar is one of the six real 'Holy Men' of India.

A well-educated American woman asked me, when I spoke to Swami Omkar, 'What is a Holy man? Do you mean he is someone

like our ministers?’ This made me realise that the ideals and teaching of the orient are but vaguely known to the occident and it is natural that the attributes and exalted way of the life of a ‘Holy Man’ are but little understood here.

A Holy Man in India is one who has renounced the world and its so-called pleasures for the bliss of God realisation. Swami Omkar took the vow of holiness at such an early age that he has never taken part in any worldliness. This, added to his constant practice of the Presence of God has made him a very clear and strong channel for the light and Divinity to shine through. It is because he really lives the life that he so inspires thousands of people to purify lives that he so inspires thousands of people to purify their lives and to ascend the Invisible Road of Spirituality.

The first news I hear of Swami Omkar was from my sister, Louise Mallory whom I went to visit in Philadelphia. As soon as I arrived, she told me in great excitement that Mukherji had taken her and her husband to hear the Message of a Holy Man. He had just come from India to start a Mission of Peace in Philadelphia. She said that his discourse was wonderful and that he was spiritual and happy and radiant; and when she returned home and learned over the bed of her six year old boy to see if he was breathing peacefully he opened his eyes and as a delighted smile spread over his face he said, ‘Why Mummy, where did you get all that light in you?’

Not to waste any time she took me the next day to meet Swami Omkar. I shall never forget his detached aspect and his manner of speech, as though a remote Surper-Self in him were speaking.

He teaches renunciation of the little self, non-attachment and merging into the One Divine Presence. To him there is no value in name and form, in praise or blame. Everything sings to him of God, everything is a message to him from God. He tries never to forget or neglect God for a single moment, day and night. He teaches that immortal treasures are hidden within ourselves

and are only waiting to be manifested. He teaches that God is in each and every cell of our bodies, shining in us as Light. As Jesus said: ‘ Know ye not that ye are the Light of the World;

I went as often as possible to study with Swami Omkar for I felt that it was as an opportunity that only God could have arranged for me and I craved to learn all that he would teach me.

He taught me his Four Initiations which are spiritual concentrating exercises taking one into a high mystical state of realisation and developing great power of visioning in the individual. Through these Initiations, one learns how to dissolve his individual cross and to release within Divine Illumination or to release the divinity which has been made captive by the ego.

The ego is the cross and it creates all our troubles, woes, sufferings and unrest. The mind and will are the tools of the ego until we surrender them to the control of Divine Intelligence and then the mind assumes its intended function of being a channel for God’s thought and activity; the ego vanishes and we are transformed into the Illumination.

Swami Omkar’s teachings have been a great inspiration and a high influence for good in my life. I shall ever be grateful to him for his blameless life and dedicated to Divine Purpose.

OM OM OM

Our Mother Jagadamba came once to India spent some time in Kailas and in Waltair Ashram. She was interested in helping to find an Institute of Indic Studies and met with some important people in India and Andhra, including Pundit Nehru, Dr. Swami Jnananandaji and Dr.K. Satchidananda Murthy of the Philosophy Department of the University of Andhra.

Whenever I hear the name of Santi Devi I always remember the loving and devoted Santa Mouni Devi who played and sang the spiritual songs of Mother India so beautifully. She spent some time in our Ashram and loved our Sister Sushila Devi very much.

It was Santa Mouni Devi who said when she heard that I was going to America again; ‘Ah, the Sun shall shine so much brighter in the West but it shall be so much dimmer, darker in the East; When our Swiss Mother, Mrs. Betty Forster, an ardent devotee of the Cause of Peace came to spend an year with us in India I felt from within that I should give her the spiritual name of Santi Devi. During her year in Santi Ashram our Santi Devi repeated the Peace prayer in the French language and sang many spiritual French songs. She visited our Waltair and Kailas Ashram and in many ways helped the Cause of Peace. Now she is back on the heights in Switzerland but she always writes to us and sends many beautiful presents and pictures from the far away Switzerland.

Where is Totapalli Mother Ashram and where is Europe? It was strange how we began to receive letters from so many devotees in Germany, Switzerland, Sweden, France, Czechoslovakia and other countries. Mrs. Irmgard Georga Schultz, whom I named Ganga Mayi became an ardent devotee and translated our Peace into the German *Friede* to share with her countrymen the message of Peace and Love. She was a real Mother of over-flowing Love and devotion and she composed the poems that begin every chapter of *Cosmic Flashes*. Many other devotees in Flensburg, such as Brother Vyasa, Albert Moldenhaur became close friends and even though we never saw them physically . May God bless always our Mother Ganga Mayi for her life of devotion and may Peace be unto all our Brothers and Sisters in Germany, Europe, Africa and all parts of the World!

Where is Germany and where is Totapalli and where is the far off Hong Kong? One of the greatest mothers of love and generosity has been our Mother Ruttonjee of Hong Kong, along with Brother Ramdasji, Sri Pao and other members of that loving and dedicated family? Over the years it has been the contributions of Mother Ruttonjee which have helped in so many ways to build and improve the Ashram and spread the Mission of Peace throughout the World. No words can describe my joy and ecstasy when I think of how good God has been to me, his frail and weak

child, in bringing such great mothers of devotion generosity and compassion as Mother Ruttonjee, Mother Mariya, Mother Kamala Devi, Mother Ratnam and many others.

OM OM OM

HOLY AND GOD - CONSECRATED LEGACIES:

Atma - Relationship

Some readers will ask, ‘What is this new Atma-Relationship?’ We have heard of blood relationship but not of this. My answer is : Atma - Relationship is none other than our relationship with God; the old Truth that God *is one* and we are all related to him. Blood relationship is confined only to a finite home, a small family and a particular community, ‘whereas God Relationship includes all families, all communities, nay even all nations and all humanity!

A recent event has deeply touched and moved my heart to the core for it brings out the full Splendour of Atma-Relationship. Where is Long Reach, California? Where is Rishikonda Beach, Waltair, India? There must be at least twelve thousand miles distance between them. Who is Dr. Cudrun Frissholm and who is Swami Omkar, with respect either of blood relationship or national affinity? Outwardly there is hardly any relationship but spirituality, from the standpoint of the One, Indivisible Atman Sister Dr. Frissholm and Swami Omkar are one and the same. They are different sparks of the One Light, different waves of the same ocean and two rays of the One Effulgent Sun.

Dr. Frissholm visited Santi Ashram in Totapalli Hills nearly thirty years ago and spent some time with us. She was deeply impressed with its silent work. She wrote in the Visitor’s Book: ‘Swami Omkar and Santi Ashram are not two but One’. It was her one ambition and aspiration to return to the Ashram, her own spiritual home and retire, serving the poor and sick. She made arrangements to join the Ashram and even booked the passage to India but alas, how uncertain is life?

Today man is and tomorrow he is not. The Call from the great beyond came suddenly. Yet, in spite of all the sudden call Dr. Frissholm had remembered her Atma - Relationship with her own Abode of Peace in the far away India and she bequeathed her estate, the little she had, not to her blood relations or close friend, but to that Atma - Relation in distant India.

In its humble way the Ashram is endeavouring to perpetuate the memory of our dear Dr. Frissholm by constructing something which will be helpful to the poor and sick whose service was her one ambition in life. May the Good Lord bless the Spirit of our Sister Cudrun Frissholm with Eternal Rest in Him; this is the Prayer of the members of the Mission of Peace.

Glory unto the Atma Relationship where one feels for all, loving all as one's own. The basis and foundation of the Atma - Relationship is contained in the following words:

The world is our home. All the people in it are our brothers and sisters. To love, serve and worship them is only religion.

May Peace be unto All!

(Peace April 1953)

* * * * *

Many miracles have happened in this life by His grace. This has been, one of the happiest miracles, coming so suddenly and unexpectedly. Unconsciously, out of the fullness of my heart I praise God with gratitude and beg Him to make this instrument more and more worthy of all His blessings. I long to share one of the miracles that has touched me deeply and made me the happiest man in all the world, marvelling at the unbounded mercy of God. While we were returning from our Nilgiris Peace Centre in one village an elderly lady approached our Jnaneswari and put Rupees 1000/- in her hands saying:

Dear child, this is for Sri Swamiji's use. Even after I am gone, please do not use the principal, use only the interest from it buy fruits, food and cloth for the needs of Sri Swamiji on his

Birthday, 21st January every year.

How can I express my grateful thanks in these finite words to the Almighty, Who has entered into the dedicated heart of Mother Annapurnamma and rendered this permanent good deed settings an example for all the mothers in the East and the West. During my stay in the U.S.A. in Philadelphia another mother, Mother Mariya also set apart some money in her Will. She said:

My child. I never want to see you in need, even after I am gone.

I feel deeply touched and immensely grateful to all these big-hearted mothers of the East and the West who have gone out of their way to take such great care of me not only while this body is alive but also after it has gone from the world. I take joy in repeating: If we do God's work, God will do our work. If we love Him unselfishly, He will take care of us ceaselessly, protecting us tenderly as the mother does her baby, the eyelid the eye.

(Peace March 1963)

Homage to our Veda Devi

Veda Reed Stone was a gifted writer and a great soul blessed with Cosmic Consciousness. Her writings have a deep, original and helpful approach to all seekers of Truth in both the East and the West for they come from personal experience, from within. She was a silent friend of the Ashram, always helped the Cause of Peace and highly appreciated every word of my messages in the Peace journal. Veda was not rich in the goods of the world but she was rich spiritually and shared her divine wealth with all the aspiring children of the world.

Sooner or later the end will come to all of us. It was a sad shocking when we heard the sad news of the demise of our Veda Devi. By the way, as she represents the essence of all religions and as she is the soul of the Vedas I felt from within that I should bless her with the Spiritual Name of Veda Devi, the Goddess of Wisdom.

It was a sad surprise when I received a registered letter from the Security First National Bank with the news that our Veda had written a Will and bequeathed three hundred dollars to the Ashram in my name. Now I feel that she is my Mother and I am her child more than ever, for I never expected material wealth from our Veda but only relied on her perennial flow of Cosmic Light, always coming from the far away California Hills to the Totapalli Hills, filling me with Light Infinite, Life Eternal and Love Universal. God's ways are mystical and incomprehensible. Now, my one thought and ardent wish is how to make best use of this love offering of Rupees fifteen so that the memory of Veda, her sacred name may be kept alive forever.

It gives me joy always to expand and do something practical for the progress of the Ashram and for the good of all the seekers of Peace. Recently we extended our Ashram to the foot of the hill and now on to the hill itself. We have made one lovely spot a Jnan Tapovanam and we contemplate constructing two kutirams there, the Jnana Kutir, Santi Kutir for meditation so that, Swamis, Sadhus and spiritual aspirants will have a place to pray in Silence and Peace. The love offering the thoughtful gift of our Veda Devi will be used in the construction of these two kutirs and our Veda Devi's spirit will rejoice that we have made the best use of her loving gift for the benefit of all.

Nearby in the Jnan Tapovanam we dug a large hole in hopes of getting water. But as the hillside is rocky we were unable to find water and so we have decided to make the large hole into a Cave for meditation. We know this will be useful to all aspiring souls who wish to spend their time in real Silence in the Cave of peace and wisdom, the Jnana Guha far away from the din and clamour of the world. Whenever we get help, be it from the unknown hand, the dead and departed or from the living ones we want only to build that which we pray will be spiritual beneficial to all seekers of Peace and votaries of Silence.

May the compassionate and loving spirit of our Veda Devi continue to be a blessing to all the children of God in the East and

West and may her great Soul of Universal Love and Infinite Light and Eternal Peace rest in God! This is the prayer of Omkar on behalf of all the members and well-wishers of the Mission of Peace, Santi Ashram.

OM

OM

OM

(Peace March 1966)

There have been so many generous and loving mothers, how can we mention them all here? Indeed, to tell my loving readers about all the mothers of the East and West, I should have to write a separate book. Our Lalita Devi was also a great mother of peace who brought us to Kotagiri and spread the message of Universal Love to all her daughters and sons. Although she too has passed away she took wonderful care of us, the Kotagiri Peace Centre and all those pining for God in the Nilgiris with a selfless life of service. May the generous spirit of Sister Lalita Devi ever remain centered in the Light of lights, shedding Peace on one and all.

Our Mother Nagubayamma, the mother of Sri. M.V. Bobjee of Madras, a great devotee has also been loving and helpful to the Mission of Peace. She gave us also a lovely set of cane chairs and tables which are now in the Verandah of the Nirvana Mandir for the comfort of ashramites and distinguished visitors.

The Mother Superior, Mother Reine, who took good care of me in the Nursing Home of St. Joseph's is also a great spiritual mother, taking good care of all the sick and suffering and spending every moment when not working for others in Holy Communion with the Blessed Christ and Mother Mary. May God bless her and all the devoted Nuns, the Sisters who give their Lives for the Blessed Christ in service to His children of the East and the West.

Our Dr. Ramani, the talented daughter of Dr.C.K.Prasad Rao, my boyhood friend from Visakhapatnam was a real mother of love to me during the days of the Heart Malady. She insisted on taking me to her own home and took wonderful care of me day and night, worrying over every beat of the heart, serving me lovingly in so many ways. She and her devoted sister, Dr. Devaki have ever

followed in their father's footsteps, living selfless for the sick and offering, serving God's children always with devotion. Our Dr. Rajeswari who is now serving the sick in the Ghana is also a great soul of selfless service. Her husband, Sri Raghavendrarao has helped Santi Ashram so generously in so many ways and they have built a palacial mansion in the Ashram for the use of spiritual aspirants. The Rani Saheba of Bobbili, Smt. Lakshmi Subhadra Devi and her devoted sister, the *zamindarini* of Chikkavaram have also been wonderful friends of Santi Ashram, building a beautiful Krishna Mandir and helping the Ashram and its devotees in so many ways. They both sing beautifully and when Saraswathi Devi plays the Vina all feel that they are listening to the divine music of the Goddess Saraswati herself.

May the almighty God bless all these mothers for selfless service and boundless love; nay, may He bless and watch over all the loving Mothers of the East and the West who live and breathe for the welfare of their children, God's children, seeing all as their own and nourishing and caring for the weak and poor, the sick and the suffering. All mothers are verily manifestations of the One Mother *Parama Shakti* the cosmic mother of the universe who holds us all in her arms, in her boundless lap of love and watches over us as her helpless babies, caring for our every need, our every want and little by little, in a loving and mystical way bringing us closer to the goal of our precious human birth, the *brahman*, the *parama shiva* the unmanifested the light of lights which is the end of all the wordly and the indwelling presence of our very own hearts. May peace be unto all.

OM OM OM

CHAPTER 98

I AM MARKANDEYA

Markandeya was a boy-saint of olden days. He was supposed to die at the young age of sixteen years. Yama, the King of Death came at the appointed hour to take Markandeya from the mundane world the earth. But Markandeya was engaged in *puja*, the worship of the Highest. He was clinging to the *Shiva Lingam*, worshipping the Indwelling Light, *SOHAM* with all the strength of his mind, heart and soul. What could the poor and helpless *Yama* do? Again and again, he stretched his noose to put it around the neck of the devoted Markandeya. Alas! The king of Death failed once in his life utterly and completely and had to leave for his Abode of Death alone, crest-fallen and disappointed.

These days, especially from the time to the Heart Malady, I take joy in repeating that I am the living Markandeya, both consciously and unconsciously. How blessed it is to be a young Markandeya always. I am only sixteen years old. To me also at the appointed hour on an auspicious moment, as I got ready in Waltair Ashram to climb up the Kailas Hill to spend some time in Peace, Yama sent his fore-runner in the form of the Heart Malady, but I was clinging to *SOHAM*, the Indwelling Light. I was taken to the Nursing Home, in the company of the Mother Superior and all the devoted Sisters, Nuns in spite of the Heart Malady, for I was with the Light within. Poor Yama could only remain outside peeping through the window forlorn.

When I stayed in the comfortable quarters of Dr. Ramani the Superintendent of the Victoria Hospital, Yama still came but when He saw the devoted Dr. Ramani and her staff of dedicated devotees all doing *bhajana*, having prayers and meditations, Yama could not come in. Later, when I was in Waltair Ashram and then in Kailas and in Mother Ashram, Totapalli Hills, Yama still tried for my life, often visiting me to see whether I was forgetting God, the Light within, or clinging to the *SOHAM* Light, ceaselessly. But alas, Yama was and is now still disappointed for I am always

winning, all by the grace of God, by His special blessings for I have ever been his chosen pet child.

God the All - knowing One has work for me to do. I have to complete the Prayer Hall with Library and Guest Rooms in our Kotagiri Peace Centre for the use and help of His children in the different religions of the East and West. Yama laughs at me whenever I go up to hill stations against the wishes of my loving doctors.

When I went to Mantralayam on the rugged roads, my heart palpitated, working like a pumping engine and Yama was there, dogging my footsteps, expecting the worst to come. But I fooled Yama then also, for, I was clinging to the *SOHAM* Light, Shiva within. Leaving aside Yama, whenever I have to spend my time in the company of the people of the world, especially those who waste my precious time with discussions and arguments, the still small voice from within says: 'Dear Markandeya, my child! every moment of your time is very precious, for anything may happen at any moment. Look at Yama, the Terrible One and how he mercilessly snatches away the lives of even the mighty and the powerful, the Yogis and Swamis. Pray continue clinging to the Changeless and Self-effulgent *Shiva Lingam* within yourself. Thus alone are you safe from all harm and from the inflexible noose of Yama. Whenever there is forgetfulness of the Light, Yama is watching us. Death is near at hand, hovering around us. It is above, below and everywhere. Death takes hold of these who deny God and cling to the body. Selfishness and death are close friends. Death cannot approach, dare not come near selfless people. Death laughs at the people who hoard the perishable wealth and neglect the impreishable wealth that cannot rust or be stolen by thieves, or eaten by white ants or confiscated by Governments.'

