

PEACE

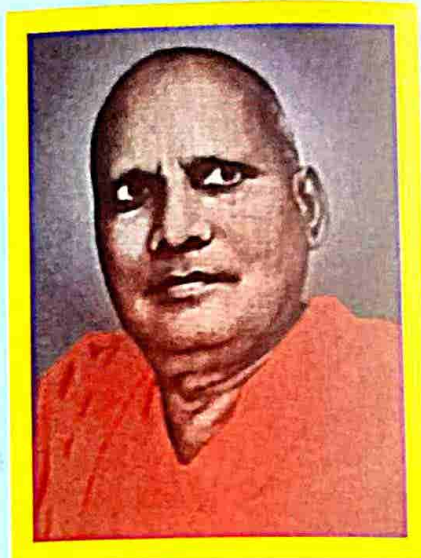
A Quarterly Spiritual Magazine with a Message for universal Brotherhood

January 2024 - March 2024



Pranavodhanuh Sharohyatma Brahmatallakshya Muchyate !

Apramattena Veddhavyam Sharavat Tanmayo Bhavet !!



H.H. Sri Swami Omkar
1895 - 1982

Adorable Presence !

Thou who art within and without,
Above and below and all around.

Thou who art interpenetrating the very cells of our being,

Thou who art the Eye of our eyes
the Ear of our ears,
the Heart of our hearts
the Mind of our minds,
the Breath of our breaths,
the Life of our lives, and
the Soul of our souls.

Bless us, dear God, to be aware of
Thy presence now and here.
This is all that we ask of Thee!

May all be aware of Thy Presence
in the East and the West
and the North and the South!
May peace and Goodwill abide among individuals,
as well as communities and nations!
This is our earnest Prayer.

May Peace be unto all!
Aum Santi! Santi! Santi!

- **Swami Omkar**

Repeat this Prayer for your Peace as well as World Peace

COMPLIMENTARY

Ekam Sat Vipra Bahudha Vadanti

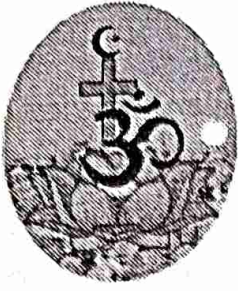
God is One, men call Him by Various Names

PEACE

A quarterly Journal of Peace and illumination

Founder : H.H. Sri Swami Omkar

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YAJUR VEDA (KRISHNA)

Aum, may Mitra be propitious to us. May Varuna be good to us. May Aryama be good to us. May Indra and Brihaspati be good to us. May Vishnu, the Cosmic Being be good to us. Salutations to Brahman. Salutations to Thee, O Vayu, Thou art the visible Brahman. Only Thee shall I call the perceptible Brahman. I shall utter true thoughts and speak truly. May that (Brahman) protect me and the preceptor. May It protect me and protect the teacher.
Aum! Peace, Peace, Peace!

MEDITATION

"The sacred word OM is called the bow, the arrow the soul and BRAHMAN is its aim. It should be pierced by him whose attention does not waver. Then, he will be of same nature with Him, as the arrow becomes one with the aim when it is pierced.

Within the heart where the arteries enter as the spokes do the nave of the wheel, He moves, becoming manifold. Meditate on Him, through the word OM. Let it abide with you, so that you may cross the ocean of ignorance.

Mundaka Upanishad

• "O Pranava "Om" Thou art the casket of the gem of the Supreme spirit, covered with the lid of intellect, guard my learning.

• Body is cleansed by water, intellect by wisdom, mind by truth and the self by non-violence.

Taittiriya Upanishad

Bodhayana

BIRTHDAY MESSAGE-THIS PRECIOUS MOMENT

SWAMI OMKAR

Happy birthday of peace to each and every one of you. I love you all because you all belong to me. I feel that I am the richest man in all the world because I love you all and you are a part and parcel of myself. As this moment alone is ours, for we do not know where we shall be in the dim and uncertain future. I want you all to be happy now and make others also happy. If you want to be miserable think of yourself.

