



Vedanta Classes

in Kotagiri Peace Centre 1972

Discourses By Sri Swami Omkar



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(First Meeting Missing)

Second Meeting: 16 September

Hearty Welcome to the Presence of God, for He is here now. If we believe God is Omnipresent, He is here now, interpenetrating the very cells of our beings, and pervading the whole universe.

In our Mother Ashram we have hundreds of inspiring motto signs One of them says,

*Chant God's Name Always
Pray Ceaselessly*

It is not enough to chant God's Name merely with the lips when we are having Satsang or Puja, or during prayer and meditation. The Name of God has to be chanted at all times, whether we are at work, sleep, waking, talking and in all the activities of life. The God whose Name we are chanting is not far away in the sky or Heavens but He is here right now.

It has been said that His Name is greater than Himself. If we believe that God is Omnipresent then He is with us now, in every moment of our lives, whether we feel His Presence consciously or not. Thus we should chant His Name in all the activities of life ceaselessly.

I want to begin our Vedanta Class with the Study of three chapters from 'Cosmic Flashes.' As some of you could not be here last night for the first meeting, Brother Markandeya will read out last night's message, which I feel sure will be helpful to all of you.

Then Sister Kalyani will sing the inspiring Mantra Hari Rama, Hari Rama for three minutes. I want you all to fill your own bodies with the first repetition. With the second repetition, fill this whole Prayer Hall. Finally, with the third chanting, fill the whole universe, God's creation with Light, Love and Peace.

Hari Rama, Hare Rama, Rama Rama, Hare Hare

Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna, Hare Hare.

Now that our sister Kalyani has sung the inspiring Mantra, we are all filled now with the Presence of Rama and Krishna. If we could all just feel the Presence of Rama it would be enough for our Peace, and for the Peace of the world.

What we need is assimilation You can read all the Bibles and Vedas but unless and until you assimilate their essence, they will do you no good. We have to realise that God is present right now in our own hearts. Only a little Love for all is necessary to feel His Presence. If we do not have a little love in our hearts for each other, then I do not know where God is. Verily, it has been said, Where there is love, God is there and where God is, there is Love.

There is an inspiring sloka which unites the Guru and his disciples, the individual with the universal. It also creates universal Love which unites all mankind. I should like now to chant that sacred mantra, to share it with all of you, wishing the Peace of you all. Although I do not have the attitude of a Guru, because I see you all as the living images of God, still I long to be of some help and serve to you. I see you all as the living, moving temples of God and I do not want ever to be superior to anyone for you are all my own, the rays of the one Sun of suns. In serving you I am serving God alone, for He is in all of you.

Om Namaste Satete, Jagad Karanaya

Om Namaste, Chitte, Sarva Lokasrayaya

Om Namo Advaita Tattvaya, Mukti Pranaya

Om Namo Brahman, Ujapine, Sasvataya

Thus I am becoming One with all of you, with all the members of the human, vegetable and animal kingdoms; becoming One with all the manifested world.

From the morning today the prominent thought has been, 'What can I share with you? What can I tell that will be helpful to all of you?' Similarly, each of you should be thinking, 'What can I learn today from Swamiji that will be helpful to me spiritually? What can I assimilate from Swamiji's message, the Vedanta Class and spiritual study today?'

'Progress is life and stagnation is death,' is a great truth. It is one of the important mottoes in the ashram. Each must ask himself, 'What is the progress I have made today?' Each one should grow spiritually day by day. There is progress in plants, trees and animals day by day. Similarly, each one should make some progress, grow closer and come nearer to God every day.

If we want to make real progress, we have to pay the price. Even if we want something from the bazaar, the market, we have to pay for it. Similarly, if we want God, we have to offer something. What we should offer is the undecaying flower of our hearts to God. We should offer the sweet fragrance of love, which is the heart flower of all of us and which is dear to God.

We have read in 'Cosmic Flashes,' Inhale and Exhale Peace. If we could only practise this one simple Mantra, we would not need to read any more books, run after any more Gurus, etc. Inhale and Exhale Peace. If we could only do this with each and every breath, it is enough for the Peace, not only of the individual but of the whole world. If we inhale and exhale Peace with every breath, we would realise God. We may call Him by any Name such as Rama, Krishna, Love, Dharma or by other name we choose to call Him.

In 'Cosmic Flashes' also we read, 'Religion and life are not two but one.' As you go out into the world of activity, you are eternally in God. When you sleep you are in God, when you eat you are in God, when working you are in God, no matter what you are doing, you are eternally in God's Omnipresence. You live, breathe and work in God. He is pervading and permeating the very cells of our beings. If you can only realise this great truth, it is enough for our freedom, Mukti. It is because of Him that I am speaking now and all of you are listening.

God is existence, knowledge and bliss absolute. He is Sat-Chit-Ananda. No matter what we are doing He is here, now and always, pervading and permeating the very cells of our beings.

The essence of today's message is: practice of the presence of God in each and every moment of your life, whether at work or at rest, for God is always present. This is the secret of success. Realise that religion and life are not two but one.

I have so much to share with all of you but as it is getting dark now and you all have a long distance to go home I will wait until tomorrow, even though today alone is ours and not tomorrow! One practical thing you can all do to help your spiritual progress daily is to keep a spiritual Diary. You can write down some of the inspiring thoughts therein, as they come to you during the day. Thus you can also see how you are growing in a simple and natural way.

In conclusion my heart longs to chant the Maha mantra of Sri Anandashram, the holy place of bliss of Sri Swami Ramdasji and Mother Krishnabai,

Sri Rama, Jai Rama, Jai Jai Rama Om

When you chant the first Sri Rama, fill your whole body from the toes to the top of the head with the Presence of God, with Light, Life and Love. With the second Jai Rama, fill all your sisters and brothers in the East and the west, in all the world, with Love and Light. With Jai Jai Rama the past, present and future are merged and dissolved in Light. Then, with the final Om fill the whole universe, all of God's creation with the splendour of millions of suns. Fill it with the self-effulgent Light, God's Omnipresence, Omnipotence and Omniscience. So let us fill all creation with Light, Love and Peace, chanting now.

Sri Rama, Jai Rama, Jai Jai Rama Om

By God's special blessings we are all filled and surrounded now by God's interpenetrating Presence.

OM! OM! OM!

Third Meeting: 17 September

My heart longs to extend a Hearty Welcome to all of you into the Presence of God, the only Reality. He is awaiting your recognition, so may you all feel His Presence, now and here.

My soul, the Atma, longs to extend a Hearty Welcome not only to all of you but to all the children of God in the whole world!

My soul is on fire to help and serve all of you. I do not want you to sit here like dolls or machines and then go away with empty hearts. I want you all to feel the Presence of God, for He is here, pervading the very cells of your beings. Without Him life is a burden to Mother Earth, and with His Presence we are everything, complete.

Today, fortunately we have read one of the Chapters from 'Cosmic Flashes,' on Sunday, the Day of Sunshine. Even though it is cloudy, the sun is always there. In spite of all the tests and trials of life, God is always present, with us and in us.

The essence of my teachings of these 78 years can be summed up in three short sentences. I try to sum up the essence of my life in these three short sentences because I do not believe in too many words.

Do not rely upon me.

Do not rely upon others, upon anyone else.

And if some of you say, 'What will happen to us if we do not rely on you, or on any others?' My answer is,

Rely on the Light which is shining in your own hearts, awaiting your recognition now and here.

If you use what you have, what you have will grow. What is the use of relying on outside Swamis and Yogis? All of you are blessed to have God or Eternal Light in your own devoted hearts. When you meditate, meditate on that self-effulgent Light and dispel all darkness and shadows.

I am a Soul of few words, I want those few words to be like bullets, or rather like atom bombs, Atmic bombs. May they penetrate into your hearts now and here, filling you all with infinite Light.

Some people are like talking machines, they talk and talk and won't let us say even a word. I myself am reluctant even to speak other than a few words. Still, as we have come a long way, I want to serve you all. I look at the mason building, step by step, stone by stone by stone. I want you all to make progress daily like that, growing closer to God, day by day, in every way.

Some of you may like and appreciate my words and some may not. Man always disappoints. Even the Swamis and Yogis will disappoint us.

There is only One Who will never disappoint us and that One is God within, the Light of lights shining in your own hearts. Hence, I request you not to rely on me but only on the Light within yourselves.

Our Kumari Santhi, who lives and breathes only for the welfare and progress of the Ashram said, 'Dear Swamiji, you know so many inspiring stories and illustrations, with good morals. Why don't you tell stories sometimes as it will be helpful to all the devoted students?'

So, as I do not wish to disappoint anyone but only to satisfy all of you, I will tell one story which will help all of you to examine your lives and shift your centre from the unreal to the real.

It seems all of us have three friends. One of these friends, the first one, we are loving with 90% of our hearts and minds. We give this friend all our love, time and energy. The second friend we love with only 9% of our minds and hearts and the third friend, we give only 1% of our love to, but unwillingly.

Who are these three friends? Listen closely. The first friend is all our wealth and material possessions, our houses, lands, money and the bank accounts, etc. We love this friend with 90% of our mind, heart and soul. But what happens when the Call comes, when we leave the body, which is inevitable for all of us? This friend, whom we are loving with 90% of our being won't even move one step on our behalf when we close our eyes sooner or later.

The second friend, whom we love with 9% of our minds, this is our ladies, children, family, friends and other relations. But how far will they come with us when we die? They will come with us only to the burial ground, but not one step further.

And who is the third friend, to whom we are giving only 1% of our love, of whom we barely think at all? Even when we are in Temples and having prayer we do not fully think of this friend, for our minds are usually elsewhere. But this third friend is the Loving God. When we die, leave the body, only He will go with us, following us in life as well as in death, never forgetting or neglecting us.

We often say we want God but only with our lips. We can dupe and deceive others, our fellow human beings, but not God, the all-knowing One. If you want God and God alone you should think only of God.

Dust if you think of, dust you are.

God if you think of, God you are.

It is high time to begin thinking of God and thus make your lives a great blessing to yourselves and to others. If you think you are the body of flesh and blood, then that is what you are. If you think you are God, the Living truth, you become THAT. Tat Twam Asi. Thou art THAT.

When you go forth to your homes, after you rest and relax, before sleeping ask yourselves, 'How much of my mind is going towards properties, home, bank accounts, running after the fleeting clouds of name and fame? How much is going to my family and dear ones and how much to God?' Ask yourselves these vital questions. Try to shift your Centre from the outer to the inner, from the unreal to the real, from Mammon to God.

May these daily lessons in practical Vedanta lead you all closer to God, the Soul and Goal of your precious human births!

MAY PEACE BE UNTO ALL!

OM! OM! OM!

Fourth Meeting: 18 September

As always, my heart longs to help and serve you all in a practical way. I long to give you all a dip into the Ocean of *Akhanda Sat-Chit-Ananda*, the existence, knowledge and bliss absolute. So, let us merge into the ocean of *Akhanda, Sat-Chit-Ananda* for He is all around us and we are filled and saturated with His Omnipresence.

I am not so satisfied with the finite words I've been telling you these days. My heart longs to help and serve you all practically, so that you can feel His Presence always. You already work, live and breathe in His Presence. I long to serve you to feel His Presence, because you are all the Living Images of God.

For anything to be successful in the world a little Love is needed. If I just sit here and talk, it will be mechanical. It is Love that is needed to give life to all. As I sit here you may ask in what way I am related to you all, that I have come to serve you. I am related to you insofar as we are all the children of the One God. We all come from Him, live in Him and go back to Him. There is not a moment of time when He is away or absent from us. In my religion there are no strangers or outsiders because we are all the children of the One God.

I pour out and pour out to you so that you will feel the Presence of God and make your lives a little better from day to day. In the other meetings on the other day we have been speaking of assimilation. Whatever we hear, let it not go in one ear and pass out through the other. Let us assimilate, take the message into our minds and let it penetrate into our hearts and flow into our very blood and thus be assimilated.

Similarly, the Spiritual food should be assimilated, enter our hearts and pervade and permeate our beings until it becomes a part of us. Our Sastras teach us *Sravana, Manana* and *Nidhidhyasa*. First you have to listen, then think with the mind and then meditate and finally become One with THAT. So, if you want God you must use these three, listen, think and meditate and thus become One with the spiritual nourishment.

The very word *Assimilation* is inspiring and helpful. Today I feel like speaking about saturation. What is saturation? Listen to this explanation and it will make this word more clear. When you put a spoonful of sugar in a glass of water it dissolves. You keep on putting spoonful after spoonful of sugar in the water and it keeps dissolving. Finally the solution of water and sugar reaches the point of saturation when you cannot put in even one more particle. This is saturation.

In the same way, you have to take the Name of God, whichever one is your favourite, Rama, Krishna, Shiva, etc. Although there are many names for God there are not two or three or more gods, but there is One God only, just as all the rivers merge and dissolve finally in the Ocean. Thus, there is only one God and you all have to saturate yourselves with God's Name, just as the water becomes saturated with the sugar.

Today we sang the lovely song in Telugu, '*Prabho Nee Namamay.*' The English translation for this song is,

*I will sing Thy Name,
I will drink Thy Name
Until I get all drunk
Oh with Thy Name!*

First, we begin by singing God's Name. However, it is not enough to sing only with the lips. We have to keep on singing. We have to saturate ourselves with His name until we are not just singing with the lips but actually drinking His Name in all ecstasy. Then, we keep on drinking until we are saturated, until we get drunk, oh, with His Name! This is the real saturation.

As you know, some devotees came from Mettupalayam, Mr. and Mrs. Meenakshi and Sundaram Chettiar. It has been always my one wish that no one goes away with an empty heart. Susana and the two sisters Jnaneswari and Santhi were singing the Name of God with such ecstasy that tears began to flow. Susana became so choked that she had to stop because she was weeping for God.

We all weep for everything but God. Let us all sing with ecstasy, so that we forget all else and weep for God only. Blessed are the lives that are weeping for God!

When you all are singing, *Sri Rama, Jai Rama, Jai Jai Rama Om*, Don't sing it in a lifeless manner. Sing it with all force. Don't make it like powder, there has to be fire in it. Weep for God.

From my own personal experience also, when I sit all alone in the a prayer Hall and chant *Sri Rama, Jai Rama, Jai, Jai Rama Om*, I sing until there are tears of ecstasy, until it is all Light.

With the first *Sri Rama*, I fill the whole body from the toes to the top of the head. With *Jai Rama*, I fill all of you, the whole world. With *Jai Jai Rama*, I bring the past with the first *Jai*. With the second *Jai*, concentrate in the present moment. The future is covered with *Rama*. With the final *Om* all the manifested creation is merged and dissolved in Light, the splendour of millions of suns. Tears of ecstasy come.

I may not be able to bring Rama from all the world but at least Rama is present with me. This is an experience for all of you to feel for yourselves. It is not enough for me just to describe it with these finite words. Experience it for yourselves, fill yourselves, saturate yourselves and the whole world until tears of ecstasy flow. You may not bring Rama to the whole world, to all the people but at least you can feel Rama's Presence. For, He is here and now, pervading and permeating the very cells of your beings.

In memory of today's inspiring talk, let us memorise and sing the inspiring song,

*I will sing Thy Name,
I will drink Thy Name
Until I get all drunk
Oh, with Thy Name!*

Let us saturate ourselves in the morning and in the evening, singing this Holy song whenever we can! Let us sing it during the day and night, feeling God's indwelling Presence. Saturate yourselves in the morning and evening and then carry the Presence with you all day long.

Don't think when you leave here that I am not with you. I am with you and in you in each and every moment of your lives, no matter where you may go and no matter what you are doing. I am always wishing your welfare and Peace.

Don't hide the Light. Carry the Light with you wherever you go. When the mind is restless don't worry, for the mind can only wander towards God, for, as He is Omnipresent. What is there in all this Creation which is not He? So, when the mind wanders it wanders only towards God and as you all know, all is God! Hence, go forth now and carry the Light with you wherever you go. Thus be a Blessing to yourselves, all your dear ones and to all the world! This is the Prayer of your own Omkar.

MAY PEACE BE UNTO ALL!

OM! OM! OM!

Fifth Meeting: Tuesday, 19 September

As usual I extend a Hearty Welcome to all of you, not only to the Peace Centre but also into the Presence of God. God is Omnipresent, Omnipotent and Omniscient. We are blessed to sit in His Presence right now. What a great privilege and opportunity to realise that the God for Whom we have been seeking in Gurus and Masters, in Temples and Churches is here now! He is sparkling in our eyes and He is flowing in our very breath. Verily, as *Soham* He is the Breath of the breath. The peace that we have been seeking everywhere outside is within us, for He is here, now.

There are hundreds and thousands of people in Kotagiri and the Nilgiris. What a great privilege it is for the few of us here to be able to spend these rare and precious moments alone with God! Everything else in the world will pass away, everything except these precious moments spent alone with God in Silence.

Our Peace Centre justifies its name, for it is an Abode of Peace for devotees of all religions and nations. It is wonderful that our oldest devotee, Sri Ram Bheem Shankar Rao has come all the way from Vijayawada to spend a few moments alone in this glorious Peace Centre with God. Some of you also have come from far away places such as Salem, Coimbatore and Ceylon. Susanna has come from the faraway America.

Now there are two devoted Missionaries, whose spiritual names are now Swami Brahmananda and Mother Saraswati Devi. They want to come and help our Peace Centre with their selfless service, love and prayers. They have already started a Branch Ashram in their home in California and are helping the Mother Ashram. A Hearty Welcome not only to all of you but also to both of them, who are longing to come soon and consecrate their lives to the service of God's children.

Paropakaratman Midam Sareeram. These bodies are given only for the service of man, God's children. However, we have to ask ourselves, 'Are we really serving others or are we only serving our own bodies and beings?' Are we only thinking and asking, 'What can I eat? What can I drink? What can I get from others?' We have to ask now what we are doing to serve our brothers, our fellow man, for we all come from the same Source. We live, work and are bound to merge and dissolve finally in THAT, or God.

It is not enough to live for ourselves. We have to help others, to justify our human existence. We are not animals who live only for themselves. We have to express in our daily lives that we are from the Light of lights and that we are eternally in that Infinite and Eternal light.

Our attitude should not be, 'What can I get from others and from the Peace Centre?' but, 'What can I give to serve others and for the Peace Centre?' The feeling should be, 'What can I take and assimilate when I go to the Peace Centre? Let me feel the presence of God, Peace, at the Peace Centre and carry that light with me wherever I go. May I share it with all my family, friends, community and nation.'

The Prayer Hall was built for all of you to use, so make best use of it by going there once in a while. If possible, go there once a day and spend some time alone, in real Silence and Peace.

Daily progress is needed. One should not allow a day to go by without spiritual progress. Don't allow a day to go by without asking if you can do anything to serve another. We can do anything and everything in all the outer activities but when the Call comes only God comes with us.

There should be pining for God. There should be the feeling of 'What can I do to serve my fellow man? What service can I give to make my life a Blessing to others and not a burden to Mother Earth? I should do it before the Call comes and I have to leave this physical body, this human birth.