O Death! Where is thy sting? How can you touch me when I am Markandeya ever clinging to the *SOHAM LIGHT* within. Please go to those lazy and selfish people who are wasting, nay killing their precious time with thoughts of 'mine' and 'thine' always living for themselves, ignoring even the God who comes

to them in the form of poor and sick. Kindly go to them who do not know the value of the invaluable, tiny precious moments. Time is priceless. Every tiny moment is more precious than all the wealth in the world. Markandeya could not live for the millionth fraction of a second forgetting the *SOHAM LIGHT*. Hence, Yama could not touch even a single hair of his head; nor dare He approach Markandeya.

Dear loving readers, you are all the living Markandeyas deathless Markandeyas, Immortal Markandeyas in spite of the passing clouds of sickness and darkness. Your birthright is immortality. Pray, take hold of your Divine Heritage Now and Here as you read this chapter. Those who are afraid of death are welcome to the Peace Centre, the abode of health, peace longevity. Markandeya is calling you. Markandeya is extending a hearty welcome to all Markandeyas.

Man is the master of his destiny. He has conquered many things in the world with his mighty genius. He has conquered now Yama also, his only cruel and unfailing enemy, who snatches away one and all, even famous doctors and lawyers, mighty politicians, famous scientists and artists and the great Sages and Mahatmas, Yogis and Swamis, without the least respect or consideration for the powerful lives of potentates, millionaires and other influential men of the world. In *pravritti*, the outer world of duality, Yama is calling you. In *nivritti*, in the inner world of Unity and Love, Shiva, the Indwelling Light, *SOHAM*, is calling you. It is with you now to choose, light or darkness, death or life, mortality or Immortality, Yama or God, and wake up from your long slumbers. The time to wake up is Now for the present, living moment alone is ours. Today is ours and not tomorrow. Verily, this moment alone is ours and every moment counts to a Markandeya.

What else can I say! I see a world of Markandeyas around me. All my readers are living Markandeyas. All the members, workers and Gurukula children in the Ashram are Markandeyas. Not only in the Ashram and in India though, every-where in the world, all are Markandeyas of longest life, health and peace. Hail

unto the Markandeyas of Light Infinite, Life Immortal and Love Universal.

I AM MARKANDEYA.

YOU ARE MARKANDAYA.

ALL ARE MARKANDEYAS.

Yama can never dare to touch us or come near us. All Homage to Yama!.

Long Life to the Markandeyas!!

Glory to God!

May Peace be unto All!

ॐ वमृगिरकतसलदजौहैं

त्रयंबकम् यजामहे सुगन्धिम् पुष्टिवर्धनम्
उर्वारुक मिव बन्धनात् प्रत्योर्मुक्षीय मामृतात्

Om Tryambakam yajamahe sugandhim pusti vardhanam!

Urvarukamiva bandhanath mrityor mukshiya mamritat!

We worship the three-eyed one, (Lord Siva) who is fragrant and who nourishes well all beings. May he liberate us from death for the sake of immortality even as the cucumber is served from its bondage (to the creeper).

This *Maha Mrityunjaya Mantram* is a life - giving *mantram*, a weapon against diseases, a *mantram* with which to conquer death and also *Moksha Mantram* which bestows long life (Dirgha Ayush), Peace (Santhi), Wealth (Aishvarya), Prosperity (Pushti), Satisfaction (Tusthi) and most important, immortality, *Moksha*.

OM OM OM

CHAPTER 99

INAGURATION OF THE PRAYER HALL (PEACE CENTRE, KOTAGIRI)

The inauguration of the new Prayer Hall and Santi Library at the Peace Centre, Kotagiri is indeed a grand event in the life of the people of Kotagiri. The function commenced at 4 p.m. on 17th August 1966. His Excellency Sri.V.V. Giri, Governor of Mysore who was to inaugurate the Prayer Hall arrived at the main gate of the Ashram at 4 o' clock. He was received there by Pujya Swami Ramananda Tirthaji, Sri Swami Nityananda Vibhuti Swami, Sister Lalita Devi, Sri Nanja Gowder, Sri Ranga Gowder and others. An Ashram child garlanded him. In the Peace Centre he was warmly received and welcomed by Pujya Swami Omkarji. He was then led by Swamiji to the new Prayer Hall.

The Governor opened the Prayer Hall and Santi Library, cutting ribbons and lightning lamp at the Shrine with the chanting of OM by the gathering. There was a large number of people present, men and women, young and old. Near Lord Ganesha's statue by the side of the Prayer Hall, some devotees were performing *bhajan* with great enthusiasm long before the Governor's arrival. The audience was much bigger than expected and so many could not be accommodated within the Hall.

The meeting commenced with a Prayer, by Smt. Kamala Devi of Bangalore. Sister Lalita Devi, President of Peace Centre, read the Welcome Address. Next Sri Swami Ramananda Tirthaji gave a brief introductory speech explaining the object of the Peace Mission and the life work of Pujya Swami Omkarji. He said that Peace Centres in Kotagiri, Totapalli Hills, Waltair and other places seek to promote World Peace by establishing Peace in the individual hearts and practise of Universal Love. He referred to Swami Omkarji's spiritual experience and realisation, his fast for forty days during which he wrote *Cosmic Flashes*, his Silence for six years on Kailas and his selfless work for the last fifty years for the Peace and happiness of all. Finally he exhorted the people of

Kotagiri to fully utilise the new Prayer Hall, to come for *bhajana* every Sunday and make full use of the library.

Then Sri Swami Omkarji gave his Message of Peace and Love, and expressed great joy that the Prayer Hall was being inaugurated by his Excellency V.V.Giri, his boyhood friend. Next, Sri Ranga Gowder, the Vice-President of the Peace Centre read the Prayers of various Faiths. Swami Ramananda Tirthaji read aloud messages received from Mataji of Anandashram, Sri. S.Nijalingappa, Dr. and Mrs. Chenna Reddy, Sri. R.Venkataraman, Sister Santi Devi of Switzerland, Dr.T.M.P. of Madras University, Dr.K.Satchidananda Murthy and Sri Swami Jnanananadaji of Andhra University as well as many other telegrams and letters from both India and abroad.

The Chief Guest then gave his felicitations. His speech was inspiring and fully appreciated by the audience. After the Governor's talk, there was bhajan and the Peace Prayer in Tamil, followed by three OMs. With the proposal of a Vote of Thanks by Sri. Nanja Gowder, Chairman of the Kotagiri Panchayat Union, the meeting came to a close at 5.45 p.m. The whole function went off well and will remain long in the memory of the people who gathered for the occasion.

OM OM OM

Words of Welcome

My heart rejoices to welcome our Governor Sri.V.V. Giri as well as all of you, not only in the Peace Centre and the Prayer Hall but also into my heart, which feels for all; above all I love to welcome you into the Presence of God. If we believe in one word, Omnipresence, that God is Omnipresence then where are we now? We are all sitting in God's Omnipresence.

What a great joy it is to know that the God for whom we have been searching everywhere, here and there in temples and churches, is here with us Now!

We are sitting in His Presence, in Him now and here. We are all in Him and He is in us! It has been said that we should make the happiest moment of our lives permanent. Is not this the happiest moment when we feel God's Presence within and without, above and below and all around, now and here? so let us make this precious moment permanent, everlasting for our sake as well as for the Peace of all. *Live in God and help others to Live in Him* has been the simple and inspiring motto and ideal of Santhi Ashram from its founding, over fifty years ago.

As a blind man cannot lead the blind, the teachings that we cannot practise in our lives are a mere waste of time if, we teach and preach to others. Reform yourself before reforming others or the world. It is the Individual Peace that paves the way towards Universal Peace. Let me share with you now on this happy occasion one of the interesting experiences of my boyhood days, when Sri.V.V.Giri and I were youngsters. I do not remember now the exact year. It must be more than fifty-five years ago, however. Sri Giri was studying Law in England to become a Barrister. I was going to America to become a Doctor, a Healer of Diseases, a mental Doctor. I had the privilege of being his guest. It gives me joy to consider him as a *Mountain of God*. *Giri* is the top of the mountain and *Varahalu* is the Gold. Strange as it may sound, Sri.V.V. Giri has been a gold mountain from the beginning for he helped me then in my great need with gold sovereigns, *varahalu*. Since then Sri. V.V. Giri's life has been dedicated to helping all the children of God, the needy and oppressed with his deep love and great sympathy.

I am one of those who believe that not a blade of grass moves without God's will. All of you perhaps may believe that I have constructed this Prayer Hall. No. A thousand times No. It is he who has constructed it through his physical instrument for the good of you all. As all great undertakings have their own tests and trials, we too have had our tests from those who are near and around us and we have been blessed also to have the help, sympathy and blessings of those both near and far too. I am grateful to all of

them. By completing this Prayer Hall without funds in hand, or making a budget before starting, I realise now more than ever that all the wealth in the world belongs to me, for money flowed from unknown sources, in unexpected ways so that the Prayer Hall might be completed.

These days in little things as well as in big things I take joy in approaching not the finite man but the Infinite and Eternal God, who is all-knowing and He, in His Infinite Love grants all my desires be they big or small, for the good of all His children. Man always disappoints but God alone never disappoints. So let us rely on Him, the Eternal Supplier, Perennial Source of all Wisdom and Peace. Let us close now with Prayers to the Almighty that there may be Peace in the hearts of individuals, in communities and nations and thus throughout the whole world!

OM OM OM

FELICITATIONS

Speech by Sri. V.V. Giri, Governor of Mysore on the occasion of the Inauguration of the Prayer Hall and Santi Library in the Peace Centre, Lakshmi Vihar, Kotagiri on 17th August 1996.

Respected Swami Omkar,

Swami Ramananda Tirtha and Friends,

I have been thinking for a long time of going to Kotagiri to pay my respects to Swami Omkar and visit the Ashram in the Nilgiris. I had the pleasure and fortune of knowing Swami Omkarji while he was in London when a boy of hardly sixteen years of age. From his infancy he has been habituated to feel for the common man, for people sunk in poverty, disease, worries and troubles and he determined early to give up the so-called luxuries that people are addicted to or desire to have. He left for America and other places, studied the world and its aspects and started an Ashram at Totapalli.

I have been in touch, during all these decades with his great work, his qualities of head and heart, his inborn simplicity and love for selfless work. He has indeed from the beginning imbibed the spirit contained in the *Gita* which represents the quintessence of Indian Philosophy as embodied in the *Vedas*, *Upanishads* and *Puranas*: Early in life therefore, he gave up everything except rendering services to those who needed them most. He studied not only the Hindu scriptures but also the principles underlying other religions. I can confidently assert that he not only studied the *Gita* in all its aspects but put those principles into actual practise by his conduct and behaviour. In all his activities he did things like other outwardly but inwardly he maintained a spirit of detachment.

All these years, he has been doing his actions without selfish motive and has maintained equilibrium of mind, in failure, pleasure and pain, joy and sorrow. Early in life purified thus, he qualified himself for further meditation, prayer and devotion. He proved by thought, word and deed that there is true renunciation in right action. Right action implies action without selfish desires. He has proved that unselfish and detached attitude can and should be cultivated even if one is engaged in life's activities.

In our country certain Sannyasins give up the world completely and run away to the forests and live there for the rest of their lives without being in touch with the world or its affairs or actually serving people who are in distress. But true renunciation is best exhibited in selfless performance of works and not in withdrawal from the world..

OM OM OM

Renunciation means freedom from lust, anger and greed, the three gateways to hell, said the Governor. For that, meditation is necessary. One has to develop a quality of indifference towards success and failure, pain and pleasure that attend one's actions in the world. Sri Swami Rama Tirtha, Sri Swami Vivekananda, Sri Swami Sivananda and other great men have also emphasized the importance of selfless work for one's own good and for the good

of the world.

The Governor then referred to the selfless services rendered by Sri Swami Ramanandathirthaji for the cause of freedom and social uplift without any desire for help or power, name or fame. Here, material possessions do not give us true happiness if the spiritual foundation is not strong. In the end Sri V.V. Giri read out a test for character by which we can daily introspect and see our own lives and correct our defects. He expressed his great happiness in the construction of the new Prayer Hall and library at Kotagiri Peace Centre and in his having the opportunity to declare them open for the good of all.

(Peace Sept. 1966)

The Message of a Bedroom Light

There is a tiny bedroom light in the room where I sleep in the Lakshmi Vihar Peace Centre in Kotagiri. Every day in the early hours of dawn, when I get up I sit facing it, watching its rays and I unconsciously muse thus-

The tiny bedroom light is giving its rays all around it.

Where are your rays? What light are you giving? How are you serving the world?

Then the answer comes from within. My thoughts are my rays. Every thought of mine is a ray going out into the world, wishing the welfare of all the children of God. One ray goes towards Pujya Vinobhaji with prayers for his welfare. Another ray goes towards Sri Jayaprakash Narayan, thanking him for all his sympathy in the Cause of Peace. Another ray goes often towards all the sick people in the hospitals of the East and the West, wishing their health and happiness. One ray goes to the far away America with prayers for the welfare of the devotees in the West.

Another ray goes towards the East to Hong Kong and Malaysia with prayers for the Peace of the devotees and friends who are taking care of the Ashram every month for many years now. Again the rays keep on going, towards Japan, Australia and

all around the world, spreading light in California, Washington, New York, Canada, South America and across the Atlantic Ocean. They go to England, France, Germany, Russia, Switzerland, Czechoslovakia and all the other countries of Europe, the Middle East and Africa. They go to all the countries where we have well-wishers of the Ashram and to countries where we do not personally know a single soul. Of course, the rays go to all the villages and towns of India and Ceylon and to all the countries and peoples north of the Himalayas. Thus, my rays include all the known and the unknown, excluding none. Every day, it gives me a joy to send forth my loving thoughts, loving rays of Peace near and far and fill the wide world with health, Peace and Love.

How consoling and inspiring is the feeling, *bhavana* that every thought of mine is a ray of Love. Thus, my rays are filling all the world, spreading Peace from heart to heart, near and far. It gives me joy and inspiration to consider the little electric bedroom light as my Guru, the living teacher. In my own way too, I am giving rays of light wherever I may be, whatever I may be doing.

May the life of every man, woman and child, the children of God, nay, the living images of God, be a lamp to humanity. May the devoted and dedicated lives of all the loving readers of this Autobiography be a blessing to all His children in the East and the West, ignoring the man-made differences of caste, creed, colour and nationality.

Truly, the wide world is our home and all the people in it are our brothers and sisters and to love and serve them is our Highest Religion.

May there be Peace in Heaven.

Peace in the Sky.

Peace across the Waters!

May there be Peace on Earth.

May Peace flow from all the herbs, plants and trees.

May all the Celestial Beings radiate Peace.

May Peace pervade the Four Quarters.

May Peace be unto all !

OM TAT SAT OM

Ashram News:

The day of the Inauguration of the Peace Centre, Kotagiri will ever remain memorable in the history of the Ashram, the Mission of Peace. Telegram after telegram and letters of felicitation have poured in, not only on the 17th but also in the previous day and on the days after. Because there were too many telegrams the Postal Authorities had to put ten to twelve telegrams in one envelope.

We take joy in expressing our heartfelt thanks to all the friends and well-wishers of the Ashram in the United States, Europe, Hong Kong, South Africa, Malaysia and other foreign lands and to all the devotees in every part of India and Ceylon for their love and sympathy. We are also thankful for the love-offerings of the many devotees which have helped to make the inauguration successful and made the poor feeding possible.

For want of space we are not able to publish the many felicitations of the eminent friends of the Ashram. We hope to publish these in full in the coming issues of Peace. We hope to be satisfied now by atleast mentioning the names of some of the well wishers of the Ashram who have contributed to the glorious success of the inauguration.

Mrs. Vera Slattery	London, England
Mrs. Betty Forster	Bienne, Switzerland
Miss. Elizabeth Achelis	New York City, U.S.A.
Mr. and Mrs. Egil Torrison	Pennsylvania, U.S.A.
Mrs. John B. Hayward	Washington D.C. U.S.A.
Mrs. Frances Golitzen	Los Angeles U.S.A.
Misses. Blanch and Grace Hosp	Los Angeles U.S.A.
Irmgard Georga Schult	Flensburg, Germany
Bhai Vyasa	Flensburg, Germany
Professor Paramatma Prakash	Munich, Germany

Mrs. Ruttonjee & Brother	Hong Kong
Ramdasji	
Sri Chinnaiah	Kuala Lampur, Malaysia
Sri Chen Yoke Chen	Kuala Lampur, Malaysia
Mr.and Mrs. Somayya	
(Smt. Damayanti Devi)	Mauritius
Father Padayachee & Family	Durban, South Africa
Sri Ramachandran, Editor,	Ceylon
Religious Digest	
H.H. Sri. Swami Sahajanandaji	Divine Life Society, Durban
South Africa	

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**Sri V.V. Giri & Swamiji at Prayer Hall
Inauguration, Kotagiri**



Viswashanti Vidyalaya, Kotagiri

CHAPTER 100

SRI SWAMI RAMA TIRTHA INSTITUTE OF PEACE

From my boyhood days, I derived my greatest inspiration from the holy life of Sri Swami Rama Tirtha, the Poet-Saint of the Punjab. It was the powerful message of Self-reliance and highest vedanta given forth by Swami Ram that sustained me after the first terrible defeat, the rejection at the gateway to America, Ellis Island. It was under the influence of the majestic writings of Ram that I too longed to tread the path in the woods of God-Realisation, in the Holy Himalayas, by the side of the sacred Mother Ganges and in the awesome Brahmapuri Forest. As Ram had gone to America to spread the Message of God- Realisation Now and Here I too longed to go to America and follow in Swami Ram's footsteps.