I take joy in the thought that all are superior to me in some way or other. I want to see God in all. I long to be nothing. The incense stick, which gives sweet fragrance as it burns itself out to nothingness is my *guru*. Dr. Pichayya has also been my *guru*. I feel very happy with all his selfless services, showing light to all other doctors by his ideals of life of complete self-sacrifice.

You have all come here today and my one thought is: "For all your love, what can I give you to take with you?" I am not content with mere words. Another day has passed away in doing nothing. Whenever anyone does any good for the Ashram I feel happy, for that little good vibrates far and wide, helping all in the East and the West. But whenever anything wrong happens I feel that I too have been the cause of it and my heart is sad and heavy.

We cannot serve both God and mammon. If you want God alone then you must work, breathe and live only for Him. But nobody wants God, including myself. I want the Ashram's welfare and the spiritual progress of the Ashramites, devotees and indeed of all God's children in the whole world. If there is a choice between the "I", the ego and God, we all want the "I". Each wants the

little self and not God. It is only by removing the ego that there can be salvation. The ego is in all. The "I" must go if there is to be freedom.

What good is this body? I long only to do a little more good, to help others. These days there are so many Gurus and *chelas* that I am tired of this outer life. That is why I ask even Rami, the dog: Rama Rama anuma Rami; Ramuni Maruvakuma Rami; 'Repeat Rama's name, O Rami. Why don't you repeat Rama's name. O Rami? I love to see not only the dogs and dumb animals but also the little boys, the gardeners, the plants, trees and the flowers too, all repeating God's name. I request all to remember God and repeat His name.

Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa used to say that people do not want God. There is no *daiva paritaapana*, pining for God in this world. When we close our eyes there will be nothing, no outer world, but only God. You have to look within, see God in your own heart; so why do you wander outside, wasting precious time? Go inside, for God is waiting within, in the stillness of your own purified heart.

There are two *mantras* which are near and dear to my heart. One is the Holy *Mantram* of Pujya Pappa Ramdasji and Mother Krishna Bai of Anandashram:

Om Sri Rama Jai Rama Jai Jai Rama Om

When I chant this *mantram* I feel that Sri Rama covers all the past; with Jai Rama all the present is saturated with God and with the final Jai Jai Rama Om the dim and uncertain future is filled with God's glorious light. God is always there; He is ever present

for He is Omnipresent, Omniscient and Omnipotent. All that we have to do is only to recognise Him. If you want Him, go within.

The second *holy mantram* is:

Om jai jai Rama Krishna Hari Om

When I heard the story how the little baby was brought back to life by the powerful vibration of this Holy Mantram, sung by thousands of people, all inspired by the great saint Tukaram, I too love to chant it. Sometimes in the early hours of the morning I chant this Mantram to wake up all the people from their slumbers of ignorance and delusion. O Man! Why do you sleep when God is awake and Omnipresent, awaiting your recognition in the stillness of your purified heart within, in all silence?

Om Sri Ram Jai Ram Jai Jai Ram Om

Om Jai Jai Rama Krishna Hari Om

May Peace be unto all!

OM

OM

OM



- Blessed are they who are prosecuted for righteousness' sake; for, theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven.

Jesus Christ

- I do not expect to find a saint today. But if I find a gentleman, I shall be quite satisfied.

Confucius

**BIRTHDAY MESSAGE READ OUT BY PUJYA SRI
JNANESWARI MATAJI ON THE AUSPICIOUS OCCASION
OF 130th BIRTHDAY OF PARAMA PUJYA SWAMI
OMKARJI - ROSARY (JAPAMALA)**

Rosary is partially helpful to *Sadhakas* in early stages. Devotees of Sri Krishna use rosary made of *Tulasi* (Holy Basil) beads for doing *Japa*-repeating a *Mantra* or God's name. Devotees of Shiva like *Rudraksha Mala* (Rosary made of *Rudrakshas*). Some devotees use rosaries made of Sandalwood beads. Use of rosaries made of Pearls is also in practice amongst rich people. Though these external rosaries are to some extent helpful to reach God, it is difficult to keep mind steady and focussed. There is only one permanent and peaceful rosary which facilitates concentration. That is *SOHAM Japa mala*.