Spiritual thirst is most essential. We may take a horse to the brook to drink but if it is not thirsty it won't drink, even if there is water all around. It is similar with man. God is here. He is all around us. However, it is only when there is some spiritual thirst that you can realise His Presence. He is not in the sky or Heaven, in Banaras or Tirupathi. He is here, all around us. It is not enough to say God exists, you have to feel His Presence. As He is here and now, you are to express Him in thought, word and deed.

The sayings of Saints and Sages are very inspiring. Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa used to say, *'Mother, when will You come to me? This world is of three days duration and the life of man is of but a few minutes. Let me realise Thy Presence now!'* He used to actually weep for God. Blessed is the life which weeps for God! How many of you are actually weeping for God?

Gandhiji used to say, *'I can live without food but not without prayer.'* How many of us can repeat the above words? Every morning as I begin the day I chant,

(Peace Prayer)

I am telling this, my own experience, so that you too may begin each day with a prayer on your lips, when arising from the sleeping state to the waking state, in the early hours of the morning.

Gandhiji used to have a small statuette of three monkeys. In the Mother Ashram also I have a large one. There also used to be one here on my desk but it has gone now. They used to make the statue of monkeys but nowadays they are making it of three little children. How restless some of the children are these days!

The first little monkey or child closes its eyes and says, 'I won't see anything but God.' The second one closes its ears and says, 'I won't listen to anything but words about God.' And the third one closes its mouth and says, 'I won't speak of anything but God.' So we also must practise this in each and every moment of our daily lives.

The price has to be paid. It is not enough to have all the statues, all the Initiations. We have to practise what we learn. It has been said that religion begins when we know our own mistakes and not those of others. Man wants to ignore the beams in his own eyes but see and remove the specks in the eyes of others.

I don't mean that you should give up your jobs and your duties but that you should do them honestly. There must be honesty and purity in thought, word and deed. Do a little service for others and try to help the Peace Centre also.

Change, change, change, from within is needed! There has to be change in your daily lives. May this Vedanta Course help you to grow day by day in every way, ignoring the unreal and clinging to the Real.

I do not remember whether it was Surdas or some other Saint, but anyway he was surrounded by his disciples. They were all doing Bhajan every day, feeling God's presence within and without. Some disciples wanted to go on Pilgrimage and they requested their Guru also to come. If he came, they could have inspiring Bhajans at all the Holy Places.

However, the Guru was unwilling to move and said that he would remain in the Ashram alone and that the party should go without him. Then, he requested to take with them one cucumber, a bitter cucumber. He said that whenever they prostrated before any Saints, the cucumber also should be made to prostrate. Whenever they bathed in any Holy rivers the cucumber also should have immersion. Whenever they received any Vibhuti or any initiation, the cucumber also should have vibhuti and initiation and so forth, throughout the pilgrimage.

So the devotees did as the Gururji requested. They took the cucumber along with them. Whenever they visited any temples, the cucumber also participated. Whenever they received initiation the cucumber also received initiation and took Holy baths, etc.

Then after some time the disciples returned to the Saint. He lovingly and happily greeted them and gave a big feast in honour of their safe return. He took the cucumber which had also made the Holy pilgrimage and cut it into pieces. He served them to the devotees, putting a piece on each plate. Yet when the devotees tasted it, alas, the cucumber was very bitter!

So, the lesson to be learnt from this inspiring illustration is, when you go on a pilgrimage, the outer journey is not what is most important. The change must come from within. You must give up a little selfishness. Man is always saying, 'I, I, I.' If you want God, you have to change from within and give up the little 'I', the ego.

Let the lesson of the three monkeys open our eyes so that we see only God, open our ears so that we hear only of God and open our mouths only to speak of God. See God, hear God, speak of God! Make your lives a Blessing to your children, families, friends, and to all the people in Kotagiri and the Nilgiris and all the world.

I'm expecting big things from all of you. Give up selfishness. Make your lives a blessing by having the inner change from the unreal to the real. May God bless all of you!

As one word is enough from the wise, even if I don't speak another word, these few words alone are enough for salvation and freedom, the soul and goal of your precious births.

MAY PEACE BE UNTO ALL!

OM! OM! OM!

Sixth Meeting: Wednesday, 20 September

My heart longs to help and serve each and everyone of you, not excluding even one soul. I find my happiness in service, in service that is helpful to each and every one of you. I am weary and tired of all finite words. I want to help you all, not with words but with something practical which will help you all to grow spiritually day by day.

After experience of nearly 80 years I have learnt the value of every moment, the preciousness of every moment. I am responsible for each and every one of you because you have come to me, spending some of your precious time. Yet in what way are you assimilating my message? All these finite words are unreal, so feel the Presence of God, dwell only in the real.

You may believe it or not, but I feel that all words are mere stones. I do not want to feed you with stones if you are hungry, but with love. What we need in our hearts is a little love. I want to feed you not with mere stones but with God's presence and love, which is the soul and goal of the precious human birth.

How very easy it is to preach and teach to others, but it is very difficult to practise the same in our daily lives. Theory without practise is a burden to Mother Earth. It is like the elephant carrying the fodder with a heavy burden on its back. How difficult it is! Compare this with the elephant who is eating fodder with no burden on his back. This is the difference between theory and practise. So, what we need is to feel a little love and peace and make our lives a blessing.

Our age is to be counted not by the grey hair or years that we have but by the moments we spend alone with God. When the call comes and we have to leave the human body, only the moments spent alone with God will help us.

I request each and every one of you to be true to the God within. Introspect when you go home and see how many moments you have spent with God. These are the only real moments, your real age. So, introspect and think over. Don't worry over spilt milk, for the past is dead and buried. Introspect and draw closer to God.

When you count your age, as one cannot spend all his time in deep meditation alone, you can count also the moments spent in selfless service, as your real age. Your attitude should be not, 'What can I get out of this service?', but to consider that it is a privilege to serve all the living images of God, His children.

What we sow, we reap. This is a divine law, there is no secret. What we are is determined by the past thoughts, words and deeds. What we will be is determined by our present thoughts, words and deeds, right now. If you are selfish thinking, 'I, I, I,' you are going down and down into hell. If you are always thinking of others, living to serve others, you are going up and up to the Heights.

It is a Divine law. Merge within and ask yourselves whether you are going down with selfishness or going up with Light and peace. You can dupe and deceive all the people in the world but not God, Who is the Light within. So, be true to that Light and be a blessing to the world of humanity.

I do not wish to weary you with too many words. My life's one aspiration has been to live in God and help others to live in Him. I do not want any of you to go away empty-hearted. You cannot get Peace in the market place for any amount of money, but you can have it freely here. Don't think you can put it off until tomorrow. Time is very precious. Today alone is ours and not tomorrow.

In conclusion, I should like to conclude today's message with a helpful illustration which will show clearly that you have to reap what you sow, whether you sow in secret or openly. You can dupe any and everyone but you can never dupe and deceive God, the Indwelling Presence.

It seems there was once a woman living in a village who had a milk business, selling milk. After several years of selling milk and saving all the money she tied it all up in a bundle and

left for her native place. It seems she had to cross a river by taking a ferry boat at one point. After sitting down in the boat a monkey, who was also there with some other monkeys, grabbed her bundle, climbed the mast and opened the bundle. It seems she had about 600 rupees.

The monkey began throwing one rupee in the water, and then one rupee down in front of the woman. He went on like that until half the money was in the water and only half remained for the woman. The woman was very sad and troubled.

There was a wise man on the boat and he asked her how she had made her money. She told him that she sold milk. Then he asked her whether she sold pure milk. She said no, that she mixed the milk with water and sold the mixture of half milk, half water. Then the wise man explained that as she had sold only half milk so now, she was entitled only to half of the money.

This story clearly illustrates that every thought, word or deed, whether it is done openly or secretly, bears consequences sooner or later. So, watch your thoughts very carefully!

*God if you think of, God you are.
Dust if you think of, dust you are.*

If you feel God's Presence, then God you are. However if you confine God only to form and name, to pujas, Yogis and Swamijis, even to the Peace Centre, then you are limiting yourself only to this finite human body.

Time is very precious, so make best use of each and every moment. See God within and without. Be true to God, both within and without. My friends! I love you all deeply, and my prayers are ever with you so that you may feel the Light and carry it to your homes, community and nation.

Live in God and help others to live in Him.

This has been the one ideal and aspiration of Shanti Ashram since its founding over 56 years ago.

God is not in the far sky or Heaven. He is here and now, sparkling in your eyes, and flowing in your very breath. Don't confine Him but come out of the body and feel yourselves in tune with the Infinite. God is not in the sky or Heaven, He is within yourselves. He comes to you in the form of others. So, come out of the body and do a little service for God's children.

May all of you carry the presence of God with you wherever you may be! My prayers go forth to all of you. Please help me by feeling God's Presence and by filling your hearts with the nectar which is in all of you. May God bless you all with Peace!

OM! OM! OM!

Seventh Meeting, 21 September

Once again, extremely happy to see you all. There is only one thought now in my mind and that is: 'What can I tell you all to help you grow spiritually in thought, word and deed?'

My habit often is to think in a way that seems a little negative. I have the thought that another day is passing away in doing nothing. Yet, the consolation is that even though the day is passing away, at least I am helping you all to feel God's Presence in the present, living moment.

God has blessed me with a heart that lives for all. When we read the '*Prayers of Various Faiths*,' I feel that our Satsang is complete. It is wonderful to have such a vision. As we read the prayers now, I feel all the people in the world belong to us.

When we read the prayer of the Hindus I feel that all the Hindus in India and all over the world are here with us now, in the Peace Centre. Similarly, when we read the prayer of the Christians I feel that all the Christians, not only here but in the east and the west, are all with us. When we read the Buddhist prayer all the Buddhists in all the world are also present with us. Similarly, when we read each of the other prayers for the different religions of the world, all the members of those religions are here with us.

Thoughts are things. So, to feel that all the people of the world are here with us when we read the prayers, gives joy and inspiration. What is the use of living like a frog in a well? If you have to live you should live like a frog in the ocean.

One's consciousness should not be limited to the finite but should expand to the infinite. Somewhere it has been said that instead of living for a thousand years in ignorance it is better to live for one minute in consciousness of the Creator, who has given us the precious human birth.

When Dr. Markandeya wrote letter after letter requesting me to come here many were against my coming. Many devotees, friends and the doctors also did not want me to make the long train journey. They wanted me to instead stay in the Mother Ashram and rest and relax.

However, there is only one Doctor, the Doctor of doctors, and He gave me the urge from within to go and serve all of you. So, when the urge comes from within it gives me joy to follow it. In spite of all the obstacles and impediments, the strikes, lack of money, etc., I am happy we are here now to serve you all. We are the instruments of God; He is leading us and we are following.

I would never let any sickness or obstacle make me miss the opportunity of coming to serve you all. I feel so happy to serve you all! Not only that. If we hadn't come here our Ram Bheem Shankar also wouldn't have come to enjoy some days with us in rest and relaxation. Hence, all is in the Divine Plan.

A Vedanta Course means some learned souls. Dr. Markandeya was the only one here for some time, struggling to serve you all. Now I have come to help him. I am one of few words but still, I want to help and serve you all. Therefore, although I wasn't asked I've taken on the burden of giving a message every day for the thirty days of the course.

Every day I meditate for hours, trying to give something practical to help you all. I want you all to grow closer to God, grow spiritually day by day. It is a Divine Law that no man can serve two Masters, not both God and Mammon. You have to sacrifice darkness to have Light. With every Bhajan, prayer and meditation we should lessen our selfish nature and make it selfless. We should try to say, '*In what way can I serve my fellow creatures?*' This should be our attitude and aspiration.

Leaving aside all we have studied and learnt from Yogis and Swamis, there are two words which are very helpful. Try to bring these two words which are the essence of practical Vedanta into your daily lives, instead of memorising a lot of slokas, prayers, etc. If you could

assimilate just these two words of practical Vedanta, it is enough to help and inspire you in your daily lives. These two simple words are Brahman and Shakti.

Brahman is the un manifested power, the source from which we all came. Shakti is the manifested power. Whenever we see motion it is Shakti and all is motionless it is Brahman. Brahman is the ocean and Shakti is the wave. The ocean is silent, deep and the Shakti is active moving.

When you are walking it is the Shakti which is walking in you. When you are speaking it the Shakti. Similarly, in all the acts and movements of life it is the Shakti manifesting in you. However, the Brahman and Shakti are never separate they are always united just as the ocean and it ways are never separate but always one. If you could only remember this, in what ever you are doing, in walking, talking, working, sleeping, eating etc., it is the Shakti which is moving in you and yet the Brahman is never absent.

Brahman is God, the un manifested. Shakti is the wave and you, the individuals are the bubble. How beautiful! God is the ocean, the world is the wave and you, the individual, is the bubble. So, let the bubble merge in the ocean and let there be Peace.

The one who runs after two hares will not catch either of them. First he runs after one are and then after the other and both get away. Think of the people of the world who are running after not just two hares but so many. So, pick one hare and run after only that one. May our one hare be Brahman, God-realisation now and here.

In memory of our Vedanta Class, let us make Brahman our Soul and Goal and run after this one hare only; we are sure to catch it sooner or later. So, day by day grow spiritually, at least to make me happy.

May God's Richest Blessings ever be upon all of you! May you all run after the one rabbit of Brahman. May your lives be a blessing to family, community, nation and world. This is my prayer for all of you.

In memory of this happy occasion let us chant now the inspiring Peace Chant-

May there be peace in the Heaven,

Peace in the Sky,

Peace across the Waters,

May Peace flow from the herbs, plants and trees.

May there be Peace on earth.

May all celestial beings radiate Peace.

MAY PEACE BE UNTO ALL!

OM! OM! OM!

(Eighth, Ninth, Tenth Meetings Missing)

Eleventh Meeting: 25 September

Whether we are sitting in a chair or on the floor is not important. What is most important is that we feel God's Presence wherever we may be. Even if you are sitting on the chair, if you are not feeling God's Presence then there is no use and it is a burden wherever you may be. With the Presence of God we are everything and without it we are mere nothings.

What we need now is to practise feeling the Presence of God, from dawn to dusk, from the first step to the last step, from waking until we sleep in Him every night. The least forgetfulness of God should make one miserable, not only miserable but it is dangerous also to forget and deny Him.

Question: What do I expect from those who stay with me?

Answer: One hundred percent selfless service and love universal.

It reminds me of the inspiring story of a devotee who waited for a thousand years, and this is no exaggeration for perhaps it was not the Kali Yuga but the Golden Age when devotees lived for thousands of years. He waited at the Gates of Heaven and waited, and during all that long time he had just one little nap. In just that moment, in that little time, the Gates of Heaven opened and then closed again. When it is so dangerous to forget God, the Light within, even for a moment, imagine how much more dangerous to forget God, the Light within, for days and months together!

Our Sriram, in the Mother Ashram, is an ideal devotee, a selfless soul who never thinks of himself but lives only to serve others. He always give the example of the children's game 'Vaikunthapani.' I don't know if you have this game here but it is well-known in Andhra.

The map of the game is full of snakes and ladders. In the game one goes up and up the ladders, reaching all the way to Vaikunta, Heaven. However, just as he reaches the Heights, even at the very last moment he may sleep, fall into the mouth of a big snake and go all the way down into the depths. Then he has to start all over again. So, in life, spiritual life, there are so many tests and trials, but the one consolation is:

Out of the depths, fresh strength.

Out of the dark, new light.

Even in the gloom, we are on the way!

Falling into the mouth of the snake means selfishness, forgetting the Light within and denying God, the Soul and Goal of the precious human birth. So, we should never deny Him, even for the millionth fraction of a second. We should cling to Him, the Light of lights, always.

Our greatness lies not in never falling down but in rising each time we fall and in never forgetting Him. There is greatness also in getting up again and again every time we fall down, with the firm determination never to fall down again. Let us cling to that Light eternally.

Some of my own personal experiences give great joy. Every time I take a bath I feel that I am born again. The past is dead and buried. I'm telling you this so that you too can have a rebirth with every bath. From that very moment of the bath you can have a rebirth into God's Presence.

Identification with the body is inevitable for the man of the world. However, for the God-man, who is longing for the Divine, a glimpse of the Light within is most essential. Yet, if we examine our lives we find we are identifying with the body of flesh, blood and bones and not with that infinite Light, the Atma.

There are many wonderful, helpful chapters and inspiring thoughts in the book, '*Cosmic Flashes*.' If we could only practise one chapter it would be enough for our salvation and Peace.

I was deeply touched the other day when we were reading, '*The Breath is the String of Life*.' Man is a bead and there is a string which unites all the beads. That string or thread is the Spirit. You are miserable if you think you are a separate bead, the physical body, but you gain eternal happiness when you realise that you are the string which unites all the beads. Real happiness lies only in forgetting the physical body and identifying with the Light.

If you could only practise each morning the thought that you are not the body but the string which unites all the beads! Not the individual, that which is separate, but you are the One. *Ekam Eva Advitiyam*. The real is One without a second. There are not two but only One. If you can only identify yourselves with that Cosmic Principle, the One without a second, it is enough for your Peace and freedom.

It has been said that even saints and sages, the wise people, have their moments of sadness and depression, joy and happiness, because nothing is permanent. The day is followed by night and the night is followed by the day. We have to cling to the Light and rise above even day and night.

Why is there sadness and depression? Just as the light bulb which has no electric current gives no light, so when you are disconnected with the Light, God, the Infinite Splendour of millions of suns, you feel miserable and sad. Rise above the body, the limited finite existence and connect yourself with the Eternal Light, realise that you are the One without a second!

One of the easy ways to practise this is to repeat and feel *Soham*, the highest Mantra, the Universal Mantra. It is always going on within you, whether you are consciously aware of it or not. It is thus called *Ajapa Gayatri*, the Mantra that repeats itself. You don't have to repeat it, all you have to do is be aware that it is always going on.

Be the witness and watch your own breath as it goes in and out. *Inhale and Exhale Peace with every breath*. This is enough to realise God. If you are a devotee, following the path of Bhakti you need not change your Mantra. Be is Shiva, Rama, Krishna, etc., you just keep that name going, Shi-va, Ra-ma, Krish-na, Je-sus, etc. With every breath inhale 'Ra' and with every breath exhale 'Ma'.

I don't want you to change your chosen path. I'm here to help you all, to give you a life on whatever path you are walking on, to show you a little more Light. All rivers merge and dissolve in that Light of lights. On your own paths you've risen and come down the Himalayas, so don't abandon them, go back, keep on going up and up, pursuing the same path. You may fall way down by changing paths, so keep to your own path, clinging faithfully to your own Ishta (chosen path or God).

The way to be happy is to make others happy. You may have memorised Gitas and Bibles, but if you are selfish, you are miserable. You should try to make someone else happy. You can start with the ladies in your home, the children, relations and servants, and try to do something to make them happy. The real way to help others is to make them realise their own Divinity, that the Light is within each and every one.

Man is a sleeping lion. The nectar of immortality is within all of you. Don't think it is confined only to Swamis and Yogis. Where there is life there is God or Divinity. So wake up to your Divinity, to the Light within. However, if you want mortality, the outer life, no one can help you. Others cannot help you. In memory of this Vedanta Class, wake up now to the Divinity within yourselves!