It is strange and interesting how Sri Swami Ramananda Tirthaji, a direct disciple of Sri Swami Narayan who loved and served Swami Ram with all his great heart and should have come to know of Santi Ashram and helped our Mission of Peace in so many ways. It was our Sushila Devi who first wrote to Sri Pujya Swami Ramananda Tirthaji many years ago and requested him to send some of his inspiring writings for our Peace magazine. He did so and they were published, giving inspiration to many readers of our journal but we did not meet him until many years later. Here are the interesting words that Swami Narayan told our Pujya Ramananda Tirthaji many years ago predicting the great future of Santi Ashram. Truly Swami Narayanan, with his loving heart was ever a silent friend of the Mission of Peace, helping always in many ways. May his devoted spirit ever rest in the Light of Lights, the only reality, the Indwelling Presence of our hearts.

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Sri Swami Rama Tirtha Institute of Peace

Under the auspicious of H.H. Sri Swami Ramananda Tirthaji Maharaj, the living disciple of H.H.Narayana Swamiji Maharaj, the direct disciple of H.H. Swami Rama Tirtha.

The goal of the individual as well as of all mankind throughout the world is peace. Life devoid of Peace is a burden to Mother Earth. Everyone wants World Peace without thinking of establishing Peace within his or her own heart. It is the Peace of the individual that paves the way to Universal Peace; so establish it first in your heart and then spread it in your home, radiate it in your community and let it vibrate in the Universe. Hence, the motto of Santi Ashram, the Mission of Peace has ever been the ideal of Universal Peace.

In the same words, Sri Rama Tirtha says in his clarion voice:

Wanted Reformers:

Not of others, but of themselves.

Who have won

Not University Distinctions

But Victory over the local self.

Age: The youth of Divine Joy;

Salary: Godhead.

Apply Sharp

With no begging solicitations

But Commanding Decision to

The Director of the Universe,

Your own self.

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(Peace April 1964)

This new venture of the Sri Swami Rama Tirtha Institute of Peace aims to establish world Peace through individual peace.

There is no age limit for the candidates who wish to enter the College. The only requirement for age, is in the words of Swami Ram, the Youth of Divine Joy. Thus, a heart which is not fanatical, confined to one religion but which feels for all the children of God, in all religions is the best requisite of all. Those who are blessed with hearts that feel for all mankind, who consider the world as their Home will be admitted into the Institute from any religion.

After the Course of Education, the students may return and live in the world, establishing Peace in the heart and home, in the community, village or town, silently spreading Peace through their

ideal lives of purity and services. Their one ideal would be even though they are in the world not to be of the world, but of God, serving the world always radiating the ideals of Rama's Institute of Peace. In the following words of Swami Ram, the life of the average man in both the East and the West can be summed up as:

Marry, Multiply, Live in Ignorance and die in Bondage.

How sad it is that man, the living image of God, a Roaring Lion, lives like sheep and dies in darkness and ignorance!

The qualification of the students who enter the Institute and the credentials required shall be simple and given out later by the Committee of the Institute. As for the financiers, we feel confident that the aspiring children of God scattered all over India and the world will give us the necessary funds, given truly by *Rama* himself though his many devotees and consecrated followers in the East and the West; for, the sole purpose of the Rama Tirtha Institute is only to bring Peace and Harmony into the world.

Religion should not be skin-deep. If one knows his own religion not in precepts but in practise, one will have nothing but Love and Respect for all religions. True religion is not an outer belief in God but complete trust and inner belief in the Indwelling Light, the Divinity of Man.

The ideal of the Rama Tirtha Institute of Peace is not to change faiths or make conversions from one religion to another but only to help the conversion of hearts, facing the One, Omnipresent God in all the respective followers of all religions.

It was Swami Rama who said:

Let one man alone live in God and the whole nation can be united through His ideal Life of Peace.

Now the chief aim and aspiration of our Institute is to help and serve the students and teachers to *Live in God help others to Live in Him* through the simple and ideal lives of purity, devotion, service and Peace.

May Peace be unto All!

OM TAT SAT OM



Swami Rama Tirtha Institute of Peace



Sister Sushila Peace Van

CHAPTER 101

DADA T.L. VASWANI

Sri Vaswaniji and I have never been two but one, eternally one although we have never met each other physically. Our relationship has been of the soul, and *atman* and we have ever been one, interrelated in the past and the present and the future.

Our Peace, the monthly journal of Illumination was first published in 1928 from Totapalli Hills, the Mother Ashram. That was more than forty years ago. Since the beginning of publication of Peace, Dadaji Vaswani has helped the magazine with his learned contributions, and has occasionally, unasked out of the fullness of his devoted heart of dedication, helped the Ashram with funds, with love offerings also. If you go through the old copies of Peace you will be happy to read many of his inspiring messages of illumination and peace.

It was a sad and shocking surprise to hear the mournful news that our beloved Dadaji has left his mortal coil after a brief sickness. Even in sickness until the last moment, he served His children. Here is an inspiring poem on Death by our Dadaji.

Death - And After

So bless me Lord! That when I leave
This beauteous Earth and this rich Feast of Life
I may have forgotten God but not forget
My song of thanks giving Lord, to Thee.

Many a death have I died in Life's long Ascent,
And I have been born again and still again,
Forgotten are my names and human forms,
My joy now is in being unknown.

In Temple-worship incense mingles with rich music and with song,
So with Thy music and Thy Song, my Maker and my Lord
May my last life-breath mingle, mingle
In deepest adoration unto Death!

Sri Vaswaniji's life from beginning to the end has been a life of continuous sacrifice and service, like that of the Blessed Christ, always thinking of others and never of himself. Sri Mira's school and several other humanitarian works are living monuments of the saintly life of the Sage Viswani even though he himself has passed away, left the mortal coil, or rather become One with all the manifested and unmanifested creation. Before Sri Dadaji left his mortal coil, he surprised me when I slipped and broke some bones, had fractures in both the leg and hand by sending a money order by telegram for Rs. 116/- with the request that I use the money for my personal expenses in the hospital. This gave me a happy surprise and I was deeply touched by his great affection and love for me, whom he had never seen. Dadaji's great gesture of love, affection and blessings made me healthy and happy. It was my comfort and consolation during the days of my stay in the hospital.

Sri J.P. Vaswani, his worthy nephew and ardent disciple was also very kind and sent his prayers for my welfare. I was highly pleased and moved when he sent me the following poem from a Sindhi Saint with the consoling thought that God breaks the bones of those he loves most. Here is the kind letter written by Sri. J.P. Vaswani on behalf of Beloved Dadaji with the inspiring poem.

* * * * *

Sr. Mira's College for Girls
Founder : Sri. T.L. Vaswani
10 Connaught Road,
Puna - 1
6 November 1965

Reserved and Beloved Swamiji,

Your kind letter has brought tears to my eyes. I have recalled the words of the great Sindhi Poet who was also a Saint. In one of his soul-stirring song he says:

The Lord slays whom He loves:
He breaks the bones of His beloved ones:
And those whom he chooses
He heaps upon them suffering and pain!
But in this too is ever
A meaning of His mercy!

You slipped and broke the bones. In this too is a meaning of His Mercy. Beloved Dadaji slipped five years ago and broke left femur bone and has not been able to move ever since. In this too is a meaning of His mercy. Blessed be His Holy Name.

Beloved Dadaji sends, for your kind acceptance Rs. 116/- enclosed herewith. It will be kind of you to ask someone to let Dadaji know about the progress of your health.

I bow down to you and seek your blessings. And may all your work continue to be richly blessed by Him whose grace is our sufficiency! Neither food nor fire, neither health nor wealth but the wisdom which is of God is our sufficiency, the love which is of God and which fulfills our every need, even before we become aware of it is sufficiency.

Yours in the One Service,

J.P. Vaswani

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Sadhu Vaswaniji has written hundreds of books and booklets with the fiery message of inspiration to awaken the sleeping youth and all seekers of Truth in the East and the West. His poems are simple and deep, nay, life-giving and soul-awakening and give a message for all lives to come, for each and everyone in the world. I love to close this chapter about him with two of his inspiring poems wishing the Peace of all. Beginning with the individual Peace. With the death of the ego at the Altar of Silence. I am tempted now to share also another short poem 'The Boat' before the two longer ones.

The Boat

They blame me for the worn-out boat,
They tell me; see the battered sails.
Is this the boat they stay, to bear
The wind and storm and wave?

So let them say; I only know
That I shall cross through storm and wave
To the shore where shines my Master's light,
For His Love standeth ever sure.

O Lord of Love

Teach me, O Lord of Love
To pray each day;
And out of gloom and dark
Lead Thou the way
Into Thy Sacred Light!
To keep me always
I know not anything,
A creature of clay;
And Lord! So keep me safe
And all my fears allay
That I may from Thy feet
Ne'er far off be, and stray.
The Sword of Grace strike Thou
My sins of doubt to slay.
Teach me O Lord of Love
To pray each day.

INVOCATION

To name Thee none is worthy, O Lord!
And I do praise Thee for the Light
Of Sun and sister Moon so bright
And for the Love we greet as God.

For air and cloud and sunshine pure
I praise Thee Lord, for flowers and fruit,
For grass of earth, for tree and root,
For mercy Thine which shineth sure.

I give Thee glory, God of the heart
In bird and beast Thy beauty still
I see, and on the Ancient Hill
And in the shining Fire Thou art.

In sister Water too I see
Thy radiant Face and I adore
Thy mystic strength in the torrent's roar
And in the Saints in whom glows Thee.

Thy Grace I see Thee face to face,
I bow to Thee, O Blessed One
Where'er the Race of Life I run
And I in all Thy Love embrace.

In every race in every clime
In church and Mosque and Temple,
In Hindu, Muslim, Parsi, Jain,
In Jew, in Christian, one hymn doth rhyme.

All Glory, Honour, Praise to Thee,
One sing to Thee the ages sing,
One gift to Thee sages bring,
O Pure and Fair, O Ever-Free!

May the loving spirit of Sri Dadaji bless all, both the living
and the dead with inspiration and devotion so that they may all

realise the goal of precious human birth and above all serve his children, all humanity and thus be a credit to the Creator!

May Peace be unto All!

As this chapter is so short let me add here, in memory of Sri Dadaji, two recent, short messages written for the help of all the aspiring souls, the seekers of Truth in the East and the West!

RELIGION IS LIFE

Here is the one rule of spiritual life; do what you will as an offering to the Lord!

Religion is not creed nor rite nor recitation from a Shastra, religion is life. And life is sacrifice, a Yagna!

Whatever you do and wherever you work, in the field, the loom, the factory, the office, the shop, your daily life is your temple: and you are your priest!

And you too, are the offering, the holy, hymn, the fire of sacrifice!

OM TAT SAT OM

TEMPLE OF LIFE

We build our temples with bricks or stones; We forget that the temple to which the Lord doth call us to worship Him and receive His sacrament in the temple of life.

We worship God in mandirs or mosques, in chapels or churches: we forgot Him in the field and the factory, in the school and the market place.

We pray to God “in heaven; we do not see Him around us, playing with children, radiant in flowers, singing in rain, in stream and sea, in songs of the air and woods and waterways.

We echo creeds and scriptures; we do not see the glory of God in the heart within.

OM TAT SAT OM

CHAPTER 102

WELCOME TO DEATH

(RAMA TIRTHA MEMORIAL AT TEHRI)

Nobody wants even to hear or read about death. Most People shiver and shudder at the approach of death. Yet death is inevitable to one and all, to rich and poor, to the learned and ignorant, nay, even to doctors, saints and sinners. The difference between outlook of a saint and that of a sinner is, the saint welcomes death while the sinner tries to run away in fear of death. But no one can escape the call of death. Verily, death and life are the two sides of the same coin. As night follows day and day again follows night, so also death follows life and life follows death, for one and all, of all castes, religions and nations of the East and West, nay, to all the people of the whole world.

Someone said, death is the entrance into the Great Light. Another sage of the West said, how wonderful is death! Death and his brother sleep! It was the Buddha who said,

'Man never dies. The soul inhabits the body for a time and leaves it again. The soul is myself. This body is my dwelling place. Death is no death; the soul merely departs and the body falls. It is because men see only their bodies that they love life and hate death.'

My heart longs to share with the loving readers three illuminating verses by John L. McCreery.

There is no Death

There is no death. The stars go down
To rise upon some fairer shore;
And bright in heaven's jewelled crown
They shine for evermore.

There is no death. An angel form
Walks over the earth with silent tread;
He bears our best beloved things away;
And then we call them 'dead'.

Wherever He sees a smile too bright,
Or heart too pure for taint and vice,,
He bears it to that world of light
To dwell in paradise.

* * * * *

It was Guru Nanak who said,
Death, which is a Terror, to the world, is a joy for me.
For, in death you find Peace, Bliss and Joy.

Often in the still moments of Silence, the question comes,
I ask myself unconsciously; When do you want to die? When do
you wish to leave this body? Do you wish to cling to this corpse-
like body forever, bound in a dark dungeon, a cage of flesh? The
answer comes in stillness. The still small voice within says,

I long to leave this body when I cannot help or serve His
children any longer. The moment when I think only of myself, let
this body depart, let life cease in this tabernacle of the body, when
it is no longer useful to humanity.

Thus, dear children of God in the East and West, my going
from this world, departure from this body depends upon you all.
So long as you can use me, I am with you always. It is only when
you do not need me that I long to depart from you. How life-giving
are the following lovely words on death.

Death is not the end of life,
It is only the beginning of a new school of experience.
Death is not the last sleep,
It is the last final awakening.
Death is the golden key that
Opens the palace of Eternity
Rejoice, if you love the soul
That is being promoted to another and better world.

Here is another inspiring poem -

Take My Life

Take my life and let it be
Humbly offered to all to Thee.
Take my hands and let them be
working, serving Thee, yea: Thee
Take my heart and let it be
Fully saturated, Lord, with Thee
Take my eyes and let them be
Intoxicated, God, With Thee.
Take this mind and let it be
All day long, a Shrine for Thee.

Finally, it was the immortal Swami Ram who wrote in his notes just before taking his final bath in the holy Bhilangana in the himalayas.

O Death! Take away this body if you please.
I care not, I have enough bodies to use.

and ends , with the parting words -

I touched this, I touched that, I doff my head and off I am.
Here I go, there I go, none can find me

OFFERING

A Humble Offering to the late Sister Lalita Devi, the President of the Peace Centre, Kotagiri , Nilgiris in memory of her sudden demise on 26th August 1968, invoking God's richest blessings and our silent prayer for her great Peace in God.

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(Peace Mar. 1969)

Swami Rama Tirtha Memorial at Tehri, Himalayas

- Swami Ramananda Tirthaji

It was about ten years ago that the late Sri Lal Bahadur Shastri, then Union Home Minister suggested that a marble pillar

should be installed on the hallowed spot where the body of Swami Rama Tirtha was swept away by the swift current of the river Bhilangana, a tributary of the river Bhagirathi, Ganga. A Committee for this purpose was formed with Sri Lal Bahadur Sastri as one of its members and under his guidance, finalised the plan of the memorial. The late Lal Bahadur Shastri was a great devotee of Swami Rama and his life was illumined by the Divine Light emanating from this God- intoxicated Poet-Saint of India.

The Memorial Committee met from time to time and formulated the plan. Sri Ranade, a retired engineer and architect of Delhi undertook to make the design. He visited Tehri and gave the Committee his plan. Funds were raised from a few admirers of Swami Rama. The Government of Rajasthan supplied the marble stone for the Memorial Pillar, costing fifteen thousand rupees. Some of the State Governments also helped the project. The Foundation Stone was laid by the late Sri Lal Bahadur Shastri himself soon after. But due to his sudden demise at Tashkent, this Memorial could not materialise for some time. There was also a dispute about the land on which the Pillar was to be erected. Swami Ananda, one of the Secretaries of the Committee, after several visits to Tehri finally selected an undisputed site nearby which was owned by the Government and on 20th June 1968, the pillar was taken to Tehri and the preliminaries for its installation were completed.

His Holiness, Sri Swami Omkarji of Santi Ashram, Totapalli Hills, Andhra Pradesh was invited to inaugurate the Memorial. Swamiji considers Swami Rama as his main source of inspiration. In fact, Santi Ashram was started in memory of Swami Rama fifty years ago.