That is the only Spiritual Rosary which is eternal, unwavering and always existing. Wise men call it '*Ajapa Mala*'. It can be said that, in a lakh or even crores of people, only one may use *Ajapa Mala*. It is sad that people who use such a *Japa Mala* are scarce. This itself is *SOHAM* meditation, one which grants liberation in the simplest way and gives the visions of Inner Light, always present and peaceful meditation.

Loving devotees! The embodiment of Soul in the form of sisters and brothers, on this Birthday wishing for your Spiritual progress, my inner self is desiring to offer you, with love, *SOHAM Japa Mala* as a birthday gift. This *Japa Mala* is not within the reach of those seeking the outer material world. It is closest to those turning inwards and desiring the divine. Why so many words and writings? Time is very precious. One who is wasting such priceless moments is wasting one's whole life. Today is ours. Resolving that you are born just in this moment, doing *SOHAM* meditation with each

breath, be liberated. This *Ajapa Gayatri* meditation can also help for our peace and to realise the most difficult and otherwise unachievable realisation of God now, here and this very moment.

Loving Soul-mates! Receiving my this small birthday gift immediately, to make your most precious human birth blessed, start a new life from this moment, make best use of every moment in future with God-consciousness, feeling that my birthday is your birthday, I request you all to help in World Peace while working for your liberation. This alone is a tiny gift on my birthday.

May there be success in all!

OM TAT SAT OM

(Translated by Dr. Smt. B. Vasantha)



- True guidance is like a small torch in a dark forest. It doesn't show everything once, but gives enough light for the next step to be safe.
- Success is not to be measured by how much one accumulates, but by the extent to which one uses what is accumulated for the service of others.
- The brain and muscles must develop simultaneously. Iron nerves with an intelligent brain-and the whole world is at your feet.
- The moment I have realised God sitting in the temple of every human body, the moment I stand in reverence before every human being and see God in him- that moment I am free from bondage, everything that binds vanishes, and I am free.

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

**Message delivered by Pujya Sri Padmanabhanandaji
on the occasion of 130th Birthday of
Parama Pujya Sri SWAMI OMKARJI**

After offering Salutations to Lord Ganesha and *Guruvandanam*, Swamiji offered humble prostrations to the holy presence of *Paramapujya* Sri Swami Omkarji Maharaj and devout *Pranams* at the feet of Pujya Mataji. Pujya Swamiji gave his benedictory address to the devotees in the following words:

Today we gathered here to celebrate the 130th Birthday of our most revered *Parama Pujya* Swamiji Maharaj and in the morning after my usual morning prayers I was asked to speak on Swamiji Maharaj's talk delivered on the occasion of his 85th Birthday. I contemplated on the message of Swamiji Maharaj and would like to share a few thoughts from the message which is an invaluable gift to all the aspirants on the spiritual path. The message talks about *Japamala* about which we all know to a certain extent. Swamiji says that devotees of Sri Krishna use *Tulasimala* and those of Siva use *Rudrakshmala* and others use *malas* consisting of beads made of sandalwood and rich people even use mala made of pearls. But I will give you the **Ajapamala**, which is the opposite of *Japamala*. Swamiji says that this mala is not open to everyone, but since it is his birthday, he wanted to give this precious *Ajapamala* to his devotees as a sacred gift since he loves all as his own. While many ordinary people use *Japamala* for doing *Japa*, taking *Mantra deeksha*, this *japamala* cannot be used by everyone except one in ten million people. So what is this special *Japamala*? This *Japamala* is nothing but *Soham Japamala* i.e, meditation on *SOHAM*. Swamiji categorically mentions that this *Japa* may not be useful to those who are involved in the (worldly) *Pravritti dharma* and not only that, this *Japamala* is not available to such people. This *Japamala* is available only to those who are following the *nivritti dharma*. This statement of Swamiji is 100% true and even we may say it is 200% true. According to *Shastras* there are two types of Dharma, one is *Pravritti Dharma* and the other is