The way to feel the Presence is to practise in each and every moment of the day, from waking to sleeping. A spiritual Diary is very helpful, for each day you can ask yourselves and write in it, 'Did I see God today in such a one? Did I forget to see God in someone who misused me?' Keeping the Spiritual Diary is most essential.

Our Ram Bheem Shankar left today and now he must be on the train, but while on the train he should keep consciousness that he is in the Light, not on the mere train only. He is always in God.

May you all work, sleep, walk, talk, eat, live, and breathe in that Light of lights, the Divine, in each and every moment of your lives, is my Prayer for all of you!

MAY PEACE BE UNTO ALL!

OM! OM! OM!

Twelfth Meeting: 26 September

Let us begin this evening by chanting 'Sri Rama, Jai Rama, Jai, Jai Rama Om' and fill our bodies and the whole world with Light.

Sri Rama, Jai Rama, Jai, Jai Rama Om!

Once again God has given us another blessed day to love Him, to love others and to grow nearer and dearer to His heart. Of all the blessings in the world the greatest blessing is time. Another day to grow, to pray, to meditate, to sere, to love thy neighbour. So, let us make best use of these precious days.

We can buy God with this precious time. By forgetting Him we can go down. By remembering Him we can enter His heart. As I see into the heart of God, I see the present, past and future. I see the omnipresence, the omnipotence and the omniscience. How blessed are they who can enter into the heart of God in this present, living moment!

It touches my heart in the first place, to see you all coming so devotedly, in spite of the rain. This shows your devotion and your loyalty. I want to reward you all by helping you feel the Presence of God. The whole morning I have been thinking, 'What can I say that will be helpful to them?' But no words came. I felt like being silent.

If the bird wants to sing it will give forth melodious music. Yet, if it doesn't want to sing, you cannot grab it by the throat and force it to sing. Similarly, the fragrance comes naturally from the flower. So also, love should flow spontaneously and naturally from all of you of its own accord. Don't force yourself. Whatever comes naturally from within, let it come spontaneously.

Whenever I see the picture of Sankara with his disciples, I remember the story of the Guru with his four disciples. The Guru was young and the disciples were all 70 or 80 years old. They had many doubts and they wanted to ask many questions. The Guru answered them and dispelled all doubts by his Silence.

Similarly, I want to dispel all your passing clouds of doubts and darkness of ignorance by my Silence. When I do not feel like speaking I should try to help you all by Silence, gathering you into the Light so you can feel the Presence. Such moments will be better than all the discussions in the world.

Hence, no wonder it is said, *Silence is gold and speech is silver*. However, when you do speak, your words should be golden. Only loving words should flow from you. Words of love, words of Peace, words of forgiveness.

You all know the common axiom or motto, that *'Empty vessels make a lot of rattling noise whereas a full vessel is silent, making no noise for it is full and complete.'* Often and often we see these two kinds of people. One is always talking and talking; he wearies us all and makes himself weary, whereas the other is silent, being full and complete.

Hence it has been said, *'Knowing THAT, they melt in Silence.'* THAT is supreme Silence. So, I want you all to think about THAT, pray and meditate about THAT and merge and dissolve in THAT, the Eternal Silence.

In conclusion, I want each and every one of you, to have simple, natural Trance, some Sahaja Samadhi, which is your Divine Heritage. This, in memory of the Vedanta Class and especially as we read the chapter from Cosmic Flashes on Sahaja Samadhi.

You are not putting on something unnatural, for you live, move and breathe in THAT. May you experience THAT, the way the flower gives fragrance. May IT flow spontaneously and may you move and have your being in THAT, in each and every moment. This is my prayer for all of you!

So, I request each and every one of you to carry that inseparable Oneness with you. Even if you want to forget God, you cannot run away from Him. Feel that Presence and carry it with you to your homes, family, work, and wherever you go, and may you all express that Peace ceaselessly!

MAY PEACE BE UNTO ALL!

OM! OM! OM!

Thirteenth Meeting: 27 September

Once again my heart longs to extend a Hearty Welcome not only to the few of you who have come here but to all the people in Kotagiri and also to the whole world. As my religion includes all and excludes none, it gives me joy to extend a Hearty Welcome to all the people in all the religions and nations of the world.

It appears that the rain is having a race with the students of the Vedanta Class, to see who will win, the rain or the students! Yet, as all the students are coming in spite of the rain it appears they are winning and the rain is being defeated. It seems that the one who puts his hand to the plough will not look back but will always look in front of him. Thus, I am glad you all are pursuing the goal of precious human birth and going forward day by day in every way.

In Totapalli Hills, In Andhra it is not so cold as here. Hence, whenever it rains it gives me joy to go out in the rain with only a loin cloth, or a single cloth on and I feel ecstasy in the rain. When it rains I feel Heaven and Earth are uniting. Unconsciously I'll sing the song,

*It's not raining rain to me,
It's raining roses, jasmines
And all kinds of flowers!*

What is more, when it is raining, it is raining Peace, raining Love and Light over me. Experiences like these appear lifeless and dry when described in finite words. However when one experiences joy and Peace, one feels united with all the world.

Did you ever hear of the life-giving and soul-awakening saying, 'Work kills no one, but worry kills multitudes.'? It seems that no one will die of a little work. Work gives longevity, vigour and strength. On the other hand, worry saps one's vitality and strength and brings sadness and misery. Thus, work leads one to joy, strength and happiness whereas worry kills, bringing sorrow, pain and misery.

There is an illustration, a living example told by our elders of how worry and fear killed multitudes. It seems there was epidemic of cholera or some such terrible disease and thousands were dying. The elders were worried and they performed Puja to the goddess with the request that She should spare the lives of the innocent people.

Finally, as a result of the puja it seems the Goddess appeared and promised, 'I'll take only five thousand more lives.' The elders were pleased that the Goddess had listened to their prayers.

However, when the epidemic was over they found that some fifty thousands people had died. They again approached the Deity and asked Her why fifty thousand had died when She had promised to take only five thousand more people. The Goddess answered, 'I took only five thousand lives; the rest died of worry and fear.'

So, as the children of God, coming from Him and living in Him, we should not allow the least cloud of worry or fear to come between us and God. Realise that you are the Light of lights. As long as you are the Splendour of Millions of suns, no worry or fear can trouble you.

What joy it gives to know that the God for Whom we have been seeking outside, in temples and churches, sky and heaven, is awaiting our recognise in the stillness of our own hearts! Not Pravritti, going outward, but Nivritti, going inward, is needed. Still the senses, go always outward.

In our New Prayer Hall where I sit, just in front of me is a wonderful motto sign. I look at it and marvel, I probe into its depths and it gives me ecstasy and joy.

Lord Speak, Thy servant heareth.

If the servant is quiet and listens, the Lord will speak. If the devotee wants the Lord he should be silent and then the Lord will speak in the silence of our own hearts. The truth is so

simple, so plain, so face to face, and yet we make it so complicated by our endless thoughts and desires.

Nearby on another window in the Prayer Hall is another beautiful saying,

Silence Creates Souls.

But we don't give any opportunity to Silence. We are always busy doing something or the other and when we are alone we begin to think, talk to ourselves. We do not give the Lord any chance to speak to us.

There is another simple, easy motto. It is so very simple that it is difficult to follow.

Speak Less, Meditate More.

It would be more suitable and apt for the man of the world if this motto appeared in the opposite way, '*Speak more, meditate less.*' Then man would not need to worry, he could talk and talk and there would be no need to meditate.

The essence of today's Message is, let us live and cling to God always. For, we are the children of Light, the Living Images of God. We have come from Him, live in Him and are bound to go back to Him. Let us listen to Him more than ever, by our Silence.

While coming to my room from the Prayer Hall, in spite of the drizzling rain, the thought was, '*I'm walking in God, there is never a moment of time when I'm not in God. I am in God in the past, present and future. I am inseparably One with God.*'

This thought gives me joy and ecstasy! I am sharing it with you so that you too will feel God's Presence, even while walking. You walk, move, live and breathe in God, so even if you forget Him you are still in God's Presence. May God bless you all!

MAY PEACE BE UNTO ALL!

OM! OM! OM!

In memory of this Happy Day let us chant now the helpful poem '*Today.*'

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 and plan. Since time began
Today has been the friend of man.
You and Today! A soul sublime
And the great heritage of time.
With God Himself to bind the twain,
Go forth, brave heart! Attain! Attain!*

AUM

Fourteenth Meeting: 28 September

Hearty Welcome to all of you into the Presence of God! It is wonderful to begin every class with some inspiring message. Today we have read Moti Manekji's good introduction to the Peace Prayer and also 'Thou has come' in Tamil.

He has already come. He is the breath of our breaths, life of our lives and the soul of our souls. He is already here, awaiting our recognition in the stillness of our own purified hearts. All that we have to do is only to feel, feel and feel. If you could just feel His Presence now, it is enough for your Peace and salvation.

Today I want you all to begin with, to memorise one sloka, the *Guru Sloka*. It is not in praise of me but for the world Guru, the Eternal, Infinite Light. This sloka covers all the world, everything and everyone.

*Brahmananda, Parama Sukhadam, Kevalam Jnana Murtim
Dvandva Teetam, Gagana Sya Drishyam, Tat Twam Asyaadi Lakshyam
Ekam Nityam Vimalam Achalam, Sarvadi Saakshi Bhutam
Bhava Teetam Triguna Rahitam, Sad Gurum Tam Namaami*

OM! OM! OM!

It begins with *Brahmananda*, the bliss of Brahman, the universal happiness. The only real happiness which pervades the entire universe is knowledge of Brahman.

Parama Sukhadam, the supreme happiness. The only real happiness is not to be found in outer things, work or eating, sleeping, etc., but only in the Brahman, the universal bliss.

Brahmananda Parama Sukhadam. There is only one happiness, supreme happiness, which changeless, and that is Brahmananda.

Kevalam, Jnana Murtim. It has the form, the essence of Jnana, the highest Wisdom.

Dvandva Teetam. This Reality is beyond the duality of this world.

Gagana Sya Drishyam. Like the Akasa, the ether, it is all-pervading.

Tat Twam Asyaadi Lakshyam. The only description of it is *Tat Twam Asi: Thou art THAT*. Recognise and be silent. There is only ONE that exists, not two or three.

Ekam, Nityam, Vimalam, Achalam. It is Ekam, One. It is Nityam, eternal and infinite. It is Vimala, it cannot be shaken or moved, and do not think it is far away in the heavens. It is here now, as the Witness, shining in your heart.

Sarvadi Saakshi Bhutam. It is all-pervading, it is the Witness of all.

Bhava Teetam. It is beyond the thinking power of the mind.

Triguna Rahitam. It is free of the three Gunas, Rajas, Tamas and Sattva

Sad Gurum Tam Namaami. I am worshipping the Sat Guru, the Infinite, the Lord of the universe, Who pervades all.

I want you all to memorise this sloka so that we can begin our class tomorrow with it. What a wonderful beginning, what a wonderful thought! To begin our class meditating on that Infinite Light, the splendour of millions of suns!

*Brahmananda, Parama Sukhadam, Kevalam Jnana Murtim
Dvandva Teetam, Gagana Sya Drishyam, Tat Twam Asyaadi Lakshyam
Ekam Nityam Vimalam Achalam, Sarvadi Saakshi Bhutam
Bhava Teetam Triguna Rahitam, Sad Gurum Tam Namaami*

Om! Om! Om!

The very idea of reading the inspiring slokas, the Gita, Cosmic Flashes and other inspiring messages such as 'Thou has Come,' Peace Prayer, etc., is only to help you feel the Presence of God. They are to share the Presence of God with you so that something may come into your hearts and lives, making you feel rich and complete.

It was in Totapalli Hills last month that we celebrated Susanna's Birthday. You should all come to Totapalli Hills, for it is a vast place of some 200 acres, with beautiful trees, flower gardens, hills and plants. There are also hundreds of inspiring spiritual mottoes such as,

*Inhale and exhale Peace
Religion and life are not two but one.*

If you can just follow one of these mottoes, it is enough for your salvation and Peace. Another motto is,

*The serpent time is opening its mouth, which is death, and devouring all the lazy, talkative and selfish
people.*

So beware of time. One motto like this is enough to help you all. Therefore, rise above useless words, laziness and selfishness and be a blessing to Mother Earth. This is what this motto and hundreds of others like it teach us.

In Shanti Ashram we celebrate the birthdays of all the Mahatmas, Avatars, Saints and also the little children. We make them repeat the Peace Prayer 25, 50 or 100 times, according to their age.

Coming back to that day, we were in a bower near the Jnana Guha and there were hundreds of fragrant flowers above and all around. It is very beautiful and peaceful and some day I want all of you to come there. Don't think that Kotagiri Peace Centre alone belongs to you. The Mother Ashram also belongs to you.

If you want real Peace you should come once to that glorious Abode of Peace and bring your ladies and children too. Don't think you can go to Heaven alone; they also must come. Let them go before you, in advance.

So, I made Susanna to read the sixth chapter, as the Gita opened at that place, and it was on 'Dhyana Yoga,' the Yoga of meditation.

Each one has a gift for something or the other. I am not able, after all these almost 79 years, to repeat from memory even one sloka of the Gita but yet God has given me the gift of being able to know the essence of whatever I read or hear.

In the 6th Chapter one sloka has entered my heart and remained in mind and it is: 'He who can see Me in everyone and everyone in Me, he is dearest to Me.' This one sloka is enough. While travelling here on the train I tried to see Krishna in everyone. In addition, all the time I am trying to see everyone in God and God in everyone.

There are so many spiritual books in the world. There is no need to memorise sloka after sloka, verse after verse. Wherever you go and whatever you do, try to see God in everyone. I'm telling you my own experiences, so you too may practise to see God, Krishna, in everyone.

We all came here to Kotagiri, besides to fulfil the wish of Brother Markandeya and all of you, to inaugurate the Vedanta Class. It was also because the birthday of our Jnaneswari is coming on the 13th October. She said she wanted to come by herself and spend some time in prayer and meditation alone. Then I thought, 'Why should she go alone? Let us also come with her!'

Besides her name, *Jnaneswari*, she also has another name, 'She who never thinks of herself.' To be completely selfless is her gift. Each one has his or her own gift. We can't change

our feathers. Just as the crow can't become a peacock, few people can forget themselves and live just to serve others, never thinking of themselves, in the way our Jnaneswari does.

In all the Maths and Ashrams there are rarely any ladies who succeed the Swamijis. However, I felt from within and decided that when I close my eyes only this young soul should succeed me because of her ideal life of purity, love and complete selflessness.

For the birthday of Jnaneswari, Chy. Santhi, one of the devoted and dedicated souls and the companion of our Jnaneswari, wants to feed the poor and crippled people and make them to repeat Ram Nam. She has also brought 10 blankets to give away. So, I'm telling you this so that you will help us picking the ten people.

They also want to give a dinner to you all too, either on the Birthday or the next day and make you all feel peaceful and happy, feeling the Presence of God. After all, the essence of all religions may be summed up in one thought,

God is Love and Love is God

God is not sitting up in the sky or Heavens sending troubles on His children. He is Love and He is in your own hearts. All that you have to do is to express that love in thought, word and deed. You may repeat all the Bibles, Vedas and Korans but if there is no love in your heart then you are dead.

The heart without love is a cemetery. *God is love and love is God.* Let us not sell our souls to big names and forms, Ministers and Governors, but let us sell our souls to God. All will be Light when we are true to ourselves. Verily, *God is truth.*

In conclusion, I should like to share with you one of the inspiring thoughts from my personal experience. So many people repeat the Peace Prayer in Sanskrit, English, Hindi, Tamil, Telugu and other languages of India. It has also been translated into French, German and many other world languages.

Even so many can chant it, still, when our Jnaneswari repeats the prayer, whether she says, '*Adorable presence*' in English, '*Parama Puja*' in Sanskrit or '*Pujyaniyamana*' in Telugu, I feel that God comes and stands before her, because she is so devoted, simple and loving. I am telling you all this so you too can repeat in such a way that God will come and stand before you to listen to your prayers. May God bless you all!

OM! OM! OM!

As you repeat now, '*Jai, Jai Rama Krishna Hari Om,*' fill your bodies with Light, Life and Peace. Let this not remain theory but practise it in your daily lives.

MAY PEACE BE UNTO ALL!

OM! OM! OM!

*Brahmananda, Parama Sukhadam, Kevalam Jnana Murtim
Dvandva Teetam, Gagana Sya Drishyam, Tat Twam Asyaadi Lakshyam
Ekam Nityam Umalam Achalam, Sarvadi Saakshi Bhutam
Bhava Teetam Triguna Rahitam, Sad Gurum Tam Namaami*

OM! OM! OM!

Hearty Welcome to all the devotees into the Presence of God. Although this sloka is given in Sanskrit it is the essence of all religions. It is not the worship of the individual Guru but of the universal Light, the highest Guru.

Brahmananda Parama Sukhadam. There is only one Anandam, one bliss absolute which gives happiness, the happiness which knows no change and which is the same in the past, present and future. Brahman is not any human being, any one individual. Brahman is the infinite, the unchanging and the ever-lasting. We should find our bliss and happiness only in Brahman, the creator, the unmanifested from which we all have come.

A man may find happiness in over-eating something tasty but this doesn't last long. Also he may get indigestion. However, it is not the same with Brahman. The more he drinks the bliss of Brahman, the more it increases and the more happy and intoxicated he becomes. Brahman is the only eternal happiness, which gives joy eternally. *Brahmananda Parama Sukhadam* is the highest bliss wherein man knows no change or sorrow.

Kevalam, Jnana Murtim. In describing the attributes of this Brahman, the Sat Guru, it is said that it is the essence of all knowledge, it is all wisdom in a nutshell. It is Kevalam, the reality, the absolute, the one without a second.

Dvandva Teetam, Gagana Sa Drishyam. It is beyond duality, not two but one, beyond the duality of difference. *Gagana Sadrisham.* It is the highest, Heaven itself. It is all-pervading and everywhere, like the ether.

There are all the attributes of God. He is one without a second. We should all become like the Akasa, the ether. As there is no place where the Akasa exists not, so we also must become the all-pervading Spirit.

Tat Twam Asyaadi Lakshyam. Its distinguishing mark is the highest Vedantic truth, 'Tat Twam Asi, Thou art THAT.' Don't think that it is something abstract and beyond the senses, for it is here, now. It is the universal breath, Soham. It is *Ekam*, the One, *Nityam*, eternal and ever-lasting and *Vimalam Achalam*, the pure and without stain, the most excellent, the stupendous and indescribable.

Sarvadi Saakshi Bhutam. It is everywhere, all-pervasive and it is the eternal Witness of all. Don't think that you are the finite body, for you are THAT, truth, the eternal Light.

Bhava Teetam, Triguna Rahitam. It is beyond all thoughts and feelings and beyond the three gunas of Rajas, Tamas and Sattva, beyond all inertia, activity and harmony. It is the universal Guru, the indivisible Light, not the finite and limited body of anyone. Now, as we repeat this holy sloka let us merge and become One with that infinite Light.

This prayer or mantra is to be memorised and meditated on in order to obtain its results and to taste the essence. You have to realise something from within yourselves. As Christ said, 'Be still and know that you are God.' When you are still, there is the Brahmananda.