On the other side of the road leading towards Badrinath, with the lofty Himalayas forming a panoramic background, *puja* was performed in Sri Swami Omkarji's presence amidst the chanting of *Vedic Mantrams* and *havan* also was performed. Thereafter, a public meeting was held. Sri Swamy Ramananda Tirtha, the Chairman of the Memorial Committee gave a resume of the project and Swami Ananda submitted a brief report. Swami

Omkarji then addressed the gathering. His speech appears elsewhere in this issue. When the entire memorial is completed, before October the memorial will pass into the charge of the Tehari Municipal Board for its maintenance and safe custody.

Swami Omkarji named the Memorial Column, the 'Pillar of Light'. On the other side of the river, at a distance of four miles, on the banks of the river Bhagirathi is the village of Pedyar where Swami Rama spent considerable time in silence and meditation. It was here that he later took *sannyasa*, His *dhyana kutir* is still intact. Swami Omkarji visited the spot and decided that a branch of Santi Ashram should be established there. The kutir and other structures will be renovated and the Swami Rama Tirtha Santi Ashram will emerge. For this purpose, Sri Swamiji gave a donation of Rs.1,116/- The Sri Rama Tirtha Pratishthan of Lucknow also announced an annual prize of a set of Swami Ram's Works in the name of Swami Omkarji to be awarded to a student who stands first in an essay competition on the teachings of Swami Rama from amongst those studying in the Swami Rama Tirtha Degree College which will function from next year.

I visited Bamrogi Guha amidst the Himalayan ranges where Swami Rama lived before shifting to Simlasu and chalked out a plan to perpetuate his memory. It was also announced that the Swami Rama Tirtha Birth Centenary will be celebrated on a country wide scale in the year 1973. A Committee will soon be formed for this purpose and all main spots which have been sanctified by the stay of Swami Rama will have some sort of memorial.

A local committee with Sri Sakalani, the Municipal Chairman as Convenor has been formed to take further steps to give concrete shape to future plans of the project in the Tehri area. Swami Omkarji gave ten books of his writings to make a start of the Swami Rama Tirtha Santi Library to Sri Sakalani who has volunteered to complete the renovation work on his own account. May God give all the strength necessary to fulfill His own will is my prayer.

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(Peace July 1968)

Inaugural Speech

On the occasion of the Inauguration of the Sri Swami Rama Tirtha Pillar of Light on 20th June 1968 in Tehri Garhwal District, Himalayas.

Dear Living Images of the Blessed Rama! My heart longs to touch your devoted hearts with the Infinite love of Rama, whose love is Universal and excludes none but includes all. On this auspicious day of the inauguration, I feel the Presence of God, closer and nearer than ever because of His richest blessings. It was a miracle how, He brought us from the far away South to the remote North. Giving us this blessed privilege to serve not only you but all the seekers of Truth and Peace in the world, in the name of this inauguration. I take joy in repeating often that there are two kinds of people in the world.

- I. Those who are dead already even though they are alive physically. Selfish people are dead always.
- II. Those who are selfless and God-loving. God-intoxicated like our Swami Ram are ever alive even though their bodies may be dead.

It is with us now to introspect; examine our lives and see for ourselves whether we are dead or alive. May the dead be alive and may the life continue to be a blessing to all the world!

There is only the One, Indivisible *Atman* to inaugurate for He is the only Changeless Reality. The Upanishads teach us, that which exists is one and sages have called it by various names. It is that Reality; or God which has brought us all together now. It is because of His Presence that I am able to speak and you are able to listen. So let us feel His Presence now more than ever in memory of the inauguration.

I would love to call this Pillar of Rama the Rama Tirth Pillar of Light for Rama lived in Light and the Light was in Him and truly He is the Light Itself. In memory of this inauguration let us carry with us three inspiring statements-

We are in the Light.

The Light is in us.

We are the Light.

for nothing else exists besides the Light in either the past, present or future.

On this Holy Day of the Inauguration of the Sri Swami Rama Tirtha pillar of Light, the *International, Spiritual Lighthouse of Jnana*, my heart longs to start now a Rama Tirtha Peace Centre to diffuse knowledge and light far and near all over the world for peace and happiness for God's children. As these are not the days for talking, for mere words, but for deeds I should love to begin the foundation of the Rama Tirtha Peace Centre with a loving contribution of Rs. 1,116/-. May it be a tiny beginning and may it grow into floods of Light, diffusing the world with Rama's Light, Life and Consciousness. Although we, *sadhus*, do not know from whence the next meal comes yet I am grateful to God for the great opportunity. He has given me to make a good beginning for the Rama Tirtha Peace Centre in Tehri. One of the well wishers of the Peace Mission and a close worker has been saying why do we have Santi Ashrams in India and even in foreign lands but yet we do not have even one Ashrama by a riverside anywhere in India? Now my heart rejoices that God, in His Infinite Mercy and Understanding is fulfilling that great wish of the Patriot-saint of Bharat by starting the Rama Tirtha Peace Centre on the banks of the holy Bhilangana, what other place could be more sacred than the holy site where Swami Rama left the body to be dissolved. Thus let us establish a Peace Centre in his name and whence Peace shall flow in rivers, in torrents and floods to fill all the world with Rama's message of practical Vedanta, God - Consciousness in order to end all racial discrimination and war in this world.

You will be surprised to hear that although I never before had the privilege of visiting Tehri, yet I had the good fortune of spending six long years in my youth in Swargashram, Rishikesh, in a lovely *kutir* on top of a hill. I spent all my days in *tapas* and

spiritual study and my only books then, were a copy of *Ashtavakra Gita* and Swami Rama's Writings and Message.

What I am now, I owe to the simple, God-intoxicated, ideal life of Swami Rama. With my six years of stay in Swargashram in those blessed days, Swami Rama was my soul, goal and ideal and I tried to walk in his holy footsteps. As I read that Rama walked forty miles in one day in the hills, I too tried to walk forty miles and even forty four miles the next day. As Swami Rama had gone to America I too longed to go there and went four times.

In the fertile valley of Totapalli Hills, East Godavari District, Andhra Pradesh, an Abode of Peace was started in 1917 for the benefit of all seekers of Truth in all religions and nations. It was there that His Holiness Sri Swami Narayan, the direct and ideal disciple of Swami Rama came and highly appreciated the silent work. The Ashram's Golden Jubilee was celebrated in 1967 by his grace. While thus busy, day and night with the fervour of selfless service I had the heart malady and was confined to bed in a Visakhapatnam Hospital where I had the good fortune to have a visit from our Pujya Ramananda Tirthaji.

Swami Ramanandaji has been always very kind and loving towards me, respecting the least of my wishes. One day, lying on the hospital bed, I spoke to him thus-

Dear Swamiji, I feel depressed and sad, not because of the heart malady but because of the thought that more than seventy years of my precious life have been wasted in doing nothing. Even now, before I close my eyes, in my last days, it would give me joy if you could help me by starting a Vedanta Colony as had been desired by Swami Rama and train every year a few students, God-conscious souls like Rama to spread practical vedanta for the peace of the world. It is Rama's message of practical vedanta alone which can save the world now from all the unnecessary misunderstandings, mutual hatred and suspicion.

Thus, with one hundred percent zeal and fervour, the Rama Tirtha Institute of Peace was started on twenty-five acres in a lovely

spot in Santi Ashram, with the blessings of Pujya Sri Vinobhaji. It was inaugurated by the great Sarvodaya leader Sri Jai Prakash Narayan. We have already trained two sessions of students and the third course begins this coming August 1968. During my past long lease seventy three years of life I have often introspected, compared my life with the short span of thirty-three years passed by Rama. The prominent thought was:

When Swami Rama did so much good, accomplished immense work in thirty-three short years, what have you done in all these long seventy-three years?

As is to console me in my closing years, the all-knowing God sent me our Pujya Ramananda Tirthaji to fulfill the long cherished dream of a Vedanta Colony as envisioned by Swami Rama. God alone knows what is best not only for individuals but even for the whole universe, for the good of all His children in the respective religions and nations. May we cling to God more than ever, leaving the results to Him!

‘Have you seen Swami Rama?’ was a perplexing question often asked by friends of Swami Rama in the East and the West. How could I see him when Rama passed away then I was a mere lad of a few years. Yet, my soul bursts when I say that I have never seen Rama, for, to me you all are the living images of Rama. I try to live in Rama, breathe in Rama, work in Rama, move in Rama and ever have my being in him. When such is the case, how can I say that I have not seen Rama?

Rama is expecting big things from all of us. He has brought us here not only to inaugurate Rama’s Pillar of Light but also to start the Rama Tirtha Peace Centre on this auspicious day, on this sacred spot where Rama left the body, to merge and dissolve in the element of nature. It has made me very happy to hear of the great sacrifices and silent work of some of the devotees in these parts. Hence, I feel that God has brought us here knowing that the great future of the Tehri Peace Centre will be more safe in your hands than anywhere else in the world.

My heart rejoices to mention here that our Peace Mission, the Abode of Peace is blessed to have already a Peace Centre in the devoted heart of Sri Swami Anandaji Maharaj, the secretary of the Bharat Sadhu Samaj, New Delhi. Because of his great services we are now here in Tehri. The great future of our Swami Rama Tirtha Peace Centre lies also with our Pujya Ananda Swamiji and with each and every one of you for you are all the living images of Swami Rama. I believe more, not in Peace Centre externally started on lands, but in the inner Peace Centre begun within, in the hearts of you all, for the peace of all.

At this inaugural speech let me not delay you with too many words. Yet, my heart longs to share my inner thoughts as well as my aspirations with all of you, the devoted lovers and advocates of Swami Rama. I have done my part now and it is with all of you to do the rest. These days, one small prayer gives me comfort and consolation. Let me share it with you-

Dear God! let others be great and famous and let me be unknown and insignificant.

Be dead that ye may live is the essence of Rama's teachings and the essence of all relations. *If you want to be miserable think of yourself, if you want to be happy think of others.* This thought has been the aspirations of my life.

Let me close this message with the helpful Peace Prayer which has been translated into more than twenty languages of India and foreign languages as well. The simple Peace Prayer makes you feel the Presence of God as you repeat it, Now and Here. In memory of our visit to Tehri and the establishment of the Rama Tirtha Peace Centre and the Inauguration of the Pillar of Light may I request you all, kindly to memorise this Prayer along with the Peace Chant and repeat it as often as possible, along with your other prayers for it helps to develop Peace in the heart, then in the home, community and nation and finally in the world at large.

As we repeat the Peace Prayer now with eyes closed let us feel His Self-effulgent Light in the very cells of our beings from

the toes to the top of our heads.

Adorable Presence! Thou Who art within and without, above and below and all around, Thou Who art interpenetrating the very cells of our beings, Thou Who art the Eye of our eyes, Ear of our ears, Heart of our hearts, Mind of our minds, Breath of our breaths, Life of our lives and Soul of our souls, Bless us, Dear God to be aware of Thy Presence, Now and Here.

May all be aware of Thy Presence, in the East and the West, in the North and the South. May Peace and Good will abide among individuals as well as communities and nations. This is our earnest Prayer.

May Peace be Unto All!

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CHAPTER 103

THE LAST PILGRIMAGE OF FORTY DAYS-1

Introduction

With the dawn of every day, I feel like a child for I take a new birth. As I have my bath I feel that the past is dead and buried and I am reborn with the dawn of the new day. Thus, these small chapters of the Pilgrimage are not intended to be messages to the learned, but are rather the musings of a mere child.

I am only speaking my inner thoughts aloud.

Some think that these thoughts should be polished and rewritten. Others doubt whether it is necessary to write about the Ramies. I am however, expressing, whatever comes from within. Out of the fullness of my heart, the mouth speaketh. Yet, as the Ramies are a part and parcel of my life, I love to share my thoughts about them with my loving readers, particularly with the friend of dumb animals. Hence it is my joy and privilege now to share with the seekers of Truth every thought that comes from within me.

The sugarcane may not be straight but bent, yet the juice the sweetness, is nevertheless there, just the same for all to taste. Similarly, I request my loving readers to assimilate from this pilgrimage all that is best and helpful and leave the rest, wishing the Peace of all.

Ist Pilgrimage:

Question : How can you say it is the last pilgrimage?

Answer : As today alone is ours and not the next, who can be sure of the morrow? How true are the words: Today man is and tomorrow he is not.

Blessed are they who can live in the present moment, forgetting the past gone by and ignoring the dim future! Blessed are the few rare and precious souls who can cheerfully exclaim: Let this body remain a thousand years or let it dissolve now, this moment, for it is the same for the *Atman*, the indivisible Self for

the Light is changeless and remains the same under all conditions.

Forty days:

I have often wondered, why the number forty should be given such prominence in the Spiritual World as well as in the world of duality. The Blessed Christ fasted for forty days in the wilderness, alone with God, living on honey and roots. Several sages and saints seekers after Truth observed Silence or fasted for forty days to realise God during that holy span of time. Somehow or other, in our life it is essential to set apart thirty or forty days to be alone with God, offering prayers and having deep meditations in Silence. It would be blessed if everyone would consecrate forty days of every year to spend alone with the Indwelling Light to realise the goal of precious human birth.

It was Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa who asked us to set apart even three days in which to realise God in this Iron Age, Kali Yuga. There are some people who set apart a day every fortnight. Some set apart a day every week to spend in Silence and fasting too so that they may realise God or *attain Nirvana*, the Peace that passeth all understanding.

The Rama Tirtha Institute of Peace :

We owe this life-giving and soul-awakening institution entirely to the untiring efforts of Pujya Ramananda Tirthaji. He approached the living saint Sri Vinobaji and presented the scheme of the Rama Tirtha Institute and received his blessings and wise suggestions. At the request of Sri Swamiji the great Sarvodaya leader Sri Jaya Prakash Narayan came with his life partner Smt. Prabhavathi Devi and inaugurated the Rama Tirtha Institute of Peace.

The Institute has already given training to two sessions of Students. It is now getting ready to give the course of training to a third group chosen irrespective of the differences of caste, creed, colour and nationality. The only condition for anyone who wishes to join the Peace Institute is that they consider the world as their home and all the people in it as brothers and sisters and feel that to

love and serve all mankind is real religion. Verily, religion and life are not two but one to such.

Swami Rama Tirtha Memorial Committee, Tehri, Garhwal :

We owe this Rama Tirtha Memorial of the Saint of the Punjab entirely to the consecrated day and night efforts of Sri Swami Ramanandaji Maharaj. Let me quote his own words from our April issue.

"We are happy to announce that it has been decided to put up a memorial at Tehri, Garhwal where the great poet-saint of India, the late Swami Rama Tirtha offered his body to the Bhilangana River, a tributary of the River Bhagirathi. It is proposed to have a small marble construction with Swami Rama's last writing, *Invocation to Death* inscribed on it. It is our wish to build a few *kutirs* for the stay of those who desire to spend some time in spiritual pursuits. It is also proposed that a Prayer Hall equipped with a good library of Swami Rama's and other spiritual subjects be constructed."

"Thus the memorial work is going on slowly, silently, in a solid manner. Although Rama left his body, the physical sheath, more than sixty years ago I am glad to see even at this late hour that some of the devotees and admirers of Swami Rama, who are spread out all over the country and even the world are able to open their eyes to the great need of this glorious Memorial which will remain as the greatest blessing to the aspiring children of God in the East and the West."

Invitation to Inaugurate the Rama Tirtha Pillar:

In Totapalli when Swamiji and I were alone communing with nature, at an auspicious moment it was a happy surprise when he requested me to inaugurate the Rama Tirtha Memorial Column in Tehri, Garhwal where Swami Rama Spent his last days in Sadhana, deep meditation and Silence. I felt that in my closing years it was great honour and the greatest privilege of my life to have the opportunity to inaugurate Rama's memorial. Yet, the distance was too long. We had to travel for three days and nights

on the train, covering a distance of nearly 1600 miles. After that, we were to proceed by taxi or bus, climbing high hill another sixty miles or so. My devoted friends grumbled asking how I, who had the heart malady will go into the mountains, on the high altitudes where the weather is cold and there is frost, and snow. But I accepted the invitation cheerfully, feeling that it was a Divine Call from God Himself. Swami Ramanandaji was anxious to make all comfortable arrangements for our journey and stay in Tehri.

Bada Rami and Chota Rami:

Some people in the world, as they have no children or definite work to occupy their minds, being bored with life itself, adopt pets, a dog or cat and thus waste their precious time in doting on them, looking after their comforts and smallest desires. This is good for them. But for those to whom every moment is precious, it is more important to be attached only to God, the Indwelling light and not to cats and dogs. But Both Bada and Chota Rami were the gifts of Sister Lalitha Devi, the President of the Kotagiri Peace Centre in the Nilgiris. Since they clung to me day and night, staying with me when I worked meditating with me when I meditated and sleeping where I slept, following me like shadows I had to bring them to the Totapalli Mother Ashram where they now spend all their time with me, taking part also in the daily evening Satsang. As we prepared to leave the Ashram for the Inauguration Ceremonies, Bada Rami looked at the bedding and other things with a mournful face. Chota Rami went and sat in the Peace Van that was to take us as far as the Waltair Ashram. I felt sorry to disappoint both the Ramies, being cruel and locking them in their room and then leaving the Ashram without their knowledge. For a day it seems that they did not even eat their food; such is the faith, trust and devotion of even the dumb animals.