Nivritti Dharma. Everyone in the world wants to be happy. No one wants to be unhappy. Even spiritual seekers want to be happy. *Pravritti dharma* will take you to *abhyudaya*, all the comforts of this world and the other worlds. All these can be evident in *Iswarya* being enjoyed in this world and *Swargaadi Loka praapti* thereafter, whereas *Nivritti marga* alone takes one to attain *moksha*. If we take ordinary people who have assembled here, how many of you want *moksha* and *moksha* alone. Puja Swamiji has used two words. *Nivritti marga* and *daiva kaanksha*. They seek God and God alone to the exclusion of all else. Every one of us loves God and prays to God. We pray and love God for fulfilment of our desire for worldly possessions and comforts but how many of us seek God for the sake of God alone. Not many. We have no problem with God so long as we are provided with all the comforts. We go to a temple and perform *archana*, *puja* etc., only to receive *Iswaryam* and *Ishtakaamyarttha siddhyardham* only. Those who are taking to *Pravritti dharma* aspire from God fulfilment of their worldly desires and nothing else. For such people this *ajapam* is not possible but Swamiji out of infinite love for the spiritual seekers has bestowed this precious jewel to us. To those who adopt the *nivritti dharma* in life, this *ajapam* will prove ideal and they get *moksha* in this life itself, nay here and now itself. So you opt for that. *Nivritti dharma* is love for God to the exclusion of all others. This message is very essential for those who have committed to spiritual life and especially for those living in the Ashrams. Swamiji's message finds resonance in the Shastras. In Yoga Shastra, *Vairagya* is the key to attain *Moksha*. Irrespective of age, ashrama, *prarabdha* etc., one who is living a life of *Vairagya*, he attains *Moksha* now and here. In the twelfth chapter of Bhagavad Gita, Bhagavan says those who are committed to Him and who discard the doer ship of *karma* will attain Him. *Karma* means *kaama*. Because whatever activity we do, that activity arises from *kaama*, *Avidya* leads to *kaama* and in turn *kaama* leads one to do *karma*. Thus all actions originate from desire. *Karma*

tyaagam means *kaama tyaagam* because *kaama* means *aasha*. *Aasha tyaagam* means desirelessness. When the mind is parched out of all the desires, then the *pravrutti dharma* goes away. *Nivrutti dharma* sets in. Suppose we have to do *Soham japa* without break, without any obstacles, then the mind should be free from all the thoughts. So when the mind is free of thoughts, it becomes free of desires. So if your mind is free from all desires, then automatically *nivrutti dharma* sets in. Then *Soham dhyanam* goes on uninterrupted. In our place, Kerala, they used to tell a story. There was an ordinary Brahmin and other Brahmins in the village used to ask him why he was wasting the life without doing anything. But he continued to live like that only without bothering about what others say to him. One day when the Brahmin was taking bath, another Brahmin friend also came to that place to take bath. And then this man told him, 'you are already 90 years old. At least from now onwards why don't you devote the rest of your life in the service of Lord?' Then the Brahmin replied, 'I will do that later.' But they being the best of friends, he warned the Brahmin that there is not much time to think and he should immediately start serving the Lord. Further death is imminent and it may happen any moment. Then the Brahmin grasped the urgency and went to the temple and prayed to the Bhagavan. Uttanpada got *aatma saakshaatkaara* in 6 days and King Parikshit got *moksha* in 7 days and I am already 90 years old and wanted to dedicate my remaining life to attain liberation. God was pleased with the Brahmin and gave him *Moksha* even before his death. Swamiji says that one who engages in *Soham dhyana* after following *nivrutti dharma* need not worry about his *Sanchita* or *Prarabdha karmas* as they will not stand in the way of his attaining *Moksha*, the ultimate goal of human life. The *Moksha* is not to be attained in the distant uncertain future but is attained here and now. So the *ajapa japa* is the most precious and the easiest of all methods to attain *Moksha*. In Mandukyopanishad it is said that whatever one receives is God's gift and one should feel contented with what he has as the giver is none other than God. In *Bhakti*