All prayers, meditations, fasts and Yoga practises are only to still the mind, *Yoga Chittah Vritti Nirodhah*. The main point is to still the mind. This is the only practise which leads to real happiness. There is one inspiring motto which we have in the Mother Ashram and also here,

He who controls his mind, controls the whole world.

So, may you all learn to still the restless mind and to control its wandering faculties. May you be the Masters of the mind and not the slaves of the fickle mind.

OM! OM! OM!

It is my wish that no one go away with an empty heart after coming to the Peace Centre and after seeing me. So, we want you all to feel the Presence of God now and here.

When I see children I am always happy. It has been said, 'He who cannot love children, dumb animals and flowers is not a human being at all.' Children are so innocent and so God is nearer to them, rather than to older people. It was Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa, the great sage who said that children are more free to enter into the heart of God than the man of the world.

Suppose you have one rupee or 100 naiya paisa. When a man is married he has to give 50% to his wife, 25% to his children and 25% to his business and responsible works. There is not even 1% left to give to God. But children can give 100% of their minds and hearts and God answers their call, the innocent prayers. Hence, it has been said that *'The kingdom of heaven belongs to the little children.'*

If you want to go to Heaven, be childlike and simple. Give up the idea that God is far-away and aloof in Heaven. God is sparkling in your very eyes, throbbing in your heart and flowing in your very breath. As not a blade of grass moves without His Will, it is because of Him that you are all here now. So, feel God's Presence in your hearts and carry the Presence with you to your homes, families, communities and thus be a blessing to the world of humanity.

MAY PEACE BE UNTO ALL!

OM! OM! OM!

Sixteenth Meeting: 30 September

As we chant now the holy Sloka *Brahmananda Parama Sukhadam*, let us merge in Brahmananda, the bliss of Brahman.

(Sloka)

Once again I am extremely happy to be alone with all of you, communing with God. As I am happy I want all of you also to be happy, not with the things of the world but with the Spirit, with Brahmananda, the Light of the world. Whether you forget It or not, It is always with you.

Often I do not feel the urge to talk, speak and discourse, but I feel the urge to be alone with God. I feel that each time I speak I am disturbing the Silence, because God is Silence. Just as when you throw a pebble in the water ripples come, so also when I speak I feel some sort of vibration arise in the Silence and I feel no desire to disturb the Profound Silence.

There is one motto sign in our Ashram which has been always near and dear to my heart: *'Dear God, let others be great and famous, with their names in the newspapers etc., but let me be unknown and insignificant, serving Thy children in Silence.'*

Even in the Bible we read that if you want to be first, be last. The first is the last and the last is the first. It is only when you sacrifice yourself for some good work and are humble that your life will be worthwhile.

The humble people want to be unknown, to occupy the last seat whereas the proud people want to have the first seat or front bench. These days, one of the silent and great thoughts is, *'Everyone is superior to me in some way or another. I am insignificant and nothing.'* This insignificance gives the greatest joy.

Just now we were adding more names to the list of the Ashram Patrons and Members and the name of Sri V.V. Giri was included as one of the Life-patrons. I felt suddenly from within to include his name. For, Sri V.V. Giri has been my childhood friend. He inaugurated the New Prayer Hall. Also, when I asked for him to come to Totapalli he came to that wilderness lovingly.

At the time of the inauguration of the Prayer Hall he said, "Swamiji, I want to give Rs. 300/- to the Peace Centre." We waited for several years and as one year after another passed away, I thought that the draft might have been lost in the mail. Therefore, I wrote and reminded him of his promise. He immediately sent Rs. 300/-. Now, with that generous contribution to the Peace Centre, let us build a *Giri Cottage* here in his name. We have to ask what we can do to be worthy of being associated with his name.

Even though much has been done so far, especially by brothers B. Bhojan, Markandeya and Lakshmanan, we have really only done 1% of the work ahead. There is 99% more work to be done. If this Peace Centre were just for Kotagiri alone, what we have done would be enough. However, let us think universally, that the Peace Centre is not just for us alone but for the whole world. We are the Universal Religion which believes that, *'The whole world is our Home and all the people in it are our sisters and brothers. To love and serve them is our only religion.'*

So, our great work lies ahead. So live universally, don't confine yourselves to a finite family and community alone. What we do for others alone lives and follows after us.

When I should be meditating in the Prayer Hall, I am thinking how to improve the Peace Centre. As the Peace Centre is God's work, we should live, work, eat and breathe for the Peace Centre and make it a blessing to all God's children.

It is strange and interesting how an experience of some 60 years ago arises in my mind. When I went to America for the first time I met Sri V.V. Giri in London, England, where he was studying to be a barrister. In those days, and now also, I had the bad habit of trusting everyone.

One fellow on the ship was without money and he became my friend. He ingratiated himself and said that if I gave him the necessary passage money he would send it back to me when he reached New York. He also added that as his family was influential he would arrange for my entry into America. In his dire need, as he was without money, I trusted him and gave him all my money.

Then I was stranded in London without even a naiya paisa. However, as V.V. Giri was my great friend he generously gave me three gold sovereigns. His very name, *Varaha*, means gold. How rich and loving of him to come to my succour! Even to this day I still trust everyone. So, it is wonderful how this boyhood experience still remains with me, after all these years, still quite fresh.

By the way, I can still recall even now the name of the man who duped me. It was Chester Solomon. Many years later, when I told this story to a prominent layer devotee in New York he contacted Columbia University and found Mr. Chester Solomon. Then he was very sorry and wrote, offering to send all the money I wanted. However I replied, 'Very sorry, but now I am a Swami and I don't want any of your money.'

I am telling you all these little things as you are the pillars of the Peace Centre. It belongs not only for us alone, but for all the devotees in the world. I want people to love it and make the highest use of it.

The other day, when our Ram Bheem Shankar Rao came, he said that he had spent some of the most memorable moments of his life here, as there is so much Peace here. So when everyone should comes here and finds Peace I feel I am rewarded. This is the greatest service we can do for all.

It has been said, 'Religion begins when we know our own faults.' When we can see our own faults and remove them, that is real life. Similarly, we have to ask what is coming in the way of our Peace Centre and then remove it, change and thus improve the Peace Centre. For any spiritual work and progress, it is essential that we know our own faults.

Our Peace Centre was founded around 1957 and all this time we have had a tea garden which we have tried to develop, but nobody takes any interest. Even the man who plucks the leaves takes the profit for himself. I don't want the tea for myself and I am not habituated even to take tea. However, it is for the Peace Centre, for the good of you all.

Similarly, with the pear garden. They only pluck the pears and never care to look down to see if there are any weeds. So also, the prayer Hall leaks and the Peace Clinic also leaks. When Dr. M.S. Rao comes twice a week to the Clinic to serve the sick and poor he has to stand in the rain, and some of the valuable medicines also have become wet.

Some money was collected and the Prayer Hall was whitewashed, instead of repairing the leaks. What we need is to close the leaks and also have the rat holes stopped so that the Peace Centre may be improved and the work can go on successfully, to benefit all.

Tomorrow is Sunday and we are having the Committee Meeting. I am sharing all these thoughts, so that each one of you can go home tonight and think and meditate on ways to improve the Peace Centre. Tomorrow you may all thus give your wise suggestions. Don't think that I want to be a Dictator, saying, 'Do this and do that.' Let each one do his part.

There is also a story about a millionaire who had two sons and he gave an equal share of his property to each. After some years one became very rich and the other squandered all the wealth and became so poor that he fell into debt and finally was brought to court.

The Judge called in the rich brother also and asked him to explain why, when both brothers had been given an equal share, one had become very rich and the other very poor.

The rich brother explained that his brother had never cared for the property but had sent the servants to do the work and left all the lands, houses and wealth without caring to see what was done. The wealthy brother however, never said, 'Go,' but always said, 'Come,' to all his

workers and properties. He always said 'Come, come,' to all the people who wanted to increase his wealth and position and thus he became a millionaire.

Come to the Mother Ashram in Totapalli Hills and see how beautiful it is there. This is so because I have always said 'Come' to everyone and everything, even to the gardeners and workers. Early in the morning I give the gardeners some work. Then, at the end of the day I am not satisfied unless I go and see what they have done and whether the work is done properly. Then I make suggestions for further improvement.

Even for the weeds a pit is made and later we have manure from it. So with this Peace Centre, it is not for me but for all of you, it belongs to all. It is a Universal Centre. Let us say 'Come, come, come,' and make it more useful to one and all!

In conclusion, there is an inspiring story which illustrates how the selfish man is digging his own grave and the selfless man is going up and up. It seems there was a very miserly woman.

When she died, Yama, the King of death came to take her to hell. However, because she was so old he pitied her and asked her if she had ever done anything good at all, ever giving any little thing in charity. Then she remembered and said, 'Yes, once I gave a carrot to a poor woman.'

Then Yama said, 'Now think of that carrot.' She did so and the carrot appeared before her. She caught hold of it and it began to ascend to Heaven. Some other souls saw it going up. They, one after another caught hold of her feet and each others until there was a long trail of people, led by the old woman, all ascending to Heaven by holding onto the carrot.

Yet, then the old, selfish nature of the woman asserted itself and she said, 'This is my carrot! Why should others get benefit from it?' And immediately, with this selfish thought, she waved her hand and lost hold of the carrot and she and all the others fell down. This illustrates how, if we are leading selfish lives, the selfishness will assert itself always in the end and we alone have to suffer.

It all looks like dream. Where is Andhra and where is the Nilgiris? How God has brought us here! I feel so grateful to all of you for flooding us with your love and also with so many vegetables, fruits, etc. What have we done to deserve your love and devotion? I feel so grateful but I am not satisfied with myself. I long to do something substantial to help and serve you all. May God bless you all with perfect Peace!

I have taken the initiative to come here in spite of the doctors and friends who requested me not to travel such a long distance, because of the recent operation and sickness. So, I request each and everyone of you to make daily progress and give some wise suggestions for the progress of the Peace Centre.

Go home tonight, meditate and think deeply. Then, tomorrow give ways to improve the Peace Centre, and to get others interested also in doing their part. Don't expect everything from me alone. You yourselves must give forth, for God is inherent in all of you, awaiting to express Himself.

MAY PEACE BE UNTO ALL!

OM! OM! OM!

Seventeenth Meeting: 1 October

Hearty Welcome to all of you into the Presence of God. If we could only understand ~~that~~ one word, that God is Omnipresent, we would know that He is here now with us. Not only ~~that~~, but as He is Omnipresent, He is everywhere. There is no place where He is not. We all ~~live~~, work, eat, sleep and breathe in God. We are eternally in His Presence.

We feel extremely happy to have with us this evening our Dr. Indiramma and Brother Govinda Raj of Mysore. They have been the oldest devotees of the Ashram and Peace Centre, taking care of it always. I always tell the visitors when they come to the Ashram that there is only one condition for coming and staying here. They must be inseparably one with God, feeling His Presence ceaselessly, the Presence of the Light of lights, the Soul and Goal of our existence.

Wherever there is real devotion and inspiration within, distance is no obstacle. When devotees really want God, they will come even in the rain, crossing hills and dales. After all, the moments spent alone with God are the only moments which really count.

Glad to see that both Brother Lakshmanan and Brother B. Bhojan are with us again although they were with us until 3 PM. As I was just saying, nothing stands before the real devotees of God. They will come to Satsang no matter what the weather is.

It has been said, 'Real happiness, changeless happiness is the same and ever-present in the past, present and future.' Where is that happiness? It is within you. God is within you eternally. It is all in the practise of feeling of the Presence of God. If you ignore God for ~~one~~ minute it becomes two minutes, and then more minutes until it becomes one hour, then one ~~day~~ and so forth.

Similarly, if we remember Him for one minute we can remember Him for three or ~~four~~ minutes and it increases day by day and we can remember Him even at work as well as at rest in Silence. We all repeat,

Forgetfulness of God is death.

Yet, we all forget Him. So we should cultivate remembrance of God in each and every moment of our lives. God means the One who is eternally present, the ceaseless Light, the unchanging. We should all try to practise, to cultivate the feeling of His Presence in each and every moment of the day, in our daily lives.

A great saint once said, 'Oh God, so long as I live, I will never forget Thee, I will worship Thee. But when death comes, when fever and sickness come, I may forget Thee. So, I will repeat Thy name now alone, more than ever, in case I forget Thee later on.'

So, what is needed is silent and steady progress towards the Goal. Progress is life and stagnation is death. You woke up this morning, every morning, and now it is evening. You have to ask yourselves what progress you have made this day and every day. Try to feel His Presence, have prayers and meditations daily, have some God Realisation within.

There is a very simple booklet called 'God Realisation Now and Here.' It is in seven simple steps. If you are hearing, whatever you hear is all God. When you see, everything you see is God. Even when you are thinking, all your thoughts are God, for there is nothing that is not Him. Thus you have to spiritualise each and every moment of your life.

As you go deeper and deeper, there is God-realisation not only in every word you speak and every thought you think, but in every breath that you breathe. Thus, pass from speech to thought and then pass on from breath to breathlessness. This is the highest state. Merge within and realise the Goal.

There should be intensity. One should say, 'I will never forget God, no matter what happens.' The devotee must weep for God. With that intensity the devotee must pine for God and merge in Him. If you want the things of the world, if you work for them you'll have them. If

you want God, then you have to meditate and pine for God. The least forgetfulness of God should make you miserable, helpless and sad.

Recognise and be silent. So long as you don't feel God's Presence you feel miserable. Be silent, recognise God in all things and thus you can have changeless happiness. The greatest consolation is that the God for Whom we have been seeking is not in the sky or Heaven, temples or churches, Yogis and Swamis, but is only awaiting our recognition in the stillness of our own purified hearts. All that we have to do is be still and He will reveal Himself to us.

I take joy in repeating that if you use what you have, what you have will grow. So we all have something good, Divine, inside of us. If we use this precious gift from God it will grow. That something within, is the Light of lights.

Here is a simple illustration. Suppose we have a battery light and try to focus it on Totapalli Hills. No matter how powerful the Light is, it cannot show the Mother Ashram from here.

However, if we use the battery light for the extent that it does give light, say ten feet or so, we can go those ten feet easily, and then another ten feet and so on until we may even reach the Totapalli Hills by the use of the simple battery light. Not only the Totapalli Hills, but we can cover the whole world with the little light.

Thus, if you use what you have you can reach finally the Infinite Light and profound Peace, and God-realisation Now and here will be yours.

This is the reason why I emphasise always repeating the following powerful affirmations:

Don't rely on me.

Don't rely on others.

Rely on the Infinite Light which you have within yourself.

My teachings are very direct and simple. To realise Him, think of Him ceaselessly and He will take you directly to the Light.

The essence of today's message is: The God for whom you have been seeking everywhere outside is within, sparkling in your eyes, throbbing in your hearts and flowing in your every breath. Never forget or deny Him for, He is the Light of lights within you! May God bless you all with Infinite Peace!

OM! OM! OM!

Seventeenth Meeting: 1 October

Hearty Welcome to all of you into the Presence of God. If we could only understand that one word, that God is Omnipresent, we would know that He is here now with us. Not only that but as He is Omnipresent, He is everywhere. There is no place where He is not. We all live, work, eat, sleep and breathe in God. We are eternally in His Presence.

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The essence of today's message is: The God for whom you have been seeking everywhere outside is within, sparkling in your eyes, throbbing in your hearts and flowing in your every breath. Never forget or deny Him for, He is the Light of lights within you! May God bless you all with Infinite Peace!

OM! OM! OM!

Eighteenth Meeting: 2 October

Hearty Welcome to all the old and new devotees into the Presence of God. At least in memory of Gandhi Jayanthi let us feel the Presence of Gandhiji in our hearts. If we do not, then what is the use of all these outer celebrations? There are essentials and non-essentials in everything we do. The non-essentials are the offering of flowers, fruits, singing of songs and waving of lights (Arati). They form only the outer worship. There are not complete in themselves. Their only purpose is to lead us to the essential truth which is the Light, a spark of Gandhiji's truth, which is the only Reality.

Our Peace Centre is justified in being called an International Centre of Peace and harmony, because people from all over the world come to enjoy its Peace. Our Sister Susana is from America.

Now we have with us Dr. Indiramma and Brother Govinda Raj from Mysore, who have come all the way as if to celebrate Gandhiji's Jayanthi with us. Sometimes one feels that all this was arranged, pre-destined before by God alone. Dr. Indiramma and Govinda Raj never dreamt, thought or planned that they would come here and take part in the Gandhi Jayanthi or even that there would be any celebration here. He alone plans everything and knows what is best for all of us. So, all that we have to do is to trust Him and He will do whatever is best for us all.

Just now our Dr. Indiramma sang the inspiring song, 'Oh Govinda, when will I have Thy darshan?' But Govinda is not far away, He is here with us now. Our gardener's name is Govinda and he is sitting here at the door. Thus, I feel that, that Govinda is here with us now and see Govinda in every selfless soul. God is here, now, with us.

God seems to have said, 'I give wealth, name and fame, all the perishable goods to the people of the world, to whomsoever wants them, to worldly people. However, I give devotion only to those I love.'

When I see our Lakshmanan decorating the altar, offering the flowers and fruits and lighting the incenses and Arati, I feel that here is real devotion. God has blessed him with real devotion so that he may show the Light to others.

My one desire is only that no one go away with an empty heart but that everyone listens and assimilates something practical every day.

Our Sri Ram in the Mother Ashram tells the story of a man who went to a temple for Puja and was stopped at the entrance by a poor man who was starving. The man begged for even a morsel of food but the devotee requested him to wait until after he had gone into the temple and performed his worship. He wanted to do *Sahasrara Nama Japa*, the worship of God by repeating His name a thousand times. Afterwards, he would feed the starving man.

Yet later, when he came out of the temple and was ready to feed the poor man, alas he had died. So, while it is good to pray, it is also essential to give a little attention to the living God before us and not worship only the images of stone and wood.

My heart longs to help and serve each and every one of you and all His children in the east and the west. Our B. Bhojan, whom I call Bada Bhojan, (our G.T. Bhojan, I call Chota Bhojan) was here for two days but he wanted to leave early because of the rain. Even though it was early our Hindi Pundit was there. As no one else had come and he wanted to leave, but I requested them both to do Bhajan and feel the Presence of God.

Our Bada Bhojan has done so much. He has given money, bananas, wood, etc. So I said to him, 'You have served the Peace Centre and left us so much, that I want you also to take something away with you.'

Gandhiji once said, 'I can live without food, but not without prayer.' So, prayer should be with you from the moment you wake, while eating and while working throughout the day. Prayer

should also be on your lips when you go to sleep at night. Gandhiji loved prayer so much that even when he died the last words on his lips were *Hey Ram*.

So, if you really love Gandhiji, in memory of his Jayanthi, you should do more than give him the outer praises and pujas. He doesn't want our words of praise or flattery. He lived a simple life and was an example even to Swamijis and Yogis. He was the Sannyasin of Sanyasis, in prayer, fasting, love and renunciation. He is the embodiment of truth and non-violence.

You'll be surprised to hear that I never met Gandhiji personally, even though he once came to Kakinada to preside over the All-India Congress near our Ashram. I have ever been one of those who seek God, not in the outer people and things, but within myself.