Homage to Our Rami

(Peace Aug-Sept. 1968)

Our Rami the Body - Guard

Our Rami is not a man but a little, faithful puppy. Although he is a mere dog he is more a man in faith, love, devotion and loyalty. He was a gift from Sister Lalitha Devi. I love dumb animals but not to the extent of allowing them to come between God and myself. When Rami came to our Peace Centre as a baby of three months whenever my door was opened he would rush into my room. When I closed the door, Rami would lie down at the doorstep until the door was opened. When I came out of the room, Rami would follow me towards the new Prayer Hall or wherever I went. He was the terror of all the servants and visitors for he would bark and fall upon them, although very young. We often had to tie up Rami to prevent him from biting strangers.

As Rami was dearly attached to me, both Lalitha Devi and Santi suggested that we take Rami back to Totapalli Hills. Although I tried to give Rami to some generous and devoted people in Kotagiri, Rami was unwilling to go anywhere, leaving me. Hence we brought him along, in the train from Madras to Thotapalli along with the little white Persian Kitten, another gift of Sister Lalitha Devi. It was she who requested me to give a good name to the little puppy and we have named him Rami after the dog that Sister Sushila Devi used to have when she lived in Thotapalli Hills. Once, when her Rami was attacked by a cheetah, Sister Sushila bravely rescued it from the jaws of death and nursed Rami back to health. I often wonder whether this little Rami and Sister Sushila's Rami are one and the same. Anyway, all life is One and all are the living manifestations of the One God.

That which exists is One and sages have called it by various names. This applies to the members of the Animal Kingdom also. Sister Lalitha, seeing the attachment of little Rami for me, said that Rami is a one-man-dog. There are some dogs who live, breathe, work and die for their masters. We hear of the dog who fasted by the side of the *Samadhi*, the grave of its master and eventually died of sorrow. Such is the great faith of some dogs, the loyal and devoted companions of men, the living images of God.

As for Rami and his life in Totapalli, he wakes up with me in the early hours of dawn and walks with me, following like a shadow wherever I go and sleeping under my bed at night. When I arise, Rami also arises and sometimes opens one eye just to see if I am really getting up. Rami is also one hundred percent vegetarian eating rice and milk and also coconuts and other natural foods. Rami likes fresh ears of maize, holding the ear between his legs he carefully eats the kernels with his teeth. Milk is Rami's favorite food. Not only does Rami drink the milk with heart and soul, but he afterwards licks the plate clean. When I go to the Cave to meditate or to Sivalayam our Rami comes along and takes his own special seat, where he sits and meditates, sometimes for hours together.

But the most important aspect of Rami's life is the spiritual side. Whenever we are together I try to teach Rami to repeat the Name of Rama. Whenever I sing the following song Rami sits very still, looking at me concentratedly in a steady posture:

Rama Rama anave Rami

Ramuni maruvake Rami!

O Rami ! Repeat the name of Rama. Do not forget Rama O Rami!

In this connection, I am reminded of the famous story of the saint who made a buffalo repeat the *Vedas*. I am not asking Rami to repeat the *Vedas* but only the Holy Name of Rama, remembering always that Rama and Rami are not two but One, that Rama is in Rami and Rami is in Rama. Sometimes, when I sing this holy song to our Rami, he opens his mouth and it seems that he is almost pronouncing the syllble Ra. I worry and pray whether Rami is obtaining some spiritual benefit or not, for, I long to help, both him and our Bada Rami to feel God's Presence. When such is my love and concern for the dumb animals, then what is my feeling for human beings, the living images of God? I long to help and serve all God's children while they are yet alive, before the Call comes, when the Spirit leaves the body and it is too late to

begin repetition of the Holy Name let my readers now help me by feeling His Indwelling Presence, now and here, as they read this chapter. I long to help the Ramies for all their love and devotion. May I long to serve all, from the fragrant flower to the little bird, all forms of life to realise that we are all inseparably and eternally One. As I sing to Rami, I feel Rama's Presence within and without and tears of ecstasy pour forth. May all Glory be unto God - the Indwelling Presence of our hearts, including angels or Devas, men, dumb animals, even the stars above and the flowers below on earth.

You may not believe this but I teach Rami to pronounce the Holy name of Rama the Avatars in front of my Mandir, Krishna, Christ, Buddha and Gandhiji also appear to join us in chanting God's Name. I take joy in feeling that not only the Avatars but also the birds, beasts, plants, trees and sweet smelling flowers join in the Holy Chant of God's Name. Will you not join us also, dear loving readers, wherever you may be in the world, with prayers for the Peace of all?

Wherever you may be in the East or in the West, you are all in God's Presence for He is Omnipresent, Omnipotent, Omniscient. Let us sing his Name, let us drink His Name until we get all drunk Oh, with his Name.

May Peace be unto our Bada Rami and Our Chota

Rami and unto all of you:

OM

OM

OM

(Peace Dec. 1967)

The Demise of Chota Rami; 12 June 1971

It is with great sadness that we convey the news to our devoted readers the passing of Chota Rami, one of the holy dogs of the Ashram, loved by Sri Swamiji and all members and friends of Santi Ashram for his loving, dedicated nature, fasting on Holy Days, taking part in Satsang, meditating with Sri Swamiji in the Jnana Guha; our Chota Rami was a true devotee of the Ashram, the Mission of Peace. We all miss him terribly and our deepest

condolences to his life long companion, Bada Rami who is weeping and bereaved at present. May God grant the Soul of Chota Rami eternal rest in Him.

OM

OM

OM

Hearty Send off from Totapalli Hills:

All the members of the Ashram, including the Gurukula children were very sorry to allow us to go on such a long pilgrimage into the unknown and cold regions of the Himalayas. Some wanted to follow us and share our test and trails. With the request that they pray and meditate in Peace and help us with their prayer we said goodbye to all amidst the chanting of *Hare Rama, Hare Rama, Rama Rama Hare, Hare: Hare Krishna Hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna Hare Hare* and the sacred syllable OM.

OM

OM

OM

(Peace Aug-Sept 1968)

The Song of Different Trains:

Those who have eyes can see God in all forms and symbols, those who have ears can listen to God's Voice in the gentle breeze as well as in the roaring, terrible noise of the engine of the train as it rushes along at great speed. Sometimes we were held up at some stations to allow oncoming trains to pass by on another track; and they dashed at terrific speed.

The Howrah - Hardwar Express I felt, had the *Soham Song*, for the engine goes up and down with the music of SO-HAM. Some other engines sang the *Jai Jai Ram* Mantram. The engine of another train sang out *OM Tat Sat Om!*. You will be surprised to hear that the engines of the good trains chant *Om Nama Shivaya Om Namo Narayanaya*. Some trains that carry mail and parcels sing *Hare Ram*. In the rhythmic sound, even when there is tremendous noise if you strain your ears and attune yourself with the Universal Sound you can easily listen to the repetition, the chanting of *Mahavakyams*, Great, Holy *Statements* by these so-called lifeless engines of trains. Some repeat *Aham Brahmasmi*,

Tat Twam Asi, Ayamathama Brahma and Prajnanam Brahma as they slow down gradually upon approaching their destinations. They all end with the sacred syllable OM.

It is only a man of God - realisation who can comprehend the mysteries of nature and cosmic forces by attuning himself with the Universal Energy, whether it is in the stillness of his silent heart-beat or in the terrible sound of the train engine going up and down up and down with great force. Anyway all through the journey, it made me very happy to listen to the different songs of the respective trains for all sound comes only from the One, Great Source. Verily, the world itself is an emanation from God!

Haridwar to Rishikesh:

At last we reached the Holy Feet of Hari for the very meaning of Haridwar is the 'Gateway to Hari' to heaven itself. Although our train was late by five hours Sri Swami Anandaji was waiting patiently for our arrival with garlands of flowers. Several Swamis and the representatives of several institutions were also at the station with garlands of flowers, fruits etc and extended to us a Hearty Welcome to Haridwar. In the First Class Waiting Room we were given cool drinks. In return we were happy to share our simple and inspiring Peace Prayer. Two taxis were brought and Swami Anandaji followed us to make sure that we were comfortable along the way to Sivananda Ashram. As we had entered the Portals to Haridwar we felt greatly inspired. It is always interesting to see along the way from Haridwar to Rishikesh the many Ashramas, Monasteries, Matts of different kinds. Here and there are single *Kutirs* and huts by the side of the Holy River Ganges where Sadhus reside, spending their time in prayer and meditation. It was like a peep into Heaven not only for me but for all the members of our devoted party under the inspiring leadership of Pujya Ramananda Tirthaji.

Sivananda Ashram:

To enter into the holy precincts of the Sri Sivananda Ashram is like entering into the Presence of God, with all the wonderful

hospitality of His Holiness Sri Swami Krishnandandaji, Sri Madhavanandaji, Sri Nada Brahmanandaji , Sri Sivananda Giri, Sri Devanandaji, Sri Atma Rananandaji and Sri Nijanandanji as well as many other Swamis, Brahmacharis and devotees from distant places and from abroad too. More garlands of flowers were awaiting us, with love, devotion and veneration. It was like a homecoming and we all felt deeply touched with their deep love and wonderful hospitality.

Father Himalayas stretches his arms with lofty ranges of hills, welcoming us Mother Ganges flows ceaselessly, chanting the music syllable OM asking us also to direct our minds so that they may flow ceaselessly towards God. The beauty, glory and silent grandeur of Father Himalayas and Mother Ganges cannot be described in finite words but is only to be experienced personally by those who are blessed to be in that holy atmosphere, surrounded not only by sanctity but Love, which is God, for He is all Love.

OM

OM

OM

THE LAST PILGRIMAGE OF FORTY DAYS-2

Boyhood Memories:

It was nearly fifty years ago that I passed my boyhood days in the Himalayas on the Holy Banks of the Mother Ganges. Then there was no Sivananda Ashram with all its present extensive grounds and buildings scattered throughout the Ashram. There was no gita Bhavan and the large building which serves all the devotees nor the Paramatha Niketan, the wonderful place of man's genius with all the holy statues of saints and sages of old and new. There are now marvelous statues of all the Avatars and scenes from the holy Maha Bharata and the Ramayana. You can now wander in the Dandakaranya, in the holy Forest with Rama, Sita and Lakshmana and you will also be happy to see Sabari feeding Rama with fruits and Krishna washing the feet of the devotee Kuchela, all lovingly depicted in these statues. These are sacred moments that cannot be described by anyone but are to be seen and enjoyed personally.

The memory of those boyhood days spent in Tapas on the opposite, in Swaragashram, which can be reached by crossing in a boat from Sivanandashram is sweet indeed. In those days there was only one building, the Rama Tirtha Library which has been donated by the retired Judge, Baijnathji, a great follower of Swami Rama Tirtha and I used to spend many hours there in the study of spiritual books. In that glorious and unbelievable scene of palatial buildings and thousands of pilgrims I was alone living in a small kutir on the top of a hillock in Swargashram and I performed my Sadhana alone there as a youth. I was so full of renunciation that I would not even keep a light in the night in my kutir.

As God takes care of His trusting children He provided me with a devotee, a Sadhu from Tamilnadu by the name of Narayana Swami and he used to bring my roti and dhal everyday, going to the Kshetra and serving me lovingly as I sat by in meditation by the banks of the Ganges or in my far away kutir. Often when I sat

by the side of the Holy Mother I would have a bath and sun bathe and then feed the fish who came joyously to the banks with some roti. Those were happy and carefree days of blessedness.

During our present Pilgrimage to the North Sri Swami Devanandji took wonderful care of us both day and night and Swami Nijanandaji looked after my every comfort, following me like a shadow from the moment he first saw me in Sivanandashram. May God bless them and all the devoted Souls at Sivanandashram for their deep love and great service.

Starting the Ashram in a Rat Hole:

While staying in the comfortable quarters of Sri Sivanand ashram on the banks of the Holy Ganges, facing Swargashram, Gita Bhavan and Paramatma Niketan one feels transported into the Heavenly Regions of Blessedness with Divine Ecstasy. Even at the midnight hour, listening to the holy chant of Vedic Hymns and Mantras which come from the other side of the River, carrying holy vibrations across the sacred waters, listening to the ringing of Holy Bells and chant of the Bhagavad Gita, I would wake up in the middle of the night and sit on the verandah looking at the various lights and listening to the Holy Music, the songs of the sages and devotees. How soul-awakening and thrilling, to the core, very core of the cells of one's being.

Comparing this Heavenly Grandeur and inspiring beauty of the Himalayas and the Mother Ganges flowing down ceaselessly, chanting the sacred syllable OM in Her loving murmur, I unconsciously wondered what it was that made me start Santi Ashram in a rat hole in Andhra, where there is neither Father Himalayas nor Mother Ganga. But yet, even the little Rat was the vehicle of the Lord Ganesha, Vigneswara, the bestower of all blessings. Thus Santi Ashram, which was established in a Rat Hole has been blessed by the visits of Holy Mahatmas, Sages and Saints of the East and the West and especially by Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj, Sri Swami Narayan, the devout disciple of Swami Rama Tirtha in whose sacred memory Santi Ashram was founded and by many other famous Yogis and Swamis from the

Himalayas and other parts of India.

One Swamiji, Swami Brahmanandaji from Uttar Kasi stayed in Santi Ashram for a long time. It was he who told us the significance of the song of Pippiha, the little bird who sings Piu kahan, Piu kahan', Where is the Beloved? Where is the Beloved? Hour after Hour , the little bird keeps on singing in melodious note, Piu Kahan, where is the Beloved? It made us happy to hear from Swami Brahmanandaji that the same holy bird lives also in the cold regions of the Himalayas. Since then we have joined the bird in seeking the Beloved, the Light of lights. Blessed are they who seek the Beloved ceaselessly, even in a rat hole of an Ashram.

May Peace Be unto All.

OM TAT SAT OM

(Peace Nov. 1968)

Rishikesh to Badrinarayan :

On an auspicious day, a taxi was brought to Rishikesh from Hardwar. The taxi man one Rama Singh had come on the previous day and bargained to take us to Badrinath for Rupees 900/- including the round trip journey. The fare was rather high but Ram Singh is the best driver in all Himalayas and belongs to Tehri so he knows all the roads. He drives the car very well. He is a friend of all the police people and they helped us to keep the car in the shade when we stopped, for it was hot in those days.

Because of heavy traffic, military vans, private cars, buses and taxis, the Government ordered one way traffic to avoid accidents. At certain places we had to stop until all the vans, taxis and cars had come down and then our vehicles were allowed to proceed upwards. Red and green flags were used to signal the cars going up and down. After passing Deva Prayag we stopped for nearly two hours on the banks of the Ganges to allow a long row of cars headed by a red flag to come down. After seeing the green flag on the last car the bugle would blow and at this signal we all would proceed. After Deva Prayag came Karna Prayag and then Rudra Prayag where we stopped for the night as it was getting

dark. Pujya Swami Ramanandaji was busy at every place making all comfortable arrangements for our stay and food.

In the morning after a bath and light refreshments, glorifying God for all His blessing we proceeded again towards Badrinath, climbing one hill after another . We reached Joshi Matt early and as Badrinath is only twenty miles further we felt there was plenty of a time. Thus we were tempted to proceed directly to Badrinath rather than staying, resting at Joshi Math, especially because we had a letter of introduction to an officer in Badrinath to make us comfortable.

We made our journey in that high altitude very well, for the driver was experienced and the car almost new. Only at one place did Ram Singh jerk the car and our Pujya Swamiji asked him whether he was sleeping. A little nap of even a moment means death to all. As we approached Badrinath we were happy to see the snow-capped, hoary hills, extending to us a Hearty Welcome although it was starting to get cold and dark. By the blessings of Badrinarayana we reached the holy place safely. May all Glory be unto Him!

At Last in Badrinath:

As soon as the taxi stopped, we were surrounded by Pandas of every kind, both the enlightened and the ignorant. Most of them wore suits for it was very cold. It made me sad to see some of them smoking for, they are supposed to be the mediators who take us to the God Badrinarayan and make us comfortable, looking after our needs. Many Pandas at every place of pilgrimage are known more for squeezing the perishable money from the poor pilgrims rather than for taking them towards the Imperishable Wealth of God. Our driver, Ram Singh, went into the town with the letter of introduction and returned later with the sad news that the officer was away and not available at the station. We were in a dilemma for it was getting cold and dark. We were in the hands of the Panda Satynarayana who promised to make all arrangements in the near by Ramanuja Ashram.

It was dark, there was no electricity and the rooms were unfurnished at this Ashram. Pujya Ramananda Tirthaji was feeling cold and we all felt sorry for not stopping at the Joshi Math for the night. The Panda engaged a wily servant to look after us for the night. His mind was more on making as much money as possible than on looking after our welfare in that dark cold night. He brought hired rugs to us and also a bucket of water from the hot water spring. But he could not hire for us even a small cot. Due to the condition of my hip, I was unable to sleep on the floor. Swamiji also had to sleep on the floor in the Shrine room itself.

With great difficulty a small table four feet in length was provided for me to sleep on, with my feet extending on to a chair. The rugs that covered my body slipped and I was left without any covering in severe cold. To add to our troubles there was no bathroom or latrine. Anyway, somehow our party settled for the night in the spacious hall, huddled together like cattle trying to keep warm in the cold and dreary night. My Personal Assistant, Satyanandam, the little boy was fast asleep for he was very tired. Before he fell asleep he arranged my commode in the small adjoining room. We were afraid it might be a Puja Room. When we poured water into the commode we were sad to see that the vessel was leaking. The little P.A got up and tried to plug the hole in the pot and called the small flow of water which was coming into the room, a tributary of the Alakananda.