Marga, one is totally dependent on God with a feeling of total surrender. This path is adopted in Vaishnav Sampradaya. One Vaishnav Acharya named Kulasekhara in his Mukundamala says, Hey Bhagavan 'wherever you place me, whatever condition you give me, I am happy because I shall always contemplate on your lotus feet.' So Sri Swamiji Maharaj asks the aspirants to fill their lives with God and God alone. Swamiji Maharaj emphasises that those who remember God always remain happy and they are equally poised in any given situation. He further adds that Vairagya is not throwing away but accepting whatever comes in our way without the least resistance. Bhagavan Ramana and Swami Rama Tirtha also used to say this only. Mandukyopanishad also emphasises on this truth. So the *Upadesa* is uniquely similar. Prepare the mind to be free from all the desires. Ramana Bhagavan also taught the same thing in a different manner. This *Soham japa* is the easiest according to Bhagavan's teachings. *Ayi ye athi sulabham*. All the Mahatmas agree unequivocally that it is the easiest thing to attain *Moksha*. To illustrate this point 'suppose you have a scooter and you want to ride it. For doing so, you have to lift one leg to the other side to start driving it. How much time is taken to do this? Same is the case with Realisation or *Moksha* and it is the easiest and can happen now and here'. Janaka Maharaja read about this and called a scholar who is well versed in the Shastras to vouch for it. The Scholar answered in the affirmative and said it is possible according to Shastras. Then Janaka asked him to prove it or else go to jail. But the Scholar replied that he cannot prove it and so he was sent to jail. Thus the Maharaja sent many Sadhus, one by one to jail for their inability to prove it. Then one Maharshi named Ashtavakra visited the Maharaja. He said it was correct and he could prove it. When Janaka asked him to prove the statement, the Maharshi said 'I am your Guru and you are my *Shishya*. You cannot order me like this. As the Guru, I can order you and you are bound to obey me'. Saying so Ashtavakra proceeded and Janaka followed him. When Janaka was going all his ministers were following him. Then

Ashtavakra asked Janaka as to why others were following him and asked him to send them back and only *Janaka* should follow him. Then both of them went to a forest. In the forest *Ashtavakra* gave Janaka the upadesha and asked him to climb the horse which appeared before them. So when *Janaka* kept one leg on the ground and lifted half of the other leg to climb the horse, he went into *Samadhi*. After many days, the Minister and people of his kingdom came in search of him and found the king in *Samadhi*, in the same position with one leg half lifted. Then they asked the Maharshi what has he done to their king? Then the Maharshi replied that he had done nothing but the king is in a state of *Samadhi*. Then *Ashtavakra* asked *Janaka* to come out of *Samadhi*. This story carries the message that for those who are in the *nivritti marga*, *Soham japa* is the easiest. And this is possible only for a few among crores of people. You are the chosen one among those crores of people. Start doing it now and here itself. One who responds quickly will become dearer to Bhagavan. So that is the essence of *Upadesha*. You should decide quickly and start the *Soham Japa* before it is late. All other forms of *japa*, *Dhyana* etc. are meant to achieve control of the mind and free it from all sorts of desires leading to unwanted actions. In the end it is only the *Soham Japa* which gives us God-realisation or *Moksha*, the birthright of every human being as Swamiji Maharaj aptly puts it.

May Lord Venkateswara, Pujya Swamiji, Mataji and all *Rishis* bless us to rid our mind of all desires so that we can reach our goal!

OBITUARY

We deeply mourn the untimely demise of Smt. Neha Gupta w/o Sri Sarvesh and daughter-in-law of Smt Pushpa Shiv Charan Gupta Garu of Hyderabad on 3-2-2024. In this time of great tragedy that has befallen on their family, we at the Ashram prayed for Sadgati to the departed soul. May Pujya Swamiji bestow his grace on the family to overcome the grief!

HOW GOOD IS GOD

SWAMI OMKAR

God is good because He is all good. Whatever side I turn my eyes, I see God's Glory.

He is there wafting His cool breeze on me. He is here making me bask in His fading rays.

Whether I am on land or in water- in the sky or heaven, God is there protecting me with His never failing love and protection. Every sight portrays Him. He is in every rain drop. He is in the thunder and lightning too. During my recent visit to the Rishikonda Beach, while bathing in the ocean, I felt that every wave is a prayer. The ocean is praying. Why don't you pray, O Man! it is a beautiful thought and a lovely motto in our Waltair Ashram, helping people to think of God.