So, we have to ask ourselves what we are really doing to celebrate Gandhiji's birthday. If we truly love him we should live like Gandhiji, eat like Gandhiji, pray like Gandhiji and thus be a blessing to humanity. Don't do the puja and then forget all about Gandhiji the next day. We can learn so many things, not from the outer lectures but from our own personal experiences.

The other day we were having our Committee Meeting and afterwards it was raining heavily, so I went into the Peace Clinic to see where the roof is leaking. Our Dr. Indiramma was last here two years ago. Then, when she had seen the silent service of the Peace Clinic, she immediately pledged Rs. 5/- monthly for medicines. She has been sending it regularly all this time.

Many have subscribed of their own accord but have never paid anything even though they live nearby, in the town itself. Yet, here is one devoted soul, who without our ever asking, has selflessly and regularly sent her contribution all the way from Mysore.

Some souls live only for others, such as our Dr. Indiramma, always serving others, whereas some care only for themselves and neglect even their promises.

After the Committee Meeting I was sorry to see the leaks in the Peace Clinic, how dirty it was, how all the medicines have been spoiled and how the furniture became wet. God comes to us in the form of the sick and poor, the poor Narayanas as Gandhiji called them. Untidiness was not his way. He always wanted the faults to be known. He then corrected them immediately so something good could be done to help others, especially the poor and sick.

Now our Dr. Indiramma has come forward and she and her brother Govinda Raj are going to sweep and clean the Peace Clinic. They will also re-label the medicines and put everything in good order again.

Our Sri B. Bhojan has been an Ideal devotee, always helping the Peace Centre and collecting funds to improve it. Before he left today I told him not to be mad after money.

God is here with us, what we need is to cling to Him more than ever, and all will be added by Him. Whenever our Bhojan has an hour free, he runs off to some village and collects some money. I told our Bhojan that there is some kind of wrong within money.

When you have a little money you always want more. If you have twenty rupees you want forty; when you have Rs 100, you are not satisfied until you have made it Rs. 200. If you have one lakh there is no rest until you have made it 2 lakhs. The more money you have, the more you want.

Yet, as you get more money all sorts of fears, worries, aches and pains come. Soon even people, your family and friends too, begin to file suits against you, ready to harm and rob you of your so-called wealth. Although money can help us in many situations, still it creates many troubles.

It was Christ who offered prayers, repeating, '*Give us this day our daily bread.*' Even the King of kings, the Emperor also wants only his daily bread. Then what about us? Let us follow in the footsteps of Gandhiji and the Blessed Christ and live from one day to the next, one meal to the next and let us not accumulate too much money for its own sake.

But our Bada Bhojan said 'NO. Next week I'm coming to collect some more money to keep the Peace Centre alive.' While it is true that the roof is leaking and there are so many things to be fixed, let us remember that we have to account to God for everything, for every pie that we use. Let us not get carried away solely with collecting money. If we misuse the money that God gives us, He will not send us any more.

I heard with a heavy heart Dr. Indiramma's words that the medicines are getting wet and spoiled and some valuable vitamin pills have been wasted. Our Dr. Indiramma and Brother Govinda Raj are going to arrange and clean everything now in the Peace Clinic. When we do something we should do it right, so let us make our Peace Clinic the greatest blessing to all the poor and the sick, the Daridra Narayanas of Kotagiri and nearby places.

The God for whom you are seeking is here now, sparkling in your eyes, throbbing in your hearts and flowing in your very breath. Let us take the message of Gandhiji with us today, in memory of the Jayanthi. Let us no longer live like frogs in the well but live like frogs in the ocean. Let us feel that the whole world is our home and all the people in it are our sisters and brothers, and To love and serve them is our highest religion. God is in our gardener and in everyone, in all of you and even in our little doggie, Omy.

I like to learn from every source. If there are heaps of chaff, let me take the one grain of rice. From hundreds of flowers let me inhale the fragrance. Let me see God in every flower. There is so much to learn even from the loyalty of a little puppy.

Once a Swamiji came and stayed several months at the Peace Centre. One day he said to me, "The trouble with you, Swamiji, is that you want everyone to be like you." I feel for all the birds and flowers, for the trees and even for the dumb animals. Then how much more do I feel for all of you, the Living images of God?

My heart is sad and heavy sometimes because I am not able to serve you more. I want you all to feel more and more the Presence of God now and here. Feel the Peace now and then carry it to your homes and families, communities and nations. Share the Peace with all the children of God and thus walk in the footsteps of Gandhiji. Make your lives the greatest Blessing to the motherland and to the world. This is the ardent prayer of the One who loves you all!

MAY PEACE BE UNTO ALL!

OM! OM! OM!

Nineteenth Meeting: 3 October

Today is one of the happiest days, when we can attune ourselves with the Universal Power, in memory of the birthday of Pujya Swami Ramananda Tirthaji. He was the patriot-saint of Andhra Pradesh and the founder of the Swami Rama Tirtha Institute of Peace in Shanti Ashram, Totapalli Hills.

There are some people who give lectures on the Nilgiris without ever having seen them; they read books and look at pictures. Similarly, there are people who give lectures on Saints and sages without even having seen them. But today we have heard from Brother Markandeya of his direct personal experience with Pujya Swami Ramananda Tirthaji. His experiences are helpful not only to him but to all of us. I feel sure that Ramananda Tirthaji's great Spirit, wherever it may be, is happy and peaceful, for his blessed life has borne fruit.

When he was about to start the Rama Tirtha Institute of Peace, Swami Ramanandaji wrote to Vinobaji with whom he was closely connected and with whom he had spent many days, and asked for his blessings. Pujya Vinobaji wrote back and said, 'Don't be after quantity but after quality. Even if you produce only one or two devoted souls, it is enough.'

So now I feel that Swamiji's life has been blessed, for the Rama Tirtha Institute of Peace has produced such God-consecrated souls as our Brother Markandeya to lead the Peace Centre and another devoted soul, Swami Ramanatha Paramahansa, to lead the Ashram Branch in Waltair. Swamiji's dream has been realised and my life too has been blessed because we have already these two sincere and dedicated devotees, each doing his part to spread Peace near and far, all over the world.

You'll be happy to hear that Pujya Ramananda Tirtha spent several months here in the Peace Centre, giving his message of Peace, service and love. I remember how we used to sit alone together and share our thoughts, sometimes in a few words and sometimes in silence, in Divine communion.

One of the outstanding remarks which I made and which touched him deeply was when I told him, "Swamiji, if the salvation of all the children of God were in my hands they would all have had Mukti, freedom, long ago. However, it is not in my hands. It is up to each and everyone to put forth their own individual effort, day and night effort, a death struggle to annihilate the ego. So, if it were up to me they all would have had salvation long ago."

Swamiji and I have been always one in the essentials. It was only in the non-essentials that we differed, sometimes radically. He was the founder of many schools and colleges and he was a strict disciplinarian, often over very small matters.

If someone in the Ashram did anything wrong he wanted me to immediately send them away. But I used to request him to give them just one more chance. In the long run he would appreciate my point of views. We can also remember the words of the blessed Christ, who, when asked how many times we should forgive others, said, '*Forgive them 70 times 7.*' Forgive others until you feel the Presence of God.

Swamiji loved our Ashram members deeply. He used to remember the birthdays of our Jnaneswari and Santhi and give them Khaddar saris. He used to bring gifts to make the children happy. The shawl I am wearing now was a gift to him from a devotee when he visited Kashmir. He gave it to our Jnaneswari and she has given it to me. When I wear it I feel I am wrapped up in Sri Swamiji's love, enfolded in His Divine embrace. Thus I feel his Spirit is always with me.

It is a proud privilege that such a great soul as our Swami Ramananda Tirthaji lived here at the Peace Centre. He loved it here. He wanted to retire here but he had many other services to perform for the Motherland. Yet, he loved it here. Those cane seats are a gift from him. Whenever he came from Hyderabad, he used to bring one or two cane chairs with him. Thus, whenever a soul does any good in a place, his Spirit lingers there.

In having had our Swami Ramananda Tirthaji here, I feel we have had also his Guru, Swami Narayan. Swami Narayan loved our Mother Ashram so much that he visited there

several times and enjoyed Peace profound. By having had Swamiji Narayan here, we have also had his Guru Maharaj, Swami Rama Tirtha. Thus, our Peace Centre has been blessed and sanctified by the Presence and Spirit of many dedicated souls and it is our duty now to make best use of it.

How to make this Peace Centre the greatest Blessing to the world, an International Centre for all, is our goal. We cannot get Peace without paying the price. The Peace that we cannot get in the market place for any amount of wealth, can be had freely here. It is free to all who seek it. The only price is that we give up our selfish little self, the ego and rely entirely upon God, the life of our lives and the soul of our souls. Let us chant now three Om's for the Spirit of our Swami Ramananda Tirthaji, feeling his love and God's Presence, now and here.

OM! OM! OM!

In chanting these three Om's, we feel that not only Swami Ramananda Tirthaji is here but that also Swami Narayan and Swami Rama Tirtha are also with us. Verily, the Spirit of God is present in all of us, as well as in them, filling our bodies from the toes to the tops of the head.

The way to be happy is to make others happy. About thirty miles away from our Mother Ashram is the town of Kakinada. There, two loyal devotees, Mr. and Mrs. Chitoory Swami have started a branch ashram. As Mr. Chitoory Swami is celebrating his Shasti Purni today, let us chant three Om's for him and his devoted life-partner, wishing their long lives of health and Peace.

OM! OM! OM!

This celebration of our Pujya Ramananda Tirthaji's birthday would not be complete without mentioning his last dying wish. He said to the doctors, that as his body would not last much longer, 'Please let me go and die in Shanti Ashram, have my Samadhi there alone.' But, as his condition was very serious the doctors felt it was too dangerous to move him and as he could not have the intensive medical treatment he needed in the ashram, they would not let him come.

However, in any case he left the body with great Peace in his heart, wishing the Peace of all. Thus, he left the mortal coil. His noble life of self-sacrifice was celebrated by the Chief Minister and other important souls in a glorious manner, wishing the Peace of all.

OM! OM! OM!

One more word. As our Dr. Indiramma and Brother Govinda Raj are leaving tomorrow we feel that our visit to Kotagiri has borne fruit. They came and saw all of you of the Vedanta Class and you all have seen them. Today they cleaned the whole Peace Clinic and as some of the medicines were spoiled they did not waste them but gave them as vitamins to the roses.

We are grateful also to our Sri Lakshmanan, for he has got ten some devotees to donate the money to repair the roof of the Clinic. We feel deeply grateful to him because he is helping and helping so much in every way.

Our B. Bhojan has been also the greatest Blessing, giving so much help. Our Brother Markandeya as Secretary of the Peace Centre is doing the most wonderful service in spreading the message of Peace, practical Vedanta, throughout the Nilgiris.

Yet, as our Jnaneswari said today, it is not enough just to clean the Peace Centre. Now it is our duty to see that Dr. M.S. Rao and other devoted friends take an interest and come twice a week to serve the poor and sick.

Today one devoted Swami Vimalanandaji came from Palani and gave Rs. 10/- donation. However, he had to leave soon and attend some Puja. Yet, as we have to go away soon to Andhra we requested his help as a Swami and he is willing to help the Peace Centre and thus

do his part. Thus, by God's Grace and the love of you all, some good, solid work has been done in our Peace Centre.

There is only one thing more that troubles me and it is our Charity Box. In the last one and half years it has not been opened. The other day, in my presence, one devotee from Madras put some money in the box. As the key was missing the other day, with great difficulty our Brother Lakshmanan the Treasurer, broke the lock and finally opened the box. Yet after 1½ years there was only 24 naiya paisa in the Charity Box.

Anyway, the past is dead and buried. Let us not worry over spilt milk. Yet, the lesson to learn is not to let this happen again. Tomorrow morning our Govinda Raj may put something in the Charity Box.

Our Ramaswamy's grandson is very mischievous and it seems he is taking money, etc. Something should be done about him. Yet, his father, Naga Raju has not come even once to see us, although we have been taking care of his aged parents.

I am sorry to burden you all with this but let us set matters right and let there be Peace in the Peace Centre, but not stealing. I'm sure our Bhojan is going to take the lead now and set things right in the Peace Centre.

With Peace in our hearts, wishing the Peace of all His children, let us chant now Jai, Jai Rama Krishan Hari Om.

MAY PEACE BE UNTO ALL!

OM! OM! OM!

Twentieth Meeting: 4 October

Once again we should be grateful to the Almighty God, the Giver of the rare and precious human birth, for giving us an opportunity to meet attain in His Name. So far we have celebrated Gandhiji's and Swami Ramananda Tirthaji's birthdays. We have to ask ourselves what we have assimilated so far with these celebrations. How far have we grown? We should ask ourselves this question introspecting our lives and going within.

I think we had Swami Chidanandaji's birthday also here on 24th September. Now on 8th October we are having the birthday of our Tenneti Viswanatham, the President of Sri Shanti Ashram. Thus, every day is the birthday of somebody or the other, of some old and devoted soul.

Blessed is the soul who learns something from these birthdays. Birthdays are good, for at least once in a year we can remember the Source from which we have come. Thus we can spend at least one day in Peace, in tune with the infinite. I should like to know also the date of the birthday of each one of you, so that we can dedicate that day to prayer and meditation.

I always ask people on the day of the birthday at least, to repeat the Peace Prayer 108 times. As you know, our Jnaneswari's birthday is coming on the 13th October. She often spends the day in silence, with prayer and meditation and often fasting.

It has been said that there are three things which are very rare in this world. If you get all three at the same time, it is rarer still. It is blessed and will lead you to God-realisation now and here.

The first thing is the **precious human birth**. We don't have discrimination. We see so many people in the bazaar and in the streets and all around us that we think the human birth is ordinary. However, when we examine the life in the other Kingdoms we see that there are countless mosquitoes, worms and other insects and animals. Why has God not given us birth as one of these creatures? It is only when we discriminate that we can know how rare and precious is the human birth. It is our good Karma, good fortune, which has given us the privilege of human birth.

What are the other two things? The second is, **A burning desire to realise God now and here**. What is the use of the precious human birth unless we have the burning desire, the Daiva Pari Tapana, pining for God, to realise Him before we leave this human form.

So, one is blessed with human birth, with the desire to realise God before leaving the body. What now is the third thing? It is **the company of spiritual souls**, saints and their Satsang. There is an inspiring Sloka about Satsang by Sri Sankaracharya, from the Bhaja Govindam.

*Satsangatve Nissangatvam
Nissangatve Nirmohatvam
Nirmohatve Nischalatatvam
Nischalatatve Jivan Mukti.*

Through the company of the good, there arises non-attachment. Through non-attachment there arises freedom from delusion. Through freedom from delusion, there arises steadfastness. Through steadfastness, there arises liberation of life.

The company of Sages leads to Silence and solitude and gives discrimination. Thus, you are all blessed to have these three things:

- 1) Precious human birth

2) DaivaPariTapana, desire to realise God

3) Satsang, the Peace Centre, and the wise words of souls like our Brother Markandeya and other dedicated souls, to help you realise the Goal of precious human birth.

It has been said that these precious human bodies have been given to us by God only for the service of others. *ParopakarardhamIdanSariram*. This precious human body is intended only to serve others. What is the service you are doing for others? Is it for the body, for yourself alone that you are living? Or you are living for family, for community, for the people in Tamil Nadu and India? Or, are you living for the people of the whole world?

Blessed are the souls who live to serve all humanity, saying, The wide world is our home. All the people in it are our sisters and brothers. To love and serve them is our highest religion. Blessed are the souls who live to serve all humanity and have their only real religion as the service of others, the Living Images of God.

My heart longs to help and serve you all but sometimes it is sad and heavy that I am not able to help you more. I want you all to feel the Presence of God. It is only when we want to do God's work that there are so many tests and trials. The Doctors were against our coming here. Then, after we had bought the tickets, we received an express letter saying that we should cancel the journey as there was a railway strike south of Madras. I sent Rajaji to refund the tickets but they said we would lose Rs.100/- as the Ashram is fund less, we could not afford such a loss and so we decided to come anyway.

Brother Markandeyan even sent a telegram to find out if we were coming. Many people said it would be too cold here, but it is lovely. We are so happy that we have come, mostly because we have come into contact with devoted and dedicated souls like all of you. This is the greatest joy and privilege.

Today, in the course of conversation Vasudevan said lovingly, 'You are my God.' I am not shattered by these words. I ask myself what I can do to help you all, to deserve and be fully worthy of your regard and love. I never think of myself but only of you. If there is any desire left in me, it is only to make you all feel the Presence of God. I do not want Mukti for myself, but I want you all to feel the Presence of God, the Soul and Goal of precious human birth and go in advance to God.

What is needed is a little love. I want you all to go home and spread a little love among your ladies and children. Do not say that you'll help them later on. Today alone is ours and not tomorrow. Love of man is love of God. Help them. This is the real practical Vedanta. Let not his day go by without helping your dear ones and fellow man. This is the real life and not the rest of it. Make your lives a Blessing to all.

Let us close our satsang tonight with the wonderful poem on Service-

Service

Do all the good you can
By all the means you can
In all the ways you can
In all the places you can
At all the times you can
To all the people you can
As long as ever you can

So, with the precious human birth, the desire to realise God now and here and with satsang, and our Vedanta Class, I want you all to be happy and make others happy.

Twenty-first Meeting: 5 October

Hearty Welcome to each and every one of you, who have been so faithfully coming every evening. Welcome into the Presence of God, the God who has been so good to us. If we could only look into the history of our times, of this land and the world at large, in every moment someone is being snatched away, but we are still alive. God has been too good to us in giving us life, so that we may still feel His Presence. So let us feel His Presence now and here!

My one speciality has been always to live in God. I feel His Presence not in the uncertain future but right now I feel His Presence now alone and help you also to feel it. God is not the monopoly of a single individual, myself alone. He is not confined just to Swamis and teachers, He is in each and everyone of you.

Each has a gift. My gift is to make you feel the Presence of God. I do not want name and fame. All that I want is that everyone who comes into my presence should feel the Presence of God, now and here. This is my speciality or gift. My heart longs to touch your devoted hearts with the Presence of God, now and here. God is your Divine birthright, your heritage.

Somewhere in '*Cosmic Flashes*' there is a chapter with a great, deep thought. We cannot afford to think that God is not now with us and that He is in the far-away sky or heaven. If He is not already with us, where is He? He is near and dear to us, sparkling in our eyes, throbbing in our hearts and flowing in our very breath. All that we have to do is to recognise His Presence now and here.

So, I take joy in repeating, '*If you use what you have, what you have will grow.*' If you feel God, who is in your heart, for one minute, you can feel Him for two minutes. You can feel Him for one hour and then two hours, and then all the day. So practise. Practise of the Presence of God is most simple, helpful and essential. It is most inspiring.

There is a book by Brother Lawrence in our Peace Library which we should like to share with all of you. An old devotee, Sri Jeevana Gowder gave us all his library but we have not been able to get all the books as they are in Coonoor. I feel sure some of you will help us bring the valuable library over here. We have to do something practical and useful to feel the Presence of God.