Due to the severe cold, unable to sleep any longer, I sat up on the small table covered with rugs. It was true that I was thinking deeply and meditating on Lord Badrinarayan who had brought us safely in spite of our tests and trials in the severe cold. Unconsciously I repeated, 'Out of the depths, fresh strength, out of the darkness new light. Even in the gloom we are on the way.' Shivering with cold and somewhat depressed I felt that I was suddenly transported into the Presence of Badrinarayana. The doors of the Holy Temple were opened and my Spirit went inside the Temple and sat before the presence of Badrinarayan where it was all warmth and light.

Heart to Heart talk with Badrinarayan:

Dear Lord, do you remember that I was here for three days with you in the Garbha Gudi, the Inner Sanctuary, fifty-five years ago?

The Lord: How can I forget for there is nothing like forgetfulness in Me?

Omkar: As not a blade of grass moves without Thy will, why hast Thou brought me now to these Holy Heights again after a lapse of over half a century?

The Lord seemed pleased with my query and we were in deep communion with each other for a time.

The Lord: Yes, I have brought you here and for a good purpose; to give you a rebirth or new birth for your purification as well as for others, wishing the Peace of all my children in the whole world.

Omkar: Dear Narayan, You are sitting so comfortably in your shrine, blessing the devotees who come to You in hundreds and thousands. Are You giving any thought to their miserable plight as these devotees of Yours suffer and die on the way up the treacherous slopes, trying to pay homage to you? It was only the other day that a bus slipped and tumbled down into the valley and fourteen people died on the spot. It made me sad to hear that before your very shrine six people died of cold and frost for want of shelter and proper clothing. Do you ever give any thought to the sad plight and death of these devotees who die coming to see and worship You? Should you not come out of your cosy and warm Shrine and protect these devotees who are dying in Your Name?

The Lord seemed to be smiling at my childish thoughts and said:

The Lord: My child, I am only a Witness, Sakshi, Like the Effulgent Sun. I am rather detached and not at all attached to anyone. Man reaps what he has sown, according to his thoughts, words and deeds. This is an unalterable law, a Divine Law that applies to all. Anyway, blessed are they who die while walking towards the Heavenly Portals to realise Truth.

Omkar: Dear Lord, Thou knowest what is best for each individual as well as for communities and nations. May Thy will be done in Heaven as well as on earth! How can the tiny bubble fathom or comprehend the limitless waters of the Ocean! Similarly, how can the finite man comprehend Thy Incomprehensible Glory!

The Lord: Blessed are the few and rare souls who recognize My Immutable Divine Laws and become Silent and contented, merging themselves in the Splendour of Millions of Suns.

Omkar: Dear Lord, there is a devotee in the Ashram named Mandayya and he wanted to come for your Darshan in Badri. Do you know him?

The Lord: Who is there whom I do not Know? Is there anything which is hidden from me? Do I not pervade and permeate the whole Universe ?

Mandayya is a devotee of mine and for him religion and life are not two but one. While doing his work he always repeats My Name. Some laugh and scoff at him and only a few appreciate him and no one tries to live like him. Men of the world want Me but without paying the price, without offering their minds and heart to Me. Even though you did not bring Mandayya here, he is in Me and I am in Him.

Omkar: Dear God, times out of number I have denied thee, millions of times I have ignored and forgotten Thee yet, out of Thy great Compassion Thou hast forgiven me and lifted me to Thy Bosom every time I have denied and ignored Thee, such is Thy Divine Love. Here I am. Thou hast brought me now after fifty-five years of absence into Thy Presence again. Now, my heart longs to merge and dissolve in Thee. No more separation, no more denial or forgetfulness of Thee even for the millionth fraction of a second.

The Lord: My child, know I am with you always. There is never a moment of time when I am absent or separate from you. As you have special work to do in the plains among my children, go forth now with added strength carrying Me with you wherever you go and try to express Me in all your thoughts, words and deeds. One

word is enough for you, My child.

It was in ecstasy. Badrinarayan is no longer an Image in the Holy Shrine. More than ever He has entered, nay, He has reentered into the Shrine of my body.

The dawn was breaking in the snow-peaked mountains. The rustling sound of the pilgrims' feet could be heard. It was exhilarating to hear the devotees shouting.

Badri Nath Ki Jai, Badri Bisal Ki Jai

Hence I had to make a retreat from the Holy Shrine to my cold Ramanuja Ashram but the warmth of Badri's presence enveloped me. Thus ended my Holy Communion with Badrinarayan, the Lord of my life, Light and Love.

OM TAT SAT OM

(Peace Dec. 1968)

WORLD PEACE THROUGH THE PEACE PRAYER

The great work ahead of us, the pilgrimage to the North :

The Pilgrimage to the North has opened my eyes to the great work that lies ahead of us. I left Thotapalli unwillingly as if dragged by some unknown force but have ever tried to serve the Lord wherever we have been taken, without expecting the least reward in any form. My reward has been always the assimilation of my message by the devotees who feel the Presence of God then and there while repeating the Peace Prayer.

How true the words are that yesterday's buds are the flowers of today, blooming and spreading their fragrance near and far. Similarly, today's deeds and achievements are the outcome of our past thoughts and aspirations. During my six years of Silence the following thought used to come, 'If you are ever going to break your Silence what do you wish to do with your speech? In what way will you spend your spoken words? The reply was:

I long to spread the Peace Prayer from heart to heart, home to home, from village to village, from town to town, from community to community and from nation to nation; nay from East to West, all over the world, inspiring many people to repeat the Peace Prayer and to feel God's Presence.

Blessed is my life now that the vision of my old dream has materialised. It was a blessed moment of ecstasy when I saw in our prayer meetings many devotees chanting the Peace prayer with eyes closed, feeling His Presence with ecstasy, forgetting the man-made differences of caste, creed, colour and nationality. In our audiences there were Christians, Buddhists, Muslims and Hindus of all kinds but all forget the labels of religion and nation for the time being as they repeated the prayer. During the repetition of the Peace Prayer they were only the children of the One God the Common Father of all the children of the world, the images of the One, Indivisible God, the sparks from the One Effulgent Light. It is only in this Blessed State of Harmony and understanding that

one can cheerfully exclaim:

The world is my home and all the people in it are my Sisters and Brothers and to help and serve them is my real religion.

Though we left the Ashram a little unwillingly, we returned cheerfully and with happy and contented hearts for we had done our duty to the best of our ability. The Father seems always to be whispering in my ear: ‘well done, My child: I am pleased with thee’. How else can it be when the Father is with me at every stop, leading me towards His aspiring children to help and serve them? As not a blade of grass moves without His Will, it is He who has helped and served through this simple instrument. Hence, all Glory and credit belongs to Him.

As we were about to return to the Ashram after the Glorious and Holy pilgrimage of Forty Days, the question came:

Which Soul has derived the greatest benefit during all these days of Holy Pilgrimage?

Each one thought, especially those who had taken part in the pilgrimage from beginning to end that he was the one who had derived greatest benefit from it. Out of the fullness of the heart the mouth speaks. Suddenly I blurted out: “It was Omkar who received the greatest benefit and inspiration, above all others.’ The news was startling but it is a fact, a simple truth. Law is the more you give, the more you receive. It is the giver who is benefitted and enriched in the long run. I feel so happy and complete for the blessed opportunity God has given me to serve His aspiring children in all conditions of life.

I always take joy in telling something from my own personal life, from practical experience. I feel sad and unhappy to count the cows of my neighbours. I feel it is a waste of time to chew dry bones, the experiences of others, however great they may be. We must drink the milk of our own little cow even if it gives only an ounce of milk. I feel we have no right to open our mouths until we drink our own milk of experience for the blind can never lead the blind. From that personal experience one may not be to deliver

grand lectures but if they can speak one or two words of Love they will have their own effect and will ultimately pervade and permeate the Universe, being of great benefit to all seekers of Truth.

The Peace Prayer has helped me and it is still helping me to feel the Presence of God during its very repetition, making me forget all forms and names. It is a prayer that makes one feel God's Presence, not tomorrow or in the uncertain future but right now, as it is repeated. As the taste of pudding is only in the eating, please repeat the Prayer only two or three times and you will see for yourself its marvelous effect, filling your body with Life, Light and Love. You are filled and surrounded by the Self-effulgent Light. Your very body is pervaded and permeated by the Inter penetrating Presence as you repeat the Peace Prayer.

Dear Friend, what else do you need If you are pining for God, He is here, right this moment. If you want to taste the peace that passeth all understanding, It is within you, awaiting your recognition Here and Now. The repetition of the Simple Peace Prayer with all the strength of your mind, heart and soul will express and manifest the Indwelling, Hidden Light in you, in all its Glory. The Pandits and Philosophers may say that there is nothing new in this Peace prayer. All this is in the Kenopanisad and other Upanisads. I too agree with Pandits that it is in the Upanisads, nay that it is in every scripture of every religion. But with the Peace Prayer the Upanisads, the Scriptures are taken out into daily life, into the life of Experience. The essence of the Scriptures is brought out into the heart of life. There should be no difference between knowing it and living and being It.

Once again I raise my strong voice to say that we must not be satisfied with chewing dry bones but must taste the marrow of our own personal experience.

What is in the Vedas, Bibles, Pitikas and Qurans should be taken out of the books and allowed to enter into our minds, heart and souls for expression in our own daily lives. It is the practice of the Presence of God, not now and then but ceaselessly which is

the simple and direct way towards the Heights of Glory and God-Realisation. The simple repetition of our Peace Prayer helps us to feel God's presence Here and Now, consciously. This is my Personal Experience even now. I long to see that it is the Personal Experience of all of you also for we are all the children of the One God.

During the holy Pilgrimage I had the blessed privilege of entering into the devoted hearts of many seekers of different religions. But it made my heart sad and heavy to see in some homes worry, sadness, sickness and misery instead of joy, health, harmony and peace. Except in some blessed homes the cart is usually put before the horse. The wife wants to drag the cart of life towards Hardwar, the Himalayas and the husband longs to drag the cart towards Rameswaram, Cape Comorin. What great contrasts and contradictions there are in one is life.

Whether you wish to go to Tirupati or to Kailas let the two bulls or the two horses of life drag in the same direction. Thus, you can make some progress and be happy. If not the homes will be a veritable hell with differences, doubts and contradictions in little things as well as in big things. With a sad and heavy heart I saw the blind leading the blind and all of them falling into the same ditch of ignorance, the parents neglecting the spiritual education of the children and worrying only over their outer education and health, or some passing cloud, running after name and fame in the ever changing world of name and form.

It is with man to make his home a Heaven or a Hell. He is the master of his own destiny. It is my longing now, more than ever to help people to change their homes into Heavens. I long to help them to help themselves, to convert their homes into Abodes of Peace, Paradises on Earth. My heart rejoices to receive the following letter from a devoted soul, as if it were a reward of our Pilgrimage. Here is an excerpt from the letter given only as an appeal to all our friends and readers so they will aspire to make their homes also into Paradises of Peace, establishing Peace and Love in their hearts first, for where Love is, there is Heaven or God.

Dear Swamiji: Thy visit to our humble home with the Ashram devotees has been the greatest blessing for us. We shall ever remember thy message to us on that occasion. Heaven is there where two souls love each other selflessly. Our efforts shall always be to build that Heaven by loving each other selflessly. Swamiji has breathed Peace into our home and filled it with Peace and Love. Both my wife and I are ever grateful to Thee for thy visit and Message of Peace.

But, we know, Swamiji will be happy only if we feel the Presence of God very intimately and help others also to feel the Presence of God. We assure thee that we shall try to feel His Presence by repeating the Peace Prayer whenever we get a little time, even in the midst of our work.

In this effort to feel His Presence we pray for thy help by sending us often thy thought so that when we forget Him in the midst of our material life we will be aroused and made aware of the Indwelling Presence. We are sure we have Swamiji's Blessings in full measure. From the day of thy visit to our home we felt a change came over our lives and we only pray that this change is made permanent.

In deed Swamiji thy short stay in our midst has been an extremely happy time and we are grateful to God for blessing us with this opportunity. We are eager to come to the Ashram and again enjoy the Ananda, Bliss of thy Presence in that peaceful atmosphere. We hope, by thy blessings we will get that opportunity in the not very distant future.

These days I have been requesting the parents to see God in their children and the children to see God in their parents. Similarly husbands should see God in their wives and wives should see God in their husbands. If we cannot love the man whom we see, how can we ever love God, Whom we cannot see with these physical eyes? Love of man is love of God.

Another moment of ecstasy during our Pilgrimage came when I heard some noted scholar telling his friends after my

discourse that it was the highest and most practical discourses that has ever been delivered in his town in this Kali Yuga for it gave the method for attaining God-Realisation in a simple and direct way. Another moment of happiness came when a noted poet said with a beaming face:

Swamiji! As advised and suggested in your discourse last night, I went home and saw God in my wife and children. My very home became a Heaven. We all feel so happy and grateful to you.

Now to the world ahead! with the added experiences during our recent pilgrimage to the North, with the blessed opportunity of contacting many devoted, dedicated and aspiring souls who are living Gods to me, I feel there is too much work to be done in the outer world both near and far. Imagine what it means to establish a Heaven in every home, to convert homes into Heavens, every village and town in all the East and West into Paradises of Love and Peace.

What a blessed work, but how stupendous, great and limitless it is! Yet, we are told that even the crawling ants will eventually make a pathway across the loftiest mountains. In my zeal and heavy responsibility I appeal now for the help, sympathy and active cooperation of all the sisters and brothers of every creed to assist me in realizing my dream of converting Homes into Heavens. In memory of our pilgrimage, my heart rejoices to see also the Peace Prayer translated into English, Telugu, Tamil, Kanarese, Malayalam, Hindi, Bengali, Urdu, Marathi, Gujarati, Kashmiri, and Sindhi, as well as Sanskrit. At one place, early in our journey two thousand copies of the reprint of the Telugu Peace Prayer were exhausted in no time.

The way to begin this noble work is by establishing Peace in our own hearts, in the Heart of the Individual first. The medium by which to create that Peace or Love is the simple Peace Prayer. Please memorise and repeat the Peace Prayer once or twice or as often as possible, first audibly, then with the lips and then with the mind until your filled with ecstasy and become absorbed in the

Light of lights. Let the Light spread from heart to heart all over the world, we may not change immediately the wide world but we can at least change ourselves by establishing Peace and Love in our hearts now.

Let there be Peace and Love in our Hearts!

Let there be Peace and Love in our Homes !

Let there be Peace and Love in the Ashrams !

Let there be Peace and Love in communities !

Let there be Peace and Love in the Nations !

Let there be Peace and Love in the whole World !

Let there be Peace and Love throughout the Universe !

The Peace and Progress of the world is our progress and Peace. The welfare of humanity is our welfare.

Om Santi Santi Santi

An Offering of Love

To all the friends and devotees who are helping me to realise the dream of converting Homes into Heavens by establishing Peace first in their devoted hearts, next in their homes and as a matter of course in the wide world!

OM OM OM

Chapter 106

BENEDICTION

In the early hours of dawn on Sunday, 25th October 1970 as I sat at my desk to write the concluding Benediction of the Autobiography I found, as I arranged my papers a little booklet, World Peace through the Peace Prayer. It was as if the little message was asking me to please include it as a final chapter before giving the Benediction. God's ways are mysterious. Whatever is going to happen will happen, whatever is to be added also to the Autobiography will surely be added. O Lord, not my will, may Thy will be done, now, always and forever.

OM

OM

OM

The flickering light is ending its tiny life and as it goes out, as it is about to finish its life journey on earth, it gives out the brightest flame, seemingly as its last offering to the world. Similarly I long to give out to all of you; my heart longs to touch the hearts of you, in this closing chapter of the Autobiography, with a spark of my Love to help you feel the Presence of God. As you read this Benediction it is He Who is with you and in you, pervading and permeating the very cells of your beings.

My tender heart longs to cover all of you, each and every one of you, near and far in the ashram, Godavari District, Andhra Pradesh, in all the States of India. Ceylon, nay, in all the East, in Rangoon, Malaysia, Singapore, Hong Kong and Japan. From Japan, the land of cherry blossoms it longs to reach those in Honolulu, San Francisco, Los Angeles. Berkeley, Hollywood, Santa Susana Hills, Denver, Chicago, Washington D.C., Philadelphia, New York, Boston, Cape Cod, Southbury, New Jersey and wherever I went in my travels abroad as well as to all the places I have never seen physically. But my heart is not content to touch only human beings for it does not want to exclude even the dumb animals or the tiniest creatures or plants on earth from its boundless love. My heart longs to greet each and every tiny fragrant flower and even the stars, moon and Sun and all the other planets in the sky, both visible and invisible.

How blessed it is to live in God and help others to live in Him. This simple aspiration has been the sole ideal and goal of Sri Santi Ashram the Mission of Peace from its establishing sixty years ago. It all looks like a dream but a happy, blissful and substantial dream which gives comfort and consolation, nay strength and inspiration to many a weary and longing souls. Abraham Lincoln's wise words, so often repeated in this Autobiography:

Out of the depths fresh Strength,
Out of the darkness new Light,
Even in the gloom we are on the Way

God has been the joy, strength and inspiration of my life. Verily, we are centered in God. We are eternally in Him.