How blessed it is to make all our thoughts into prayers. Verily, it is God within and without. As he is omnipresent there is not an atom of space where He exists not. It is all He not only on every side, but also above, below and all around. Naturally, it is God in everyone. Hence it has been said that man is an image of God. It is God, even in the fragrance of the sweet flowers. It is God even in our sleep too. This message is the outcome of the message of a letter.

Jasmine flowers last night, on the veranda of the Nirvana Mandir as I sleep- I inhale the fragrance of the sweet flowers. We have not planted this jasmine creeper. It came by itself with some other plants there and began to grow and bloom giving plenty of flowers month after month.

How good is God?

While I was in ecstasy inhaling and exhaling Peace in the fragrance of these tiny flowers, from somewhere a bird began to sing in pathos. Pew kahan?

Where is Prabhu- the God! I was deeply moved and touched with tears in my eyes- on one side-inhaling the fragrance on the land and heavy from the very sky, the cry of the sacred bird seeking God. It was a holy moment of divine ecstasy. It was a full moon

day and I was going in the early hours towards the Kailas hill, floating in His presence. At one place on the way towards the hill, I sat on a slab of a stone, on one side there was the full moon going down towards the horizon. On the other side there is the advent of the rising Sun, dispelling all clouds of darkness - it is an ecstatic moment but cannot be described in these finite words - to see the two balls of the fire-one rising from the east and the other going down the horizon in the west. How good is God!

He has given me Sun and Moon, as my play things. They are my toys. How rich I feel to own the Sun, Moon and Stars! I am the monarch of all that I survey. The world belongs to me. Verily, it is my creation. How good is God to bless me with a healthy body, discriminating mind and an aspiring heart of love? He has not only given me these precious and priceless gifts but He is ever abiding without and within me protecting and watching how I am making good use of His precious gifts. The glory of God's love lies, in His eternal oneness with me- for He is the eye of my eyes, ear of my ears, heart of the hearts, mind of the minds, breath of breaths, nay life of the lives and soul of the souls.

Glory

Glory

Glory!

Inhale and exhale Peace with every breath. Recognise His life from the tiniest atom to the highest planet, for He is the soul of the souls. The individual alone is universal. Above all my heart longs to worship God- who is all love and who has been too good to me-no longer with words, but with supreme silence in divine ecstasy.

Be still and know 'Thou Art That'!

Om Tat Sat Om

OM OM OM

OBITUARY

We regret to inform the sad demise of Sri Ramadasu Garu, an old devotee of our Ashram and Anandashram on the 10th February, 2024. May his soul rest in Peace! Om Santi!

I AM NO CRANE

C RAJAGOPALACHARI

Once the sage Markandeya came to see the *Pandavas*. *Yudhishtira* happened to talk of the virtues of the fair sex and said: "What greater wonder is there in this world than the patience and chastity of woman? She gives birth to a child after cherishing it in her womb as dearer than life itself. She brings it into the world in pain and anxiety and thence forward her one thought is for its health and happiness. Large-hearted and forgiving, a woman forgives and continues to love even a wicked husband, who neglects and hates and subjects her to all sorts of miseries. How strange!"

Hearing this Markandeya told him a sacred story.

There was once a brahmana named *Kausika* who observed his vow of *brahmacharya* with great steadfastness and devotion. One day, he sat under a tree reciting the Vedas. A crane, perched on the top of the tree, defiled his head with its droppings. He looked up at it, and his angry look killed the bird and it fell down dead. The *brahmana* was pained when he saw the dead bird lying on the ground.

How frightful it would be if wishes fulfilled themselves, if each hasty or angry wish took effect at once! How much there would be to regret or repent afterwards! It is lucky for us that wishes depend on outward circumstances for accomplishment, since that saves us from much sin and sorrow.

Kaushika sorrowed that the evil thought that passed in his mind in a moment of anger had killed an innocent bird. Sometime later, he went as usual to beg alms.