Brother Lawrence was a member of a Convent in the West. As he was uneducated, he took joy in feeling the Presence of God while doing simple things in the Convent. He did things such as washing plates, polishing shoes, etc. Doing these humble tasks he was happy, feeling the Presence of God. So thus, no matter what simple little work we are doing, we should practise feeling the Presence of God.

I always share my little experiences with you so you too can practise to feel His Presence. In the early morning I take a walk and with every step I feel the Presence of God. Then I walk to the palatial Prayer Hall and sit there meditating for sometime, feeling so happy and contented. The only thing that is missing then is all of you, for I want you all to be like me, and meditate in deep silence. So, I wish you all would come and join me in the silence, feeling the Presence, centred in God.

As the waves in the Ocean are endless, so thoughts are endless. As I know my thought, so you too must introspect and know your own thoughts. Thoughts are things. Instead of leading you down, let them lead you up and up. As soon as I came into the Hall this evening I thought of the Sapta Rishis, but as there are eight of you, perhaps we have Ashta Rishis. **You** are all the children of Rishis, you are born of Rishis and you are Rishis now. As another day is passing away, think only of God, meditate on Him. No father, no mother, no relations can help us. Only the God who is within us can make us happy. So make every day the happiest, by clinging to the Indwelling Light.

One Saint said, 'I am happy every day when I wake up because my first thought is of God. So make each day the happiest day by thinking of God first when you wake up.'

By the way, there is a Sapta Rishi Ashram at Haridwar where I visited. Each Rishi has a Mandir where he can sit and meditate. It is very lovely. It is wonderful to visit at such places and meditate there every morning. Haridwar is the doorway to the Himalayas, to Hari's Abode and hence the name Haridwar. There are so many Sadhus and Mahatmas there, so many Ashrams and Hermitages, and so many pilgrims! One can see them, row after row, going all the way up the road from Haridwar to Badrinarayana itself. I had the privilege of staying there for some six years, performing Tapas and austerities by the side of Mother Ganges and Father Himalayas. Perhaps later on I visited that Holy Place one or two times again. I can still see the Holy Hills and Ganges with my mind's eye. Let every experience lead us to Haridwar, to God's doorway, into the Presence of God!

I like to share with you whatever comes from within. As I sit here now I look out and see the buildings of Chikkana Chettiar. When I first came here I was told that we was the richest man in Kotagiri. But when I see those buildings I ask, "Is he the richest man or am I the richest man?" The richest man is he who has no desires, who is clinging to God alone in each and every moment of his life.

I'm sorry our Chikkana Chettiar's son Parameshwaram couldn't come. But Chikkana Chettiar has always been very devoted. He gave Rs. 250/-- to our Permanent Fund and also the large carpets in the Prayer Hall. So, whatever we do for God's work lives after us. Hearty Welcome to Chikkana Chettiar and to his son, into the Presence of God! When any of you happen to meet them, convey to them my greetings of Peace and a Hearty Welcome into the Presence of God, into the Peace Centre. My heart longs to serve all the children of God, to share my love with them, whether they come here or not.

May God's Richest Blessings ever be upon you all! When you close your eyes at night, keep your hand on your heart and give grateful thanks to God for all His Richest Blessings. Say, *"Dear God, let me help and serve all Thy children."* May God's Richest Blessings be upon you all!

MAY PEACE BE UNTO ALL! OM! OM! OM!

Twenty-second Meeting: 6 October

Om Namaste Sateete Jagat Karanaaya
Om Namaste Chitee Sarva Loka Srayaaya
Om Namo Advaita Tatvaya, Mukti Pradaya
Om Namo Brahmane, Vyapine, Sasvitaaya

This is the second sloka, besides '*Brahmanandam*' that I am sharing with all of you. Before the Course is finished I long to share with you another inspiring Sloka which will fill you all with Light, Life and Love. So, let us begin each class with the chanting of the two inspiring Slokas, '*Brahmanandam Parama Sukhadam*' and **Om Namaste**, which are the Mantras of all the Mantras. Afterwards I wish to give you the inner meaning also.

The very repetition of this Mantra or Sloka makes one merge and dissolve into the Light of lights, and all the manifested world also merges in the Light. To begin with, *Om Namaste*. We offer our salutations to the One who is Sat, the Existence Absolute of all the manifested universe, the created world. *Sat* is the Existence, the unseen beyond All. Thus I offer my Namaskarams, Salutations, as God is one, to the Source of the whole universe and to all the Universe itself. For, God and all the manifested world are not two but One.

Om Namaste Chitee. I offer Namaskarams, salutations, to the One who is Chit, the intelligence, the essence of all the worlds. I bow to that intelligence which pervades all forms of life. God has been described as *Sat-Chit-Ananda*, the Existence, Knowledge and Bliss Absolute. When we salute the *Chit*, the intelligence we are becoming One with all the human and animal Kingdoms of Life, with whatever has intelligence.

Om Namo Advaita Tatvaya. Salutations to the One who is the Advaita Tatwa, the One without a second.

Mukti Pradaya. To the giver of Mukti, salutations. He is the One who is not two but One, the giver of salvation, Mukti.

Om Namo Brahmane, Vyapine, Sasvitaya. Salutations to Brahman, to the One who pervades all forms from the tiniest atom to the biggest planet. *Sasvitaya*. Salutations to the One who is the same in the past, present and future, who is without change. I am saluting Him, the One supreme and eternal truth, the Light of lights.

It is difficult to believe that we have come already to the 22nd day of Vedanta Class and it is soon coming to an end, day by day, in every way. We have to ask ourselves how much we have grown and how much we are assimilating every day. As there are only eight more days I want you all to be filled with practical Vedanta. You are the children of Light, or God, so be filled with self-effulgent Light.

The great ideal Sage, Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa said that in this Kali Yuga three days alone are enough to realise God, if one is observing Silence. So now we have eight more days. When the Sage said three days alone are enough, then eight days should be more than ample for all of you to realise God. In simple words, there is an inspiring question and simple, direct answer:

Question: When shall I be free?

Answer: When the ego, the I, the Ahamkara ceases to be.

This answer is for you. When you give up the ego, the Ahamkara, you will be free. One of the shortest mottoes in the Mother Ashram is also one of the most simple and inspiring.

Desire Binds.

What is binding you? You have come from God, you live and work in Him and you are bound to return to Him. You are always free. The sun is always shining. Only the clouds sometimes hide Him. Similarly, you are always free, but only the ego or desire binds you. To make this more clear, there is another motto sign,

Give up desire and thou shalt be free.

If you want to be free, give up desire. There is a beautiful illustration of how desire binds each and everyone, given by Swami Rama Tirtha. In Northern India they have a clever and simple way of catching monkeys. They put nuts into a narrow-necked jar. The monkey comes and puts his hand into the jar to get the nuts. He clutches them in his fist. Then the hunter comes to capture the monkey. The monkey could easily escape by letting go of the nuts, withdrawing its hand and fleeing. However, it won't let go of the nuts and therefore can't pull its fist through the narrow neck of the jar. Thus it is easily caught.

Likewise, we are like the monkeys, clutching on to our own little desires. We won't let go of them, in spite of pain and suffering. We want to take our desires with us in whatever we do.

My heart rejoices that our Peace Centre has been a great Blessing to devotees from near and far. Today we had a visit from Smt. Devi, whose life-partner is Sri Krishnan, the Public Prosecutor of Madurai. She came and gave a generous donation also. Thus she helped the Peace Centre and the Peace Centre helped her. She is also closely related to our B. Bhojan, the silent helper of our Ashram.

My heart rejoices whenever our Peace Centre is practically helpful to some devoted souls. You can imagine how happy I feel when our Peace Centre is helpful to you all and to the people from other religions and nations. The way to establish Peace in the world is to establish it in our own hearts. *Let there be Peace on Earth and let it begin with me!* This has been one of my most favourite and shortest of prayers.

So, let this be the essence of today's Message. Let there be Peace in the world and let it begin with us!

Let our Motto be, 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 nor neglect it, for I shall not pass this way again.

MAY PEACE BE UNTO ALL!

OM! OM! OM!

Twenty-third Meeting: 8 October

Om Namaste Satete Jagat Karanaaya
Om Namaste Chitee Sarva Loka Srayaya
Om Namo Advaita Tatvaya, Mukti Pradaya
Om Namo Brahmane, Udayine, Sasvitaaya

The repetition of this simple Sloka makes us feel our Oneness with the Light of lights. It makes us feel our Oneness with the God who is One without a second, with truth, which is all-pervading and everywhere. So, let us begin our Vedanta Class with this holy Mantra, recognising our Oneness with all the manifested world in all the Kingdoms of life.

In the first place, HEARTY WELCOME to all the old and new devotees and to our friends, Smt. Kalyani and Sri Shankar Maitra and their baby Gopalini. Hearty Welcome into the Presence of God! He is here with us, awaiting our recognition. He is not in the Sky or Heaven, He is here with us now.

If there is anything sad it is only to deny God, to forget Him. So let us gather here in God's Name and repeat the Holy Songs, Kirtanas, and establish ourselves in His Presence. He is here. It is because of His Presence that I am speaking to you and you are also listening. Let us centre ourselves in His Presence now and here.

In the first place, we cannot believe that 22 days have passed away. The only proof is the 22 messages which have been produced and typed by our patient and devoted Susana. I feel we came here just yesterday, but still, the messages are the proof that three weeks already have passed and we have only one week more.

My heart longs to help you all in a practical way. Even though we go away from Kotagiri to Totapalli physically, we want to leave with you something practical. Then you all will stand on your own feet, from what you have learnt during these days of the Vedanta Class.

Before reading the 'Cosmic Flashes' book, Brother Markandeya said that I fasted for 40 days and was silent for six years. It all seems as a dream and as though it all never happened. But the truth is in the proof of the books. They are the silent witness. It all seems as though it really happened and was written down by someone else.

What we need is to establish ourselves always in God's Presence now and here. I do not know how many of you realise how our Peace Centre has been blessed with the patronage and Blessings of Sri V.V. Giri, our President now. He came and inaugurated the New Prayer Hall. He gave Rs. 300/- of his own accord and has been our life-long friend. So, as we have the Blessings of such a great and devoted soul, we have to do something in his memory to justify the Peace Centre and make it an International Centre of Peace.

You will be happy to note that we have the prayers, blessings and sympathy of a great well-wisher, Sri Tenneti Viswanatham. He has sacrificed his life in so many ways by holding high official appointments. He is also a Brahmachari, and has dedicated his life for the service of humanity. In his last letter he wrote and asked for permission to build a Kutir, cottage in the Rama Tirtha Institute of Peace.

Today, as it is the birthday of Sri Tenneti Viswanatham, they are celebrating it in Visakhapatnam and other places. They are having programmes of Veda Ghoshti, repetition of Holy Mantras and other functions. It is our privilege to have him also as the President of Shanti Ashram. We wrote a message and rushed it to be read at the Birthday Function.

The essence of this is that he is truly Viswanath and is always on Kailas, detached from all the outer activities. Thus his life has ever been the greatest blessing to Sri Shanti Ashram, the Motherland and to all God's children. Let us chant now three times the sacred syllable OM, wishing his longest life of Health, service and Peace.

I am more than satisfied with the devotion and love of all of you, but I am not satisfied with myself. My heart longs to do more, to help and serve you all. All that we want, as written in the 'Welcome Words,' is not the things of the world, not money, but your hearts' devotion and Love. So, dedicate yourselves to God, feel His Presence and give your minds to the cause of Peace.

You may believe it or not, but the Peace that you cannot buy in the market for any amount of wealth, can be had freely here, provided your hearts are pining for it. The Maya, the delusion has become so thick and deep for us that the Real has become unreal and the unreal real. We all say with our lips that all this is Maya, unreal, but we run after the bubbles, forgetting the Akhanda, Sat-Chit-Ananda, the Existence, Knowledge and Bliss Absolute, the only Reality.

I do not wish you to think that I want you to give up your jobs and become Sadhus and Sannyasins and become lazy and idle. In our Mother Ashram we have many inspiring motto signs. Even if they don't see me, the visitors are happy to read the instructive mottoes. One of the good mottoes is,

Work Kills None, But Worry Kills Multitudes.

Here is another helpful and inspiring motto:

He Who Does Not Work Has No Right To Eat.

We all must work, do something practical to justify our existence as human beings. However, we must never neglect prayer.

He Who Does Not Pray Has No Right To Live.

In this connection we can remember the inspiring words of Gandhiji, 'I Can Live Without Food, But Not Without Prayer. Prayer is my Soul and Goal.' Yet the Maya has become so thick and dense that I laugh to think of how this saying applies to the worldly people. They say, 'We can live without food, we can live without prayer also, but we cannot live without reading the daily newspaper.'

It was Swami Rama who said, 'Blessed are they who do not read newspapers. They see God in flowers, in birds and in all of the Nature around them. They are One with Nature, with the Spirit of God.'

I am one of those who is trying to live in the present, living moment, forgetting the dead past and ignoring the dim future. It gives me great joy to repeat that *the world is my home and all the people in it are my brothers and sisters*. It doesn't matter whether they are in the East or West, North or South, I want to love and serve them all. This is my only religion.

When I left this place last time, as I always live in the present moment, I said, 'Who can tell of the morrow? I may never return here again. So I leave all the responsibilities of the future of the Peace Centre with all of you.' Similarly, when we left Totapalli Mother Ashram to come here, I told them the same thing. 'This Ashram, the work of 56 years, with its Holy Statues, Gurukula, and palatial buildings worth lakhs of rupees, is worth nothing to me. If I don't return I want you all to stand on your own feet and take care of the Ashram and its activities, considering all as your own.'

I am blessed to consider the whole world as my home. Wherever I am, I feel happy and I want to stay here forever. When I am in Totapalli I want to stay only there. Even in Waltair ashram which is by the beach-side, when I am there, I am happy to remain there alone.

In our Waltair Ashram there are two very beautiful mottoes which are near and dear to my heart,

*The ocean is praying, why don't you pray, oh man?
Every wave is a prayer. Make every thought of yours also a prayer to the almighty.*

I try to share my experiences with all of you so you too will feel the same thing and share your experiences also with all the children of God. I do not wish to speak negatively or complain but when we know the present state of things we can improve them. My only attachment is to the Ashram and the Peace Centre, but not to the land, the trees and flowers, or to the buildings. My attachment I only to all of you. You are all the pillars of the Peace Centre and I am ever wishing your welfare.

We should not be like ostriches, keeping our heads in the sand. We should know what is wrong with the Peace Centre so we can improve it. For the last 15 years I am sorry to tell you that our tea plants have been neglected. They are going down and down to nothing. Similarly, the pear garden has been neglected. No manure has been given to the trees and no one has even noticed that there are about 100 coffee plants also in the Peace Garden.

We have done so much thus far but it is not enough. If we want the Peace Centre to be a burning ghat or a cremation ground then we have done enough. However, if we want it to be an **International Centre of Peace** we have yet great work to do.

In spite of all the tests and trials my heart rejoices whenever I think of how Dr. Indiramma came all the way from Mysore with Brother Govinda Raj, and cleaned the Peace Clinic, which is run by the devoted Ashram Doctor, Sri M.S. Rao. Some devotees also came from Madurai and also a Temple Trustee came with two devotees the other day.

When people come here they have tears of ecstasy in their eyes and they greatly appreciate the Peace Centre and its silent work. Then I feel that I am rewarded. Today one Ranger came and said, "Swamiji, I came with so many thoughts and doubts. Yet, when I see this lovely place I want to give my life to help and protect it. I will do everything to help it." Thus, I feel deeply touched when people feel this way.

In conclusion, I do not wish to weary you with too many words but just this one last thought. Two devoted Missionaries are coming soon. They have already started a Branch Ashram in their home in the USA and have been collecting funds to help the helpless Gurukula children in the Mother Ashram. We asked them to come and see the Ashram first. However, as they love us so much and have identified themselves so much with the Peace Mission, they are selling their home, car, costly furniture and other possessions and coming to settle here once and for all. So, when they come I request you all to make them feel happy, comfortable and at home.

In conclusion, when we have such good land, our own well, and when I hear that some people made many thousands on sub-leases, I wonder why you all don't turn the Peace Centre into gold and make it a blessing to all.

It was Ramakrishna Paramahansa who said, "If a man is completely desireless, he lives only 21 days. It is only because of attachment and desires that man lives on and on." Sometimes I feel that I should have left the body long ago, but for my attachment to the Ashram and to all of you.

So, I want to make the Peace Centre a great Blessing to all the seekers of truth and make it a torch-light of Peace for all humanity. May you all make the Peace Centre the greatest Blessing of your lives! May you carry the Message of Peace near and far, to all humanity, and make your lives the greatest blessing to all the children of God, and to our Peace Centre.

MAY PEACE BE UNTO ALL!

OM! OM! OM!

Twenty-fourth Meeting: 9 October

Whether or not I extend a Hearty Welcome into the Presence of God to each of you, you are always in the Presence of God. This should be a source of strength and inspiration to you, for whether you pray or not, whether you meditate or not, whether you consciously think of Him or not, you are always in Him. When once you make yourselves steady in the thought that you are always in Him, that alone gives joy, strength and inspiration.

Since morning, waking up at 3 AM, I have been very busy. I have been trying to make the best use of each and every precious moment, by writing messages, letters, seeing the visitors, etc. Yet, still I am not satisfied with myself.

When visitors come I feel it is not necessary to speak too much. I am talking too much because of the Vedanta Class. Yesterday, because our Shankar Maitra and Kalyani came and more so because of the Birthday of our Viswanatham, the Ashram President, I had to talk too much. However, I feel that to realise God words are not necessary. My Antar Atma, the Inner Voice tells me to speak only a few words and merge more in the Silence.

In spite of all the work at the Peace Centre and serving the visitors, I feel happy every day to spend a few hours alone in Silence in the New Prayer Hall. I was happy today also when one devoted lady walked some two miles, all the way from Kanneru Mukku, on foot to the Kotagiri Peace Office, just to see me. From the Post Office her children brought her the rest of the way in a taxi. I requested her to make her home a heaven by having her children repeat the Peace Prayer.

Today as I was reading '*Benefits of keeping a Spiritual Diary*,' I was deeply touched by the motto and message, **Do it Now**. The essence of this simple message is that you should do your good deed today alone, for tomorrow may not come. There is another saying, the essence of which is, '*You may not pass this way again*.' Therefore, as you go, scatter roses, jasmines and other fragrant flowers. Do your good deed now alone. **Do it now!** We don't know where we will be tomorrow.

To err is human, to forgive is Divine. As all-knowing, wise and important human beings, we think that we know so much. Yet, we make so many mistakes from dawn to dusk. The only consolation is that God, who knows everything, always forgives us. We sent out many invitations to the old and new devotees, requesting them to come for the Committee Meeting. However, somehow one old lady was missed. Today I heard that she, Anna Ornsalt had died.

Anna was once the Governess to Indira Gandhi. She came also to Totapalli Hills, Mother Ashram with Sister Lalita Devi. When Sister Lalita Devi died, Anna was even made President of the Peace Centre for a time. I don't know how we missed her name. We didn't even write to inform her when we came.