We are One with God in the Past. We are One with Him in the Present. We are bound to be One with God even in the Future. Is there a moment when God is absent or separate from us, either in the past, present or future? In all the Universe, whether above or below, in the sky or on the earth there is not an atom of space where God exists not.

Glory Glory Glory

Indeed, He is within, without, above, below and all around, Nay, He is interpenetrating the very cells of our beings. All that we need now is to feel His Presence, the Indwelling Presence, the Self-effulgent Light, the Splendour of millions of Suns.

Your Peace is my Peace

May I have the privilege of serving you to help you establish Peace in your heart and then radiate it in your home, converting it into a Heaven of Peace? May you express Peace in thought word and deed and help us to vibrate it from heart to heart, in the community, nation and world at large until Peace pervades and permeates the whole Universe through your Ideal Life of Peace.

This is the Prayer of your Brother Omkar.

Dear loving readers of the Autobiography, may I leave you all now in the Self-effulgent Splendour of millions of Suns which

is your only real Birthright and divine Heritage. May you bask and bathe yourselves in the Ocean of Akhanda, Satchidananda, the Ocean of Existence Absolute, Knowledge Absolute and Bliss Absolute. My one closing, prominent thought now, as I complete this Autobiography is that this flickering Light may enter into the devoted hearts, of my loving readers in this present living moment, ever to abide there in Silence and Peace. May the Light speak no more, write no more through this instrument but rather merge and dissolve in your devoted hearts of consecration, serving you all permanently even after the demise of this physical sheath or form!

Man, the ignorant man is unhappy and miserable because he thinks too much of himself. The way to be happy is to make others happy, forgetting the ego, the little self. The constant repetition of the Peace Prayer helps, to kill the ego, to dispel the ignorance and to create love in the hearts and Peace in the Soul. Let us repeat the Peace Prayer wishing the Peace of all; not only in temples and churches but in each and every moment of our lives for the Adorable Presence is the Light of our hearts. The Peace Prayer helps to establish Peace in the heart now and here and this alone paves the way to Peace in the world.

Let us close our eyes now and repeat in all reverence and silence the Holy Peace Prayer which unites individuals with the Universal for Adorable Presence is the Stratum, the Holy Thread and runs through all beads, the beings, the children of the Almighty God. May Adorations be unto the Adorable Presence, the Indwelling Light of heart and the Self-effulgent Light of all the worlds.

My heart longs to pay homage to the pages of the Autobiography also by adding some favourite and holy Slokas:

ॐ नमस्ते सते ते जगत् कारणाय
ॐ नमस्ते हिते सर्व लोका श्रयाय
ॐ नमो अद्वैत तत्वाय मुक्ति प्रदाय
ॐ नमो ब्रह्मणे व्यापिने शाश्वताय

Om Namaste sate te jagat karanaya
Om Namaste hithe sarva lokasrayaya
Om Namo Advaita Tatvaya muktupradaya
Om Namo Brahmane vyapine sasvataya

I bow down to God Who is in the form of Sat, Existence, in the entire world; I worship the Chit, the knowledge which is in the form of intelligence in all of you: I surrender myself to the One Who is all Bliss, Ananda.

Who is all-pervading and Who is One without a second.

As a closing benediction to the Autobiography, let us chant now the Vedic Peace Chant:

Unto the Heavens let there be Peace,
Unto the Sky and Earth let there be Peace,
Unto the Waters may there be Peace;
Peace unto the herbs and trees,
Unto all the Gods let there be Peace.
Unto Brahman and to All let there be Peace!
Peace yea, Verily Peace.

This is the Prayer of the ONE WHO loves you always, wishing and praying for your welfare and Peace.

May Peace be unto All!

OM

BIRTHDAY MESSAGE

(The Diamond Jubilee of Ashram-the Mission of Peace on 21st January 1977)

HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO YOU, YOUR PEACE IS MY PEACE

May I have the privilege of serving you, to help yourself to establish Peace in your heart and radiate it in the home, converting your home into a Heaven of Peace!

May you express Peace in thought, word and deed and help us to vibrate It, from heart to heart, in the community, nation and the world at large, until Peace pervades and permeates the whole universe, through your Ideal Life of PEACE!

This is the prayer of your brother Omkar

OM

OM

OM

OUT OF THE DEPTHS FRESH STRENGTH
OUT OF THE DARK NEW LIGHT
EVEN IN THE GLOOM WE ARE ON THE WAY.

- Abraham Lincoln

This is the Richest Wealth that I received from America, during my four trips to U.S.A. These are the wise words of the sage Abraham Lincoln, which have been the strength, consolation especially in the tests, trials and tribulations of the Ashram-the life of sixty long years.

Yet, as not a blade of grass moves without God's Will, it was all in the Divine Plan as PRARABDHA KARMA, in deeds that were done in the past. Man has to reap it silently, with a smile for he is reaping only what he has sown in the past. OMNIPOTENCE IS WORKING, LET THE MORTAL RETIRE. But the mortal, the ignorant man does not want to retire. He is busy day and night in the name of the Diamond Jubilee of Ashram, planning and scheming to construct PEACE PILLER OF LIGHT and PEACE PRAYER HALL, MEDITATION and SERVICE etc., etc. There is no end for the endless desires of ignorant man.

Knowing that DESIRE BINDS, one is going down and down with endless desires, in the name of the ASHRAM, which is the property of all the Children of God, in the East and the West, in all religions and nations. When OMNIPOTENCE is working ceaselessly both day and night, from the beginning to end of the creation, who are we and what are we to disturb, nay to teach the OMNIPOTENCE-the All-knowing God with your finite and restless thoughts and schemes. Wake up O Man! Even at the dawn of 83rd year, to the Glory of God-the LIGHT WITHIN-the Splendor of millions of Suns!

Remember that you are a Lion, your nature is to Roar, with every breath – SOHAM, with every breath you are SOHAM with God-Consciousness, do not bleat like a sheep, always clinging to the cage of blood and flesh in the name of Santi Ashram. Do not be a Beggar of Beggars in the name of anything in the world. Be a giver always like the NIAGARA FALLS or the mightily ocean of SATCHIDANANDA,

which is ceaselessly praying with every wave, repeating OM NAMA SHIVAYA, OM SHIVAYA NAMAHA: INHALE AND EXHALE PEACE with every Breath. When you in hale with every breath it is NAMASIVAYA. When you exhale it is OM SHIVAYA NAMAHA!

What else can I say or write in memory of the Memorable Diamond Jubilee, of the 60 long years of service, wishing the Peace for all of you – the children of one Indivisible God in the world! Let us not worry over SPILT MILK. The Past is dead and buried. Here is the Nector of Immortality. Time is too precious to be wasted in words. Remember, that HE WHO WASTES MOMENTS WASTES ALL HIS LIFE.

Visit our Rishi Konda Beach in Waltair and also our New MOUNASHRAM- come and see, that the OCEAN IS PRAYING. WHY DON'T YOU PRAY O MAN! May every Breath be a New Birth, from the Dawn of the DIAMOND JUBILEE OF 1977.

In memory of the DIAMOND JUBILEE Let us Inhale, Exhale Peace, making every Breath, a new Birth of SOHAM you have come from SOHAM, we live, breathe, move and work in SOHAM. Finally, whether we know it or not, you merge and dissolve in SOHAM, for SOHAM is your Life, Soul and Goal of your precious birth, as well as the final destination or end of all the Creation.

This is the message of Light, Life and Love, the Message of SOHAM for all seekers of Truth in the East and the West. The message of the Diamond Jubilee of 1977 is to cling to SOHAM, or follow SOHAM ceaselessly like TAILADHARA, oil poured from one vessel into another vessel without the least break.

देहो देवालयः प्रोक्तो जीवो देवस्सनातनः
त्यजे दज्ञान निर्माल्यं सोहं भावेन पूजयेत्
DEHO DEVALAYAH PROKTO
JEVO DEVA SSANATHANAHA
TYAJE DAJNANA NIRMALYAM
SOHAM BHAVENA PUJAYET

The body alone is the Temple of God,
The individual alone is the Universal
Hence destroying the ignorance of duality
Let us worship Him with SOHAM Consciousness!

Verily, Soahm is One without a Second. As SOHAM is Omnipresent, Omnipotent and Omniscient, let the finite mortal retire-in the Infinite and Eternal SOHAM.

Hari Om Tat Sat. May Peace be unto all!

OM OM OM

A Tiny Offering with LOVE that includes all, to all the SOHAM devotees-the worshippers of Universal Energy in all the East and the West, with Prayers for World Peace.

Loka samastah sukhni bhavanthu!

OM OM OM

Chapter 107

THE ESSENCE OF MY AUTOBIOGRAPHY

My heart longs to share the essence of my Autobiography with loving and patient readers of it. To begin with, I love to repeat here one of the little simple poems of Sri Surdas as it has been dear and near to my heart.

IS THERE A WRETCH
SO LOTHESOME AND WICKED AS I?
I HAVE FORGOTTEN MY MAKER
SO WORTHLESS HAVE I BEEN

In moments of depression and weakness we are sad enough and feel one with the lovely poem of bhakta Surdas. In moment of ecstasy, when I feel God's Presence within and without, when He is the only Reality, I take joy to repeat the following Sloka, the essence of Vedas:

ज्ञातम् ज्ञातव्यं मधुना
दृष्टम् द्रष्टव्यं मदुभुतम्
चिरम् श्रान्तं विश्रान्तोस्मि
चिन्मात्रा नास्ति किंचन

JNATHAM JNATHAVYA MADHUNA
DRASHTAM DRASHTAVYA MADHBHUTHAM
CHIRAM SHRANTH VISHRANTHOSMI
CHINMATHRA NASTHI KINCHANA

I have known what is to be known. I have seen what is to be seen. It is wonderful. Through ignorance and duality I have suffered much so far. Now I am resting in Him, for, nothing else exists besides Him.

I am bubbling with joy for the GRACE OF GOD is on me today more than ever, because of your Prayers. Let me share with my loving readers of Autobiography the holy sloka that I repeat often with ecstasy these days. Here it is for your assimilation.

अहंब्रह्मास्मि मन्त्रोऽयं कोटि पापम विनश्यते
अहंब्रह्मास्मि मन्त्रोऽयं जनपापम् विनश्यते
अहंब्रह्मास्मि मन्त्रोऽयं भेदबुद्धिम् विनश्यते
अहंब्रह्मास्मि मन्त्रोऽयं ज्ञानानन्दं प्रयच्छते

AHAM BRAHMASMI MATHROYAM KOTIPAPAM VINASYATE
AHAM BRAHMASMI MANTHROYAM JANAPAPAM VINASYATE
AHAM BRAHMASMI MANTHROYAM BHEDA BUDDHI VINASYATE
AHAM BRAHMASMI MANTHROYAM JNANANAMDAM PRAYACHATE

AHAM BRAHMASMI MANTHROYAM AND SOHAM
MANTRA are not two but One. Follow SOHAM, ceaselessly like
Tailadhara, oil poured from one vessel into another vessel, without
a break.

May we close the long Autobiography with SHANTI
MANTRA of the Upanishads now:

OM POORNAMADAH POORNAMIDAM
POORNAT POORNAMUDACHYATE
POORNASYA POORNAMADAYA
POORNAMEVA VASISHYATHE.

Om Santi Santi Santihi !

Om. That is full. This is full. From that full this full has come.
Even if this full is taken from that full, it always remains full.

Om Peace Peace Peace!

May God bless all our devoted readers of the Autobiography
with Health, Peace and longest lives of service. This is the ardent
Prayer of your own Omkar.

May Peace be unto all!

OM! OM! OM!

PEACE PRAYER IN VARIOUS LANGUAGES

Peace Prayer in Sanskrit

सर्वलोकशान्तिप्रार्थना
परमपूज्यप्रसन्नप्रकाशस्वरूप!

भवान् सर्वेषाम् उपरि सर्वेषाम् अधः सर्वेषाम् अन्तः सर्वेषां बहिः सर्वेषां
बहिः सर्वेषां परितः सर्वं व्याप्य तिष्ठसि सदा। भवान् चक्षुषश्चक्षुः श्रोत्रस्य
श्रोत्रं हृदयस्य हृदयं मनसो मनः श्वासस्य श्वासः प्राणस्य प्राणः आत्मनः आत्मा।
प्रेष्ट भगवन्! भवन्तम् अत्रय अधुनैव जातुं भवदनुग्रहेण शक्तिं देहि। एतदेकमेव
प्रार्थयते अस्माभिः। प्राच्यां प्रतीच्याम् उदीच्यां दक्षिणायां दिक्षु जानन्तु सर्वे तव
सान्निध्यम्। प्रतिजने प्रतिसमूहे प्रतिराष्ट्रशान्तिः सौहृदं च विलसताम्।
एषाऽऽत्मकं हृद्यप्रार्थना - लोकाः समस्ताः सुस्तिनी भवन्तु। सर्वेषां शान्तिरस्तु

ॐ शान्तिः शान्तिः शान्तिः

Peace Prayer in Hindi

हे पूजनीय दिव्य स्वरूपा। हे सर्वान्तर्यामी प्रभु।
आप हमारे भीतर और बाहर, उपर, नीचे सर्वत्र व्याप्त हो।
आप हमारे अंतर के अणु-अणु में निहित हो।
आप हमारे नयनों के नयन। कानों के कान।
हृदयों के हृदय। मानस के मानस। श्वासों के श्वास।
प्राणों के प्राण और आत्मा के आत्मा बनकर प्रकाशित हो।
हे प्रेम के सागर, आपको जानने पहचाने का सौभाग्य अभी यहीं
प्राप्त हो। हे तेजोमय प्रभु! पूरव, पश्चिम, उत्तर, दक्षिण और
समस्त विश्व के लोग, आपके दिव्य प्रकाश से परिचित हो।
हे सच्चिदानंद स्वरूपा मनुष्य के बीच जाति-जाति के
बीच, शांति और समरसता की स्थापना करो।
हे प्रभु हमारी यही प्रार्थना है।
लोकाः समस्ताः सुखिनो भवन्तु
ॐ शांतिः शांतिः शांतिः

Peace Prayer in Telugu

పూజనీయులైన ఓ దివ్య స్వరూపా!

మా లోపలను, వెలుపలను, మీదను, క్రిందను, అంతటనూ నిండియున్న ఓ సర్వాంతర్యామీ!
మా లోపల ప్రతి అణువు నందును ఇమిడియుండి, మా నేత్రములకు నేత్రము, కర్ణములకు
కర్ణము, హృదయములకు హృదయము, మనస్సులకు మనస్సు, శ్వాసలకు శ్వాస,
ప్రాణములకు ప్రాణము, ఆత్మలకు ఆత్మవై వెలుగొందు ఓ దేవా! ప్రేమకే మూర్తి! నీన్న
తెలుసుకొను భాగ్యము ఇప్పుడు ఇచ్చటనే మాకు ప్రసాదించుము.

ఓ తేజోమయ మూర్తి! తూర్పు పడమరల, ఉత్తర దక్షిణముల, ఈ విశ్వము నందంతటను
అందరును నీ దివ్య తేజస్సును గ్రహింతురు గాక! ఓ సచ్చిదానంద స్వరూపా! ప్రతి మానవ
హృదయము నందును, నానాజాతి మధ్యమునను శాంతి సామరస్యములను
ప్రతిష్ఠింపజేయుము. ఓ దేవా! ఇదియే మా మనఃపూర్వకమైన ప్రార్థన.

లోకాస్సమస్త స్సుఖినో భవంతః!

ఓం శాంతి శాంతి శాంతి!

Peace Prayer in Tamil

శ్రీవామి శ్రీమకాంక్షి అరుణియ

శాంతి పిరార్తతణై (Universal Peace Prayer)

పోర్ఱి పోర్ఱి పురణ నిరైవే
உள்ளும் புறமும் మொழிவற నిరైరந்தாய் !
మేలూం కీడూం శుర్రెలిల్లుమలగాయ
తశైశ్శిరు పగుతియిల్ తங்கువోయ న్దే
కణ్ణణినుడకణ్ణణే ! కాతినుడ శెవియే !
ఇతయత్తి నులగై ఇరుక్కుం ఇతయమే !
మనత్తినులగై మణ్ణిడు మణమే !
உயిర்பిను రుయిర்பే உயిరినుక్ కుయిరే !
ஆன்மா విలుறை ஆன்మ నாயకణే !
இன்ப அன்பாம் இறைவனே யாங்கள்
ఱంగు ఇప్పోతే உన్ నీங்கా నిరైవై
శ్రీంగి ఉణరశ్ శెయ్కువ తొన్రే
పాంగకాయ్ ఉన్ణైం పణిన్దు వేణ్ణువమే
మేర్కూం వడక్కుం తెర్కూం కిళక్కినుమ్
எத் తిశైయిమ్ నిరైరந்தాయ్
உனது నిరైవై యుణరవే శెయ్కువాయ్
తనిత్తని మనితన్శమకమ్ తేయమ్
అణైత్తినులగైం ఇన్పమమ్ అన్పమ్
నిణైప్పినుల్ నిలవ న్దీరుల్ వాయే !
ఇతివే ళ్లంగల్ ఇతయ విణ్ణంబమ్
శ్రీంశ్రీంశ్రీం

లోకా : సమస్తతా : సౌకిణో పవన్తు
శ్రీం శాంతి : శ్రీం శాంతి : శ్రీం శాంతి :

Peace Prayer in Oriya

ପରମପୁଣ୍ୟ ହେ ଦିବ୍ୟସୁରପ ! ଅନ୍ତରେ

ବାହାରେ, ଅଧଃପତନ ପରବ ଅଶୁମଧ୍ୟରେ ବ୍ୟାପ୍ତରହି, ଚକ୍ଷୁରେ
ଚକ୍ଷୁରୁପେ, କରୁଣାରେ କରୁଣାରୁପେ, ହୃଦୟରେ ହୃଦୟରୁପେ,
ମନରେ ମନରୁପେ, ଶ୍ଵାସରେ ଶ୍ଵାସରୁପେ, ଜୀବରେ ଜୀବରୁପେ,
ଆତ୍ମା ସମୁଦରେ ଆତ୍ମାରୁପେ, ଦେବୀସ୍ଵମାନହୋଇ ରହିଅଛି । ହେ ପରମପୁରୁଷ ଉଗ୍ରବାନ ତୁମର
ସେହି ଦିବ୍ୟତେଜ ଜାଣିବାପାଇଁ ଏବେ ମୋତେ ଏ ସ୍ଥାନରେ ଅନୁଗ୍ରହ ପ୍ରଦାନ କରନ୍ତୁ ।

ହେ ସରବ ଅନ୍ତରସ୍ଵାମୀ ପୁରବ, ପଶ୍ଚିମ, ଉତ୍ତର, ଦକ୍ଷିଣ
ଓ ବିଶ୍ଵର ସମଗ୍ରଭାବରେ ସମସ୍ତେ ତୁମଭର ଦିବ୍ୟତେଜ ସ୍ଵରୂପଲାଇ
କରନ୍ତୁ । ହେ ସଚ୍ଚିଦାନନ୍ଦପୁରୁଷ ! ପ୍ରତି ମାନବ ହୃଦୟ
ମଧ୍ୟରେ ଓ ବିଭିନ୍ନ ଜାତିମଧ୍ୟରେ ଶାନ୍ତି ଓ ମୈତ୍ରୀର
ସୋର ଖେଳାଇ ଦିଅନ୍ତୁ । ଏହା ହିଁ ଆତ୍ମମାନଙ୍କର ବିନୀତ
ପ୍ରାର୍ଥନା ।

“ଲୋକାଃ ସମସ୍ତାଃ ପୁଷ୍ଟିନୋଭବନ୍ତୁ

ଓଁ ଶାନ୍ତିଃ ଶାନ୍ତିଃ ଶାନ୍ତିଃ”

Peace Prayer in Gujarati

ବିଶ୍ଵ ଶାନ୍ତି ମାଟେନୀ ପ୍ରାର୍ଥନା

ସୌମ୍ୟ ହସ୍ତୀ

ଅମାରି ଭୀତର-ଘର-ଓପର ନୀଚେ ନେ ଯୋତରଃ ସମନାର,

ଅମାରି ପ୍ରାଣ ଅସ୍ତ୍ରାଓମା ପ୍ରସରନାର,

ଅମାରି ଯଶ୍ଵାଓଜୁଁ ନୂର-ଅମାରି କର୍ମାଓନୋ ସୂର,

ଅମାରି ହୃଦୟାଓଜୁଁ ହାଟ-ଅମାରି ମନାଓଜୁଁ ମନୋଭାଗ,

ଅମାରି ଆସାଓନୋ ଓଷ୍ଠବାସ-ଅମାରି ଛିଡ଼ଗାଓନାଓଜୁଁ ଗୁପ୍ତ-ଅମାରି ଆତ୍ମାଓନୋ ପରମାତ୍ମା (ଶେବା) ହିଁ ପ୍ୟାରୀ ପ୍ରଭୁ- ଅମନେ ଆଶିର୍ବାଦ
ଆପ କେ ଅମେ ଆ ପଣେ ନେ ଆ ଶ୍ଵାଓନେ ତାରି ହସ୍ତୀ ମାଟେ ସମାଗ ରହିଅଛି. ଅମେ ତାରି ପାଶେ କେବଳ ଆଟାଓଜୁଁ ଯାଆଅଛି ଶୁଣିଅଛି.

ଓତ୍ତର-ପଶ୍ଚିମ-ପୂର୍ବ ପଶ୍ଚିମ ସର୍ବତ୍ର ତାରି ହସ୍ତୀ ମାଟେ ସମାଗ ଘନାଓ ପ୍ରତ୍ୟେକ ବ୍ୟକ୍ତି-ଜାତି ନେ ରାଷ୍ଟ୍ର ଶାନ୍ତିନେ ଶୁଭେଚ୍ଛାଶ୍ରୀ ସଂକଳାପେଦା
ରହାଓ ଆଜ ଅମାରି ଅନ୍ତଃକରଣପୂର୍ବକନୀ ଅବ୍ୟର୍ଥନା ଥେ.

Peace Prayer in Urdu

تو جو چھپا ہوا بھی ہے اور ظاہر بھی، آسمانوں اور زمین،
پر ہر سو تیرا ہی جلوہ ہے، تو ہی ہماری ہستیوں میں سمایا ہوا
ہے، تو ہی ہماری آنکھ ہے، ہمارا کان ہے، ہمارا دل و دماغ ہے،
ہماری سانس، ہماری جان اور ہماری روح بھی تو تو ہی ہے!
اے خدا! ہم پر رحم فرما تاکہ ہمیں ہر وقت اور ہر جگہ
تیرے وجود کا احساس ہو ;
بس ہماری تجھ سے یہی دُعا ہے !!!
ہم میں سے ہر شخص کو چاہئے وہ مشرق کا باشی ہو یا
مغرب کا شمال کا ہو یا جنوب کا سب کو تیری ہستی کا احساس
ہوجائے ! ہر شخص ہر قوم اور ہر ملت کے اندر امن اور خیر سگالی
کا جذبہ پیدا ہوجائے !
بس ہماری تجھ سے یہی التجا !!!
سب پر سلامتی ہو (آمین)
اے خدا ! اے خدا ! اے خدا !

Peace Prayer in French

ADORABLE PRESENCE! Vous qui êtes dedans et dehors, au-dessus et tout autour. Vous qui pénétrez les fibres de notre être. Vous qui êtes l'Œil de nos yeux, l'Oreille de nos oreilles, le Cœur de notre cœur, l'Esprit de notre esprit, le Souffle de notre souffle, la Vie de notre vie et l'Ame de notre âme. Accordez-nous la grâce d'être conscients de votre Présence ici et maintenant. C'est là notre unique vœu.

Que tous soient conscients de votre Présence à l'Est et l'Ouest, au Nord et au Sud; que la paix et la bonne volonté règnent parmi les individus, les communautés et les nations. Telle est notre sincère prière.

Paix a tous !

Peace Prayer in German

Gebet für den Weltfrieden.

Anbetungswürdiger Geist des Lebens!

**Du, der Du innen und außen, oben und unten und überall
Bist, - der Du alle Zellen unseres Seins durchdringst, -der
Du Auge unserer Augen, Ohr unserer Ohren,
Herz unserer Herzen, Leben unseres Lebens,
Atem unseres Atems bist: Gib uns Deinen Segen,
Du Ewiger, daß wir Deiner
Gegenwart bewußt sein mögen: jeßt und hier !
Das ist alles, was wir von Dir erbitten!**

**Möchten alle Deiner Gegenwart bewußt sein
in Ost und West, in Nord und Süd!**

**Möchte Friede und guter Wille zwischen
Den Einzelnen herrschen sowohl als zwischen
den Gemeinschaften und Völkern.**

Dies ist unser ernstes Gebet!

Peace Prayer in Spanish

ORACION DE LA PAZ

-para la PAZ mundial y la propia REALIZACION-

A T M A N en Todo.

ADORABLE PRESENCIA!

**Tu Que estas dentro y fuera, arriba, abajo y alrededor; Tu Que
estas penetrando lo mas intimo de nuestro ser, Tu Que eres el Ojo
de nuestros ojos; Oido de nuestros oidos; Corazon de nuestros
corazones; Mente de nuestras mentes; Alientos de nuestros all
entors: Vida de nuestras vidas y Alma de nues tras almes: Bend
icenos, Dios Amado, para ser conscientes de Tu Presencia, Ahoray
Aqui. Es estro todo lo que to pedimos.**

**Que todos sean conscientes de Tu Presencia, al Este y al Oeste,
al Norte y al Sur. Qus la Paz y Buena Voluntad reinen tanto en los
individuos como entre las comunidades y las naciones. Este es
nuestro mas profundo ruego.**

Que la Paz este en todos

Peace Prayer in Dutch

VREDESGEBED

Aanbiddelijke Aanwezigheid!

Gij die in ons zijt alsook erbuiten

Boven en onder en overall

Gij die binnendringt in de cellen van ons wezen

Gij die het Oog van onze ogen zijt

het Oor van onze oren, het Hart van onze harten

de Geest van onze geesten, de Adem van onze adem

het Leven van onze levens, de Ziel van onze zielen

Zegen ons, lieve God, opdat wij ons bewust zijn van

Uw Aanwezigheid nu en hier

Dit is alles dat wij van u vragen

Mogen allen zich bewust zijn van Uw Aanwezigheid

In het oosten en in het westen, In het noorden en het zuiden

Moge vrede en goede wil gemeengoed zijn onder mensen,

gemeenschappen en naties!

Dit is ons welgemeend gebed

Moge vrede met allen zijn!

Ohm Shanti! Shanti! Shanti!

Peace Prayer in Russian

ОМ

ПРОСЬБА-- ДЛЯ МИРА МИРА.

Вдохните и выдохните Мир- восхитительное присутствие.

Ты находишься внутри снаружи, вверху, в низу, и ~~кажд~~ повсюду. Ты проникаешь в наших клетках. Ты ~~который~~, являешься глазом наших глаз, ухом наших ушей, сердцем наших сердец, ~~жизн~~ вниманием наших вниманий, дыханием наших дыханий, жизнью нашей жизни, душой наших душ, благослови нас, Дорогой Бог, что бы ~~и~~ мы чувствовали твое присутствие сейчас и здесь! Только этого мы хотим от тебя!

Пусть все чувствуют твое присутствие, на севере, на западе, на юге, на востоке, будет Мир в взаимоотношениях между людьми, каждым человеком, между каждой общиной, и между странами. Это наш искренняя просьба, ~~пусть~~ пусть мир принадлежит всем.

ОМ-- МИР, МИР, МИР.

APPENDIX

SRI SANKARA JAYANTI

The Shankara Jayanti Celebrations came off this year in the month of May and were held in Santi Ashram with great enthusiasm and solemnity for six days, commencing on the 13th. The decorations, which were exquisite and skillfully executed with beautiful welcome arches, numerous flags and other tasteful decorations were a feast for the eyes of the onlookers. The Shrine erected in the pandal wore the grandest appearance. The picture of Sri Sankara was placed in the sanctum sanctorum inside the big pandal specially erected for the congregation. In response to our invitation, well wishers and devotees from various areas such as Pithapuram, Kakinada, Rajahmundry, Madras, Bangalore, Bellary, Vizianagaram, Cuddapah, Masulipatnam, Hyderabad, Guntur, Vijayawada, Waltair etc., gathered at the Ashram to make the function a grand success. Under special arrangements made for the purpose, a bus was run all the days of the celebrations between Durgada station and the Ashram and the journey of the visitors was thus made quite comfortable. A few shops were opened at the Ashram gate. More than five thousand people were fed on the occasion, in the pandal specially erected for the purpose.

Swami Rajeswaranandaji Maharaj was elected as the President. Lectures were delivered on various subjects by many scholars. Sri Swami Pranavanandaji Maharaj conducted regular classes for nearly two hours daily, each morning, on the sublime life and noble teachings of the Acharya. Sri Swami Satchidananda Yogiswar dwelt on “*Yoga Rahasyam*”. Brahmacharies Mahadevan and Ramaprasad spoke in English and Telugu respectively. Besides lectures, bhajans, harikatha performances engaged the audience. The *Sankara Jayanti Puja* began three days before the Sankara Jayanti Day and was performed for nine days, both mornings and evenings. During the Puja the young *brahmacharies* chanted slokas from the upanishads and the works of Sri Sankara. At the end of the puja every day guru slokas and the hymns of the master were

sung. *Homam*, sacrificial offerings to the fire was performed on the last day and with that the function was brought to a close. Towards the end of the function everyone present felt the urge to walk in the wake of Jagad Guru Sri Sankaracharya honestly and sincerely, having him as the noble ideal in life. In short, a sacred thrill, divine inspiration and permanent impression was felt in the hearts of all.

(Peace June 1929)

OM TAT SAT OM

Our Rishikonda Ashram :

At Rishikonda temporary cottages are being constructed and the devotees at Visakhapatnam and Waltair are busy establishing what will be in time, by His continued grace, another beautiful Garden of Peace, radiating Life, Light and Service to the villagers of the neighbourhood. God has already blessed the site with wonderful natural beauty, rolling hills, as far as the eye can see, fertile fields and the great blue Bay of Bengal with fair stretches of sandy beach and miles of exquisite silence. The little garden of God is underneath the shadow of Rishikonda, an ancient hill where long ago a band of sages and saints took retreat and carried out their secret, sacred mission. Our Swamiji says whenever congratulated on finding so lovely and holy a place, 'Yes, we must be Rishis and try to make Rishis of all who come to Rishikonda Santhi Ashram.' Then he smiles with a deep inner joy at the further opportunity to help and serve others and also for the promise of perpetual communion with the indweller of the heart, for new strength and inspiration.

Our Waltair Ashram:

Through the devoted efforts of Brother Narasinga Rao, a well known Advocate of Visakhapatnam another beautiful and valuable site of two acres has been given to the Mission of Peace by Brother Purushottham, a philanthropic and altruistic soul. This lovely site on the beach at Waltair he has long reserved for some

beneficent cause and on learning from his esteemed friend about the work of Sri Swamiji he has decided that the proper channel for his charitable interests has been found.

On our way back to Santhi Ashram we were most graciously received and entertained at the villages of both Brother Narasinga Rao and Brother Purushottham who has taken great delight in offering the land and has felicitated Sri Swamiji on the good beginning of the work there.

(Peace July-Aug. 1936)

Our new Waltair Branch :

Brother Purushottham is anxious that the costly and lovely Ashram site which he has given to the Mission of Peace be dedicated to the cause of Peace and service to humanity, before Sri Swamiji's departure to America. A band of ashramites have accompanied Sri Swamiji and Sister Sushila Devi to start the new centre. Temporarily, till more funds are offered by interested *bhaktas* of Peace, of which there is promising evidence in Waltair and through-out the world, palm-thatched cottages were quickly erected. They are so picturesque, cool and neat that we shall regret removing them for the permanent structures soon to be erected. The lavish tropical splendour of the land, sea and sand at Waltair make it easy to feel the nearness of our glorious creator.

OM OM OM

(Peace March-April 1937)

Kali Kambli Baba and Sri Ramdas Swamiji :

He is called Kali Kambli Baba for he wears a black blanket. Sri Baba has a large following and serves all devotees in all possible ways. At one of our meetings, Sri Babaji was kind enough to sit on the platform with Sri Swamiji for three hours and appreciated every word of our Swamiji's message. Sri Baba, who was observing silence throughout, embraced Sri Swamiji at the end and even spoke, saying that his own thoughts and teachings were just like those of our Swamiji. It was most touching to see Sri Babaji wiping

the perspiration from Sri Swamiji's face with his shawl. May long life of Peace and Service be unto our Sri Babaji.

Sri Ramdas Swamiji is another great soul. People say that he is one hundred and twenty years old. In any case, his closest disciples say that he is near one hundred years of age. He was all love to our Swamiji and embraced him as soon as they met. Sri Chaitanya and Sister Mangamma introduced us to this simple Sri Ramdas Swamiji who lives like a sweet child of God. It was very kind and good of him to take us to his disciples and to request them to help the Ashram, our Swamiji was deeply touched when Sri Swami Ramdasji sat for three hours each time at two large meetings, with eyes closed. When fruits were offered to him, he would put them on the table before Swamiji. How God unites kindred souls. His children to serve his Cause of Peace, is mysterious! Long life be unto Sri Ramdas Swamiji Maharaj!

The Golden Jubilee Resolutions

1967

- * Dear God, let others be great and famous and let me be unknown and insignificant.
- * Let me speak less, but meditate more.
- * Let me keep Service before the little self.
- * Let the annihilation or destruction of the ego be the goal whether it is in work or meditation.
- * Let every moment with Thee be more precious than all the wealth in the world.
- * Let me love silence, the essence of all the religions more than all the scriptures of the world.
- * Let Swami be dead more than ever and Omkar alive in all of you for the good of all!
- * May every breath be inhaled and exhaled only for the benefit of others, who are none other than One Self, the One Indivisible Atman.

OM

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OM

(Peace Dec. 1966)



Swamiji at 87 Years



OM OM OM

SRI SANTI ASHRAM PUBLICATIONS IN ENGLISH

1. Auto Biography of Swami Omkar
2. Life and Teachings of Swami Omkar
3. Soham
4. Cosmic Fast
5. Meditation by Swami omkar
6. Om Japa
7. Control of Mind
8. Cosmic Flashes
9. In the Hours of Silence
10. The Soul of Omkar
11. How I Learned English
12. Reincarnation of my Little Sister
13. God Realization Now and Here
14. Mystic Prayers and Poems
15. The Divine Voice of Omkar