Sister Anna loved our Jnaneswari and Santhi dearly. We always make mistakes. We want to do so much good, to help and serve others and her especially in her old age, but now it is too late. It has been said, '*A rose to the living is worth more than a carload of flowers to the dead*.'

Sister Anna was 90 years old when she closed her eyes in the Lord. Often she used to walk all the way from her home to the Peace Centre, a distance of two miles or so. Our Santhi was always happy to give her tea and some eatables. Two days ago our Jnaneswari was asking my consent to go and see Sister Anna, along with Santhi, taking our Susana also. Now we hear the sad news that she is no more. We make so many mistakes and we want to rectify them, but now it is too late.

The essence of today's message is: Let us do our good deed today alone, in the precious, living moment, before it is too late. Realise even now the preciousness of every moment.

Let us chant now three Om's and wherever the Spirit of our devoted Anna is, let us fill it with the vibration of Peace and Love.

OM! OM! OM!

*Dcho Devalaya Prokto
Jivo Deva Sanathanah
Tyaged Ajana Nirmalyam
Soham Bhavana Pujyethe.*

So let us serve the devoted soul of our Anna with Soham consciousness, which includes all and excludes none. She was an ardent Theosophist too. May God bless all the Theosophists with Peace.

MAY PEACE BE UNTO ALL!

OM! OM! OM!

Twenty-fifth Meeting: 10 October

It gives me joy to welcome you all into the Presence of God once again. Only a man of discrimination, one who knows the value of time will be grateful to God for the privilege of another day to serve Him in all His forms. One should not be so ignorant or narrow-minded as to confine oneself to a particular Temple, mosque or Church. When some people go to Church, they think that the God they are praying to is the only God. They are like frogs in a well.

Similarly, when some people go to the Temple they think the God of that particular Temple is the only God. Likewise, for those who go to the Mosque, they think that their God is the only God. Even some Buddhists, when they go to a Buddhist Vihara, may think that their religion is also the only Reality.

However, we cannot confine God to any particular Church, Temple or Religion, for He is present in every atom of the Universe. He is in man, the dumb animals, plants and the mineral kingdom too. Sitting in their own self-excavated wells, some people, even big Swamis and Yogis, think that their religion is higher than the rest. What they have within, they behold without as well. If they have God in their hearts, they behold Him in all.

Even if we do not have God-consciousness, Samadhi, in this very birth, it is enough if we have the Universal Vision. It is enough to justify our existence as precious human beings if we can love all people as our sisters and brothers, without distinction of caste, religion, etc.

There is a beautiful story which shows how we must see God in all the trying conditions of human life. It seems that two devotees came to a Master, a Guru. They were pressing him to give them initiation, *Upadesam*. He wanted to test them first. He gave each one a pigeon and told them to kill it, but with the one condition that no one witness the killing.

So, the first man went out, put a cloth over the pigeon and killed it, without anyone seeing. Then he returned to the Guru, showed the dead pigeon and demanded *Upadesam*. However, the Guru asked him to wait and see what the second man would do.

The second man went into the forest and wanted to kill the pigeon there, as there were no people in sight. Just as he was about to kill it, the pigeon looked at him with startled and frightened eyes. He could see God in the eyes of the pigeon. He thought, 'But, my Guru's instructions are that no one should witness the slaying!' Thus the eyes of God looked out at him through the little pigeon. He tried again deeper in the forest but he could not fail to see God watching him in the very eyes of the pigeon.

Thus he returned with the living pigeon to the Guru and said, "Your condition is impossible. Everywhere I go, trying to kill it, I can never be alone, for the pigeon is looking at me. God is watching me through the eyes of the pigeon."

The Guru was highly pleased with these words and said, "That is how you have to see God. You should see Him in all the trying conditions of life, in suffering, sickness and health. You should see Him in poverty and riches, in joy and sorrow, in death and life. There is not an atom of space where God exists not. Thus, you have the Universal Vision and you deserve to receive the *Upadesam*."

So, if one wants initiation he must have a firm foundation before he can receive the initiation, the Mantram and realise something. You must have the Universal Vision and realise that God exists everywhere. Then alone you will deserve the *Upadesam* of the Ram Mantram or of any other holy Mantram, and then you can have realisation.

Spiritual realisation means hard work. Kill the Ahamkara, the ego. It doesn't mean going once in a while to the Temple or Church. You have to undertake the tremendous task of destroying all that is weak and low and assert all that is pure, the highest, and strong. Only by killing the ego do you realise the Goal of precious human birth.

You have to assert God in all the tests and trials, this is the real spiritual life. It is the true Vedanta Practical to assert God's Presence in every moment, not merely memorising and muttering slokas, poems, etc.

A man was keeping a parrot and teaching it to repeat Ram Nam, '*Rama, Rama, Rama.*' But when the cat fell on the parrot it didn't repeat '*Ram, Ram, Ram,*' it cried for its life! So, when you are struggling with tests and trials, don't forget all about God and begin again to assert the old selfish ego, thinking only of your own little self and its desires. Assert God amidst the struggles. This is the real Anusthana, practical Vedanta. This is Vedanta practical.

There is another story of a Sadhu who was meditating, sitting in the Himalayan forests, repeating the highest Mantram, '*Soham, Soham, Soham,*' with every breath, following the universal breath. Then a big tiger appeared on the scene and began to devour the saintly Sadhu. Yet, even when the head of the Sadhu was in the mouth of the tiger, all that was coming forth from him was '*Soham, Soham, Soham.*' This is Vedanta Practical. He left the body with the last breath repeating Soham, setting an example to all Sadhus. This is Vedanta practical.

As you know, when devotees come to the Peace Centre, we never allow them to be idle or to go away without giving Prasadam. We often give two kinds of Prasadam, One is the peppermints, sweets, or sugar candy. The other, the real Prasadam is to make them feel the Inner Light and create an urge in their hearts, a burning desire for God.

Since I came here I've been thinking of giving you all the true spiritual Prasadam, which will be helpful whether I am here or not. Where can I find some spiritual Prasadam to give you? It is not in the Vedas, Koran or Bible. It is within yourselves. We must go within and merge in the Inner Light. Thus, these messages come forth from within. These messages can be translated into Tamil and Telugu and be printed with the help of all of you. Then you can share them with all the aspiring children of God.

When people come I feel sad if I cannot give them some inner Prasadam, so please have these messages translated. May they help all the seekers of Peace to feel God's Indwelling Presence, within themselves.

The time of our leaving is nearing. Although we will be with you in Spirit always, still we will be leaving you physically. There is yet so much to be done. Today the photographer Sri Prakash came and took all the colour photos for sending to the USA. The last one is to be taken tomorrow night, of the Vedanta Class. The photographer will come here by 8 o'clock PM. So, I request all of you to come tomorrow and bring also your friends.

The essence of today's message is, 'Dear God, let there be Peace on Earth and let it begin with us. Let us do something practical to benefit all humanity!' Let there be Peace within us, with every heart-beat and with every breath. Let us share our Peace with all His children, in Silence, in Highest Communion with the Indwelling Light. Let there be Peace in the world and let it begin with us!

MAY PEACE BE UNTO ALL!

OM! OM! OM!

Twenty-sixth Meeting: 11 October

So far we have learnt two inspiring Slokas, 'Brahmanandam' and 'Om Namaste.' Today we will learn the third one, 'Deho Devalaya Prokto,' 'Body alone is the Temple of God.'

*Deho Devalaya Prokto
Jivo Deva Sanathana
Tyaget Ajnana Nirmalyam
Soham Bhavena Pujayeth*

The meaning is, 'This body alone is the Temple of God. *Jivo Deva Sanathana*: The individual, the Jiva alone, who is residing in the body is Light. *Sanathana*: Eternally, from eternity to eternity, without end. *Tyaget Ajnana Nirmalyam*: Destroying the ignorance or consciousness that you are the body. *Soham Bhavena Pujayeth*: Worship Him with Soham consciousness, the Infinite and Eternal Light.

Realise that this body is the temple of God and God is within you always. Thus destroy the duality and worship Him with Soham breath. This is the essence of all scriptures. It is so simple and it contains the essence of all religions.

Today our photographer, Sri Prakash came and took colour photos of all those in the Vedanta Class. The film was sent by the devoted Rev. Parr, Swami Brahmananda and Mother Saraswati Devi, who are coming soon to reside in our Peace Centre and serve you all.

I always feel deeply grateful to God, the indwelling Presence of all your devoted hearts, for all His Blessings. We cannot imagine how much He has given us all. We should be grateful for the air, for the sunshine, for the water, for all His innumerable Blessings.

What should we do to be grateful to Him? He doesn't want much from us. All that He wants is that we should remember Him and give our minds to Him. For, He is the heart of our hearts, the breath of our breathes and the life of our lives.

How ungrateful to forget the Almighty God who has given us the precious human birth and all these richest blessings! He is ever protecting us like the eyelid protects the eye, like the mother loves and protects the baby. He is ever watching over us day and night and blessing us ceaselessly.

It has been said that we do not live where our bodies are, but we live where our minds are. Our bodies may be here but our minds may be elsewhere. Our minds may be with our dear ones are with some responsible works elsewhere. If that is so, then we are there alone, where our minds are, and not here where the bodies are.

The Bible also says, 'We live where our Treasure is.' If your mind is merged in God, even if you are doing business or any other work, you are there with God alone.

Two boys had a vacation from school. They wanted to spend their time joyfully. One boy wanted to go to the cinema and the other boy wanted to go to the Temple and worship God. So each followed his own inclination. One went to the cinema and the other went to the Temple.

However, although the boy who went to the cinema sat in the front row, he began to repent. He thought how wise it was of the other boy to have gone to the Temple. 'He must be enjoying the Presence of God,' thought the boy in the cinema, 'while I am wasting my time here.'

Yet, the boy who went to the Temple was not thinking of God but only thinking how he had wasted his time by going to the Temple. 'How happy the other boy must be, enjoying the cinema,' he thought.

The results are plain. The boy who went to the cinema had the fruits of going to the Temple, while the boy who went to the Temple got the result of going to the cinema. Illustrations

like these show us that we live not where our bodies are but where our minds are. So, let our minds be pining for God, to realise the Goal of precious human existence.

One of the best chapters of Cosmic Flashes says, 'God has no other body on Earth than yours, now.' What a wonderful and inspiring thought! The God for whom we've been seeking and seeking in temples and churches is never far away or aloof from us.

Where is God now? He is sparkling in our very eyes, throbbing in our hearts and flowing in our very breath. He is never away or aloof, but He is the very essence of our beings. There is a deep and inspiring thought, a soul-awakening thought that gives God-realisation now and here. It is, 'The God for whom we've been seeking and seeking in Temples and Churches is right here now, in our hearts.' Seek Him where He is. Even though you seek Him for hundreds and hundreds of years outside, you'll never find Him. In vain is the search without where He is not. So, seek Him within, in Silence, in the stillness of your own purified hearts.

It seems there was once an old woman searching in the night in the street under a streetlight, for a needle. Some people came by and when they saw her searching and searching, they also began to help her look for the missing needle.

Finally, when they could not find the needle, they asked the old lady where she had lost it. She told them innocently that she had lost it in her house. Then they asked her why she was looking in the street when she had lost the needle in her house. She replied that there was no light in her house and therefore she was searching in the street, where there was a light.

Thus, you may search a hundred years outside, where the needle was not lost, but you'll never find what you seek without, instead of within. It is only when you search within that you'll find the God for whom you are seeking, in the stillness of your own purified hearts.

However, it is very difficult to go within, so man seeks outside himself. Whenever he hears that there is some big Swami or Yogi nearby he runs to him. Hence, I never tire of repeating to our Vedanta students,

*Don't rely upon me.
Don't rely upon others.
Rely on the Light, which is shining
In our own devoted and purified hearts!*

I repeat again and again to you, the devoted Vedanta students, that even though it is difficult to still the mind and to make it waveless, as you try and try, practise and practise to go within, you will still the mind and find God, within.

In memory of this happy day and the photo taken, I want you all to keep the Prakash, the Light shining. So, follow the Light within, keep it shining and carry it to your homes, family, community, nation and to the world at large, and may your lives be a blessing to all of humanity.

Let us close this message now with the final thoughts, chanting the sacred syllable OM! OM! OM!

The day after tomorrow is our Jnaneswari's birthday. On that day we are having a poor feeding, not for the well-to-do Kotagiri people but only for the crippled and destitute.

We are leaving on the 20th for the Mother Ashram, as the work needs us there. We feel sorry to leave you all. Yet, so long as we help you to fill your hearts with the supreme Light, we feel happy. As we are concerned for the welfare of the Peace Centre, let us try to have another Committee Meeting before we leave and you can all give out your thoughts and wise suggestions for the progress and improvements of the Peace Centre.

The final good news is, that our three sisters, Parvati, Lakshmi and Saraswati, our Jnaneswari, Santhi and Susana, want to give a final dinner to all of you. We have not yet fixed the date, but we want to serve you all in memory of the Vedanta Class.

MAY PEACE BE UNTO ALL!

OM! OM! OM!

Twenty-seventh meeting: 12 October

Hearty Welcome to the few of you who have come tonight to drink the Nectar of immortality, which is the Soul and only Goal of our existence. This is the first day when there are so few Trainees. As there are three of you here we can see Brahma, Vishnu and Maheswara in you. What else do we need when we have Brahma, Vishnu and Maheswara?

Although I wake up at 3 AM and work continuously until 3 or 4 in the afternoon, sometimes not taking food until then, still I feel another day is wasted.

Once Swami Rama Tirtha was giving a lecture in America and only two or three people came because that was the day when they were asking for funds. So, even though we have only three people here, the Three Murtis are enough.

Today, the only good work, besides serving the visitors, attending to the post, writing letters and having the photos taken, the only real work seems to have been having the haircut and shave. The happy thing was that the name of the man who gave the haircut was Satya Narayana. He came from the town. I told Satya Narayana to repeat the name of Narayana and be filled with His Presence. So Narayana gave Narayana a haircut and both were in the Presence of Narayana, feeling Him in the very cells of our beings.

There is a story of a God-intoxicated soul who was eating from a leaf in the street, along with a dog. When some people laughed to see the scene he laughed also, saying that Narayana is eating with Narayana. It is all Narayana. Narayana is laughing at Narayana. How blessed it is to see Narayana in all! From the tiniest atom to the biggest planet all is Narayana. To see Narayana in all, this is Vedanta practical.

While Satya Narayana was giving the haircut we were surprised by the visit of our Executive Officer, Vaithilingam, Vasudevan and Markandeya. They came suddenly in a car with the good news that a son was born to Vaithilingam that morning. He was happy and we were happy too. So, tonight we will give some of the Prasad which he brought. We also made some special Prasad, some fruit salad, which we wish to share with you, requesting you also to take some to Brother Vaithilingam and his family. Let us chant now three Om's, wishing the long life of Health and Peace for our Vaithilingam, his life-partner and baby.

OM! OM! OM!

As I often say, the way to be happy, the simple way, the practical way, is to think of the welfare of others. Wish the Peace and welfare of Vaithilingam and his family and of all the people in Kotagiri and the Nilgiris. This is the only way to be happy.

In our Mother Ashram in Totapalli Hills, in front of my dwelling place, called the Nirvana Mandir, there are four life-sized statues, of the Buddha, Gandhiji, Krishna and Christ. They give me inspiration every time I look at them. Our Markandeya also has seen them and I request you all to come to the Mother Ashram and see them also, and spend some time in real Peace in the lovely Ashram.

The most inspiring thing about the holy statues is that every time I see them I feel that these Saints and Avatars are not outside, but within me. Krishna is at the top of the head, the Sahasrara, as wisdom. Buddha is in the Ajna Chakra between the eyebrows, as discrimination. Christ is in the Hridaya or Anahata as Love, and Gandhiji is in the legs and feet, representing service.

You cannot imagine what joy it gives me to feel that Krishna, Buddha, Christ and Gandhiji, as wisdom, discrimination, love and service are inside, within me. Thus, I live in a world of my own, which is different from that of the worldly people.

When I walk I feel that I am walking in God, that the Avatars are walking in me. When I eat it is Krishna, Buddha, Christ and Gandhiji who are eating in me. They are with me and in me, in every waking moment of life and in sleeping state too. This is something to be experienced and not talked about. When the Almanac says that it will rain on a certain day, you

may squeeze and squeeze the almanac on that day but you still won't get even a drop off rain from it. Similarly, it is not enough to worship the Avatars outside of ourselves. We have to realise them within ourselves, in Silence.

In memory of the happy birthday of our Jnaneswari, which we are going to have tomorrow, let us sing a song which we chant in the Totapalli Ashram. Tomorrow we will give you copies so that all of you may chant it, along with the three sacred Slokas that have already been given to you.

So, in front of the Nirvana Mandir, in each of the four sides, are the four Avatars. A little further, at the back of the entrance to the Nirvana Mandir, is this inspiring sign which has the following song written on it, in both English and Telugu.

*Sitting in Silence
Sitting in Silence
With Krishna on my right
And Jesus on my left;
With Buddha and Gandhiji in front
And Rama in my heart.*

*I will sing Thy Name,
I will drink Thy Name,
Until I get all drunk
Oh with Thy Name!*

I am sure, as one word is enough for the wise, for all the trouble that you have been taking to come here for the last 27 days, this one song is enough for your Peace and happiness. I want you also to share this song with the dear ones who could not be here. This is *Anusthana Vedanta*, practical Vedanta in daily life. I want you all to put this song into practise, by sharing what you have with others.

The essence of today's message is, that all the Avatars are within us. May you express them in every moment of your lives. As you walk, now it is Krishna, Buddha, Christ and Gandhiji who are walking in you. As I hear the thunders outside, as it is thundering now, may you all hear God's Voice in the thunders. May you walk in God, may everything you hear be God. In everything you see, see God, May everything you do be God. May everything you speak of be God and Him alone. May you live, breathe and have your beings in God always. This is my Prayer for all of you.

MAY PEACE BE UNTO ALL!

OM! OM! OM!

Twenty-eighth Meeting: 13 October

Once again I take joy in extending to all of you a hearty Welcome into the Presence of God, the only Reality in this world of change. If we could only recognise Him, whether in the Prayer Hall or at home, this is enough for our Peace.

We are always in Him. God is everywhere, being Omnipresent. There is not an atom of space where He exists not. It has been said that *thoughts are things*. Every thought that we think, we realise sooner or later. What we sow we reap. Whatever we think will come forth sooner or later, whether we know it or not.

Our Jnaneswari thought of spending her birthday in a silent way, in the cool Nilgiris Hills. So God granted her wish and she has had a cool, peaceful and restful vacation here. We are grateful to you all for making her birthday happy, giving a small poor feeding and some blankets also to some cripples. There have been many telegrams and express letters today, not only from all over India but from foreign lands, from America and England, sending their prayers and blessings on her ideal life of selfless service, that she may continue to be a great blessing to all.

Now the birthday has been complete because of the Blessings and Presence of our Shankar Maitra. He has also brought a lovely bouquet of flowers, wishing her long life of selfless service. Santhi worked hard to make the birthday peaceful, restful and happy. They visited the Temple and had prayers, wishing the longest life of Jnaneswari. Then they visited the Church also and had prayers before Mother Mary.

The birthday means not only the outer celebrations. It also means the inner celebrations of feeling God's Presence, of being in tune with the infinite, the Goal and Soul of precious human birth. It is wonderful to be in tune with God in every moment of our lives! These human births have been given us only to realise God. If we cannot devote every moment to God, we should devote at least an hour or two every day, according to our convenience, to be in tune with God.

My heart rejoices to see you all repeating *Sri Rama, Jaya Rama, Jaya Jaya Rama Om*, the great Mantram of Sri Anandashram, and filling yourselves with Light. When there is Light there cannot be darkness. So, my heart rejoices to see you all in the Light. Flies and mosquitoes cannot hover on burning charcoal. So, where God's Name is chanted there cannot be any negative thoughts or evil.

Remembrance of the words of a great Sage like Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa are very helpful. He said, *'If we sit under a tree where there are many birds and clap our hands, all the birds will fly away. Similarly, if we chant God's Name all the negative thoughts will fly away.'* Identification with the body of flesh and blood, with outer forms, leads to ignorance. But identification with the Light, with God within, leads to Peace and happiness and eventually all darkness goes away.

In everyone's life there should be periods of prayer and meditation. Sages have said that our real age is not to be counted by the number of years that we have lived or the number of grey hairs on our heads. Our age is to be counted by the number of moments we are spending alone with God. Only one in a million counts his age by the moments of God-consciousness. When we ask you your real age, you say 40 or 50. But this is not the real age. Go within yourselves and meditate. See how many hours are spent in God and count them in order to know your real age.

One can dupe and deceive those near us, even the dear ones, but we cannot deceive God, Who is within our hearts. What we are now is determined by our past thoughts, words and deeds. What we are going to be is determined by our present thoughts, words and deeds. *'What we sow, we reap.'* There is no secret to the Divine Law, which is the same for one and all!

Religion begins when one knows one's own faults and tries to remove them. That is the beginning of real religion. The Maya is so deep and intense that man is only going outward to

see the faults of others. We have to go inwards and see our own faults. When once we remove them, then we stand face to face with God.

It was Christ who said, '*Remove the beams in your own eyes before trying to remove the motes in other's eyes.*' Krishna said, '*Blessed is the man who sees Me in all people outside and sees all in Me.*' With selflessness we are building steps to Heaven.

We have listened now to how our lives are to be counted, not by the number of years we have but by the moments we spend in God. But this is hard work. Still, if we want God, we have to sacrifice a little. As one cannot meditate 24 hours, so it is said that the good moments of selfless service for others, are to be counted as worthwhile also. Thus there are two moments we can count when we figure our true spiritual age: the moments spent in God-consciousness and the moments of selfless service, when we can see God in everyone, the sick and the poor, and serve them selflessly.

Blessed are they who can make every day a birthday! We have to be in tune with God, sleep in God, eat in God, breathe in God, work in God, sleep in God to wake up again in God. There is not a moment when we are not in Him.

There are two paths given in the scriptures, the path of *Nivritti*, the inner life, and the *Pravritti*, the outer life. The mind is always going to *Pravritti*, the outer life. It is only when the mind goes on the path of *Nivritti*, the inner life, that real selflessness, real religion, begins.

As you are all aspiring souls, let us give up the path of *Pravritti* and begin the path of *Nivritti*, for today alone is ours and not tomorrow. Let us begin to walk on the path of inner life, giving up selfishness and let us live for others, in memory of the birthday of our Jñaneswari, the ideal and selfless soul who lives for others alone and never for herself.

May you all take with you the Light that never goes out, call it God or Peace or Truth. May you ever feel that Light and take it with you as you go forth now. May you thus make your lives the greatest blessing to all! I do not want you to leave these words in the Vedanta Class. I want you to take them with you and make them a blessing to your ladies, home, family and nation. May God Bless you all!

In conclusion, my heart longs to enter into your devoted hearts, but there must be *Daiva Paritapana*, pining for God. You can take horse to the river to drink but if it is not thirsty you cannot force it to drink. Similarly, if you say you want God, there has to be that thirst of pining for God in each and every moment of your lives. May God bless you all!

MAY PEACE BE UNTO ALL!

OM! OM! OM!

Twenty-ninth Meeting: 14 October

Hearty Welcome into the Presence of God, Who is ever awaiting your recognition in the stillness of your own purified hearts. We have read tonight one of the finest chapters from Cosmic Flashes, which tells us that we have to wait for the sunrise without, but we need not wait for the Sun of suns, which is already within us, to rise.

We have read also in the Gita, that the highest knowledge is *Brahma Jnanam*. Brahma Jnanam is the assimilation and essence of the three slokas that we have been chanting in our Vedanta Class every evening, *Brahmanandam Parama Sukhadam, Om Namaste and Deho Devalaya Prokto*. Then finally, we chant *Sitting in Silence* which makes us feel that all the Avatars are within us. So all that we have to do is only to sit and sing, with a great pining for God, until we become lost in Him.

One cannot believe 29 full days have passed away. 29 messages are finished and we feel we are coming to the end of the Vedanta Class. In all these 29 days I would like to know from each candidate what he has learnt practically. Tomorrow is the last day. I should like to hear the essence of Vedanta from each of you, what you have learnt from the course of one month. So, for the remaining days of our stay as I won't be speaking henceforth I request each and every one of you to express some of your inner thoughts. You can do this after meditating deeply. Give forth what you have assimilated, for the benefit of all. Let us make best use of the remaining days of our stay here in Kotagiri Peace Centre.

One of the most inspiring mottoes in the Mother Ashram is,

When wealth is lost, nothing is lost.

When health is lost, something is lost.

When character is lost, all is lost.

When time is lost you can never get it back again.

When time is lost we cannot get back even one precious second of the time we have lost. We are all slaves of some ordained, self-imposed duties and we have to obey the Call from within. There is call after call to return to Totapalli. But still, while I am here I long to share the Light, everything I have, with all of you. As I sit here, wherever I am, I am centred in the Light within and in the present moment.

As you know, I always tell my own personal experiences, share with you what happens in the daily life so you too can feel the same things. I always tell the devotees that we have to feel God's Presence ceaselessly, in each and every moment of our lives, in all the tests and trials, even in pain. Hence, sometimes we get an occasion to practise what we preach.

Last night, suddenly I had a toothache. For an hour or two I could not sleep. I said to myself, 'You are always telling others to feel God's Presence, even in pain. Now are you feeling God's Presence within yourself, in the toothache?' Thus I was introspecting from one to three AM.

Instead of worrying over the pain I got up and tried to clean the tooth and then I tried to do some work. I wrote some thoughts in the Spiritual Diary and did some Peace Centre work until 5 AM. I always tell the students to make the stumbling blocks into stepping stones, and I was happy to do this myself by having meditation, prayer and doing some useful work of writing letters and inspiring thoughts.

A devotee once asked God for three boons:

- 1) Some work. A lazy man's mind is the workshop of the devil. When there is some work then there is no chance for the mind to be fickle, so the first thing is work.
- 2) The second boon is: 'Dear God, give me some pain.' Why pain? If life is all pleasure than man forgets himself in sense enjoyments. But when there is pain,

even the atheist says when in great pain, 'Oh God, where are you? Why have You given me this pain?' So, even the pain has a place, a part to play in man's spiritual growth.

- 3) The third boon is, 'Dear God, give me an enemy.' Why an enemy? If we have only friends, they flatter us and we don't know where we are and what we really need. But if we have an enemy, he picks and pecks at us and we know what we have, what we don't have, and where we stand in life. If there is a snake where we live we have to be very careful. Likewise, if we have an enemy we are very careful and when he picks and pecks at us, we are on the alert to correct ourselves.

If we want God-realisation we have to pay the price. If we want something from the bazaar we have to pay the price for the article. Even when we wanted some vessels to cook and feed the poor and crippled, the Temple authorities took a rental of Rs. 3/- for their use from us. So, if there is a price to be paid for using the vessels, even for feeding the crippled and the poor, imagine the price to pay for God-realisation, to realise Him. The price is complete self-surrender. So, when the price is ready, God is there, occupying your heart.

Let God come first, middle and last in your devoted lives. He is your life's Soul and Goal. What a great joy it is to know that the God for whom we have been seeking and seeking outside, in temples and churches, is right here, within you!

When once we realise He is here, within our hearts, no more words are necessary. Hence it is said, *Knowing That, they melt in silence*. No more words will come. I feel always weary and tired when I speak too many words. I remember always the great word of my doctor, who helped me to have a New Birth. His wise words were, 'Swamiji, you are helping only a few, those who are present and hear words, when you speak. But when you are silent, you help all the people in all religions and nations.' So, I want to help and serve all the people in all the world by my Silence. I do not want to feed you with words which have been called mere stones. Silence speaks louder than any words.

Because of the Maya, in many lives God comes not first but last. If there is no other work then we remember the Peace Centre. May God come first in your devoted lives, for today alone is ours and not tomorrow. May God and the Peace Centre come first but not last, in your devoted lives. This is the essence of today's message.

As tomorrow is the 30th day, the last day of our Vedanta Class, I request you to see any of your brothers who are absent, the co-students of the Vedanta Class. Please remind them to come tomorrow for the last meeting. Thus they can make their lives a Blessing to the Peace Centre and to all God's children.

I'd like to share something practical and helpful with you and thus I will not speak any more. I will only request you to make the best use of our coming here to the Nilgiris from the far-away Andhra. May God bless you all to make best use of your lives! This is the ardent prayer of mine, for all of you.

MAY PEACE BE UNTO ALL!

OM! OM! OM!

Thirtieth Meeting: 15 October

(Some devotees came from Coonoor, and hence the following words of Welcome are addressed to them.)

As you have all come all the way from Coonoor, my one prayer is that you should take something with you. The past is dead and buried and the future is uncertain, so live in the present, living moment, feeling God's Presence. My one wish is that you all should feel the Presence of God; the God Who is sparkling in your eyes, throbbing in your hearts and flowing in your very breath. May you feel His Presence and carry it with you when you go forth from here!

One can sing with the lips or with the heart. Likewise, I can speak to you, giving quotations from books or I can give my thoughts from personal experience.

One word is enough for the wise. May we repeat *Sri Rama, Jaya Rama, Jaya Jaya Rama Om*, the Maha Mantram of Sri Anandashram, of Pujya Papaji and Mataji and feel God's indwelling Light now.

With one *Sri Rama*, I fill the whole body with Light. With one *Jaya Rama*, I fill the whole universe with Light. With *Jaya Jaya Rama*, the past, present and future are filled and covered with Self-effulgent Light. With the final *OM* all the universe is filled with the Presence of the Light of lights.

On this last day of the Vedanta Class, I am happy to extend to all of you a Hearty Welcome, not only into the Peace Centre but also into the Presence of God. If you believe that God is Omnipresent, He is here now. It was He who brought you here. So, as you have taken the trouble to come here, I request you to feel His Presence here and now.

When I speak of God, I do not speak of the God Who is confined to a particular religion or nation, temple or church, I speak of the God Who is sparkling in your eyes, throbbing in your hearts and flowing in your very breath. I want you to feel His Presence here and now, for I always emphasise that He is here, now, in the present living moment.

So far, in this Vedanta Class, in these 30 days, you have learnt the sloka, '*Brahmanandam*.' It makes you feel your Oneness with all humanity. You learned, '*Om Namaste*.' This creates in you Oneness with the Manifested and unmanifested. Lastly, as you recite '*Deho Devalaya Prokto*,' you feel that the body alone is the temple of God. You feel that the individual, the Jiva, is always the God, the Universal. Destroying the ignorance that God is separate or far away, worship Him now with Soham. Worship Him with Soham consciousness, with Universal Love, which includes all and excludes none. This is practical Vedanta.

You have also learnt the inspiring verse or song, '*Sitting in Silence*.' Silence is God. Unless you have silence you cannot know what God is. *Nissabdo Brahman. God is all silence.*

*Sitting in Silence
With Krishna on my right,
And Jesus on my left;
With Buddha and Gandhi in front
And Rama in my heart.*

*I will sing Thy Name
I will drink Thy Name
Until I get all drunk
Oh, with Thy Name!*

This one thought or idea is enough for your salvation, provided that you are pining for God.

It is a very interesting coincidence how we read this evening the Chapter in *Cosmic Flashes* on the closing day of the fast of forty days, and today also in the closing day of our Vedanta Class, the 30th day. So I have been deeply thinking, as the time of the close of the course has drawn near, what I could give you all to cover the whole of the Vedanta Course. I have been thinking and thinking, meditating and meditating. Today I want to give forth the fourth sloka, the essence of practical Vedanta, which has been also the inspiration of my life.

*Jnaatam Jnaatavya Madhuna
Drashtam Drashtavya Madbhutam
Chiram Shrantaha Ushraantosmi
Chinmatra Nasti Kinchana.*

The devotee, the aspiring soul, after struggling and struggling, comes finally to the realisation,

*I have known what is to be known, it is sweet.
I have seen what is to be seen, it is wonderful.
I have suffered much, untold miseries in the duality of ignorance
Now I am resting in God, because nothing else exists
Except God, the Chinmatra, the Absolute.*

Instead of sitting in a well of our own, working for our own selfish Samadhi, it is blessed to have a heart of universality, wishing the welfare of all. It is blessed to love and serve others, to consider all as our brothers and sisters, regardless of caste, creed, colour and nationality. This is the highest religion. This is practical Vedanta. This is the universality that our Peace Centre teaches, the universality and oneness of all religions.

We may try to get Samadhi or Nirvana in the next birth. Let us at least try to get in this birth a little love for our neighbours, considering all as our own. It has been said **Love of man is love of God**. He who cannot love man can never love God.

In the Mother Ashram there are nearly 200 inspiring motto signs, given with the thought that no one who comes into the Ashram should go away without some inspiration from reading the motto. One of the motto signs is, '*The heart devoid of Love is a cemetery.*' The heart without Love is a burning ground, not a temple of God, but a Cemetery.

I do not want to weary you with too many words. The essence of all religions is that we should have Love in our hearts. This is the practical religion that we need. You need not memorise and repeat all the Vedas and Bibles. If you have love in your hearts that is enough. You come from God who is Love, you live in Him and you go back to God, who is all Love.

Generally man is always unhappy and miserable. If you are thinking of yourself you are miserable. If you want to be happy, think of others. They are no other than God, His living images, coming to you in the form of the sick, poor, depressed and oppressed. It is your privilege to serve Him in all His manifested forms.

Another simple motto is, '*Forgetfulness of God is death.*' Death is not the dissolution of the body. Death comes when you forget God, the creator of these human bodies. Forgetfulness of God is death.

Shanti Ashram is the common property of all. It does not belong to me or to Brother Markandeya or to any individuals. If you are pining for God, the Peace Centre belongs to you.

- We have another wonderful motto, the inspiring thought from Cosmic Flashes, 'I cannot afford to forget God for the millionth fraction of a second.' Imagine dividing a second into even half or smaller parts! Then how can we divide it into a million fractions! The true devotee of God will not forget Him even for the millionth fraction of a second.

I take joy in sharing with you only my personal experiences. The book of my daily life is my Veda. So, I wish to share with you some of my thoughts and experiences in daily life. God has been too good to us. *Desire, no need of desiring*. If you are worthy and selfless, everything will come to your feet. God has been extra good to us. How He has given us this palatial building, new Prayer Hall and the beautiful Peace Centre with its gardens and flowers, so silent and solitary!

When people are sick they run to hospitals. When the children need education we send them to schools and colleges. Likewise, for people who are pining for God, places such as this Peace Centre are most essential. But, as few are pining for God, so few come here. The Peace Centre, is the common property of all, provided they are pining for God, the Soul and Goal of precious human birth. But are we making best use of this glorious Abode of Peace and Silence?

We can dupe and deceive others, our near and dear ones, but we can never dupe or deceive God. He is awaiting our recognition in the stillness of our own purified hearts. We have to practise and practise to feel His Presence. We all say that we want God. However, when it comes to practical life we do not pay the price. The Peace that you cannot buy in the market place for any amount of wealth, can be had freely here in the Peace Centre. But you do not come and make best use of the Peace Centre.

Besides our Peace Centre here, my life's work has been in the Mother Ashram. There, besides the Gurukula with 125 children, we have an aged home for 25 men and women, a hospital, etc.

We have two aged people here, Ramaswamy and his wife, living in our Peace Centre now. We want to take them to Totapalli Hills with us, especially as Ramaswamy is almost blind and cannot see. We will give them food, clothing and shelter to live and we are even thinking to get his eyes fixed. Yet the Maya is so deep that they are hesitating to come with us to Andhra. As not a blade of grass moves without God's Will, it is His Will, whether they come or not. Hearty Welcome, not only to our Ramaswamy and his wife but to each and everyone of you.

Here is my personal experience that I promised to tell you about. God has blessed us with another Ashram besides this one and our Mother Ashram. It is Waltair, beside the ocean. It is a heavenly pace where we have also another Gurukula school with 200 children. Recently we had to go there on Ashram work, to serve all the devotees for three or four days. I was happy to see again the beautiful and inspiring motto signs again.

*The ocean is praying, why don't you pray, oh man!
Every wave is a prayer. Make every thought of yours also a prayer to the Almighty.*

Another outstanding thought is, 'Oh man, why hast thou forgotten thy Creator!' Even though you have forgotten Him, He is there, awaiting your recognition in the stillness of your own hearts. It has been said, 'You can count the waves on the sleepless sea but you cannot count the waves arising in your own mind.' There are so many millions and millions of thoughts!

One night recently, while in our Waltair Ashram, I was sitting by the side of the ocean and the thoughts were coming and coming. I was thinking and thinking and then finally I said something to myself. I reprimanded my mind and said, 'If you forget Him even for one millionth fraction of a second, I shall drown you in the ocean!' This is how one should be, so alert and

strict with the restless mind. This is how one must be ceaselessly pining for God for God-consciousness.

In conclusion, throughout introspection, I began to think that, 'Life can be finished in one moment by one jump in the ocean.' Then I thought, 'While you are dead, out of the body, you cannot do any good for others, but while you are alive, you can do a little service to your brothers and sisters.' This is practical Vedanta.

A devotee was sitting at the Gates of Heaven. He was waiting for hundreds of years for the gates to open. Finally, he had just one little nap and during that moment the Gates were opened and shut again. When one little nap is so dangerous, think of the naps people are having from morning to evening, from birth to death. So, be very careful of the moments of forgetfulness.

Let each one of you promise not to forget the Light, but to carry it and share the Light with your ladies and children, friends and community. So carry the Light, carry the Infinite Light, carry the Eternal Light. Share the effulgent Light and may your lives be a blessing to your home and community, as you go forth now into the world of activity.

May each and everyone of you, who are privileged to be here, be a torch of Vedanta! May you be a Light of Vedanta, and may you carry the Light with you, wherever you go. The scriptures teach, *Paropakaratman Midam Sareeram*. These bodies are given to us not for eating and drinking, living for ourselves, but only for service to humanity. So, make your lives a blessing to mankind.

May Peace be unto all in memory of the last day of the Vedanta Course of 30 days. Let our ardent prayer be, May there be Peace on Earth, and may it begin with us.

MAY PEACE BE UNTO ALL!

OM! OM! OM!