He stood before the door of a house to receive his dole. The housewife was cleaning utensils at that time. *Kaushika* waited in the hope that she would attend him after her work was over. In the meantime the master of the house returned, tired and hungry,

and the wife had to attend to his wants, wash and dry his feet and serve him with food. In this preoccupation she seemed to have forgotten the mendicant waiting outside. After her husband had been cared for and fed, she came out with alms to the mendicant. She said: "I am sorry to have kept you waiting long. Pardon me."

Kausika, burning with anger, said: "Lady, you have made me wait for such a long time. This indifference is not fair."

The woman told the *brahmana*: "Best of *brahmanas*, kindly do forgive me. I was serving my husband and hence the delay."

The *brahmana* remarked: "It is right and proper to attend on the husband, but the *brahmana* also should not be disregarded. You seem an arrogant woman."

She said: "Be not angry with me and remember that I kept you waiting only because I was dutifully serving my husband. I am no crane killed by a violent thought and your rage can do no harm to the woman, who devotes herself to the service of her husband."

The *brahmana* was taken aback. He wondered how the woman knew of the crane incident.

She continued: "O great one, you do not know the secret of duty, and you are also not aware that anger is the greatest enemy that dwells in man. Forgive the delay in attending to you. Go to *Mithila* and be instructed in the secret of good life by *Dharmavyadha* living in the city."

The *brahmana* was amazed. He said: "I deserve your just admonition and it will do me good. May all good attend you." With these words he went to *Mithila*.

Kausika reached *Mithila* and looked for *Dharmavyadha's* residence, which he thought would be some lonely hermitage far from the noise and bustle of common life. He walked along magnificent roads between beautiful houses and gardens in that

great city and finally reached a butcher's shop, in which was a man selling meat. His amazement was great when he learnt that this man was *Dharmavyadha*.

The *brahmana* was shocked beyond measure and stood at a distance in disgust. The butcher suddenly rose from his seat, came to the *brahmana* and inquired: "Revered sir, are you well? Did that chaste *brahmana* lady send you to me?"

The *brahmana* was stupefied.

"Revered sir, I know why you have come. Let us go home," said the butcher and he took *brahmana* to his house where he saw a happy family and was greatly struck by the devotion with which the butcher served his parents. *Kausika* took his lessons from that butcher on *dharma*, man's calling and duty. Afterwards, the *brahmana* returned to his house and began to tend his parents, a duty which he had rather neglected before.

The moral of this striking story of *Dharmavyadha* so skilfully woven by Veda Vyasa into the Mahabharata, is the same as the teaching of the Gita, that man reaches perfection by the honest pursuit of whatever calling falls to his lot in life, and that this is really worship of God Who created and pervades all. The occupation may be one he is born to in society or it may have been forced on him by circumstances or he may have taken it up by choice but what really matters is the spirit of sincerity and faithfulness with which he does his life's work. Veda Vyasa emphasises this great truth by making a scholarly *brahmana*, who did not know it, learn it from a butcher, who lived it in his humble and despised life.

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- By the light of truth, he is able to discriminate between the real and the unreal, and the knowledge thus gained convinces him that he is one with the Supreme; that there is no difference between himself and the Supreme Truth.

ISHA UPANISHAD

PEACE PRAYER

SWAMI YOGANANDA

Like all of you, Readers, I am also attracted to *Bhagavan Omkar* for his unique ability to make us experience the Peace that passeth all understanding Here and Now. The words "Here and Now" attracted me much. The same is the teaching of *Swamiji Sivananda* of Rishikesh, who is a great friend and admirer of *Bhagavan Omkar*. Yes, we want peace, God-vision, *here and now*, and cannot blindly rely on some unknown world and wait till an uncertain future. And it is but natural that such great and rare saints who are able to make us enjoy that Peace, here in our heart, in our home, in our present earthly condition, are easily attracted by thirsty souls: There are numerous methods taught to us by religious and other teachers for attaining peace, in the form of doing rigorous *Sadhanas* and ordeals. But *Omkarji* is here before us with his richest blessings, to show and give us Peace *here and now*, at this moment. How? *His prayer for world peace is the answer to it.*

The prayer is the quintessence of the Upanishads. It is so simple to utter, but it is full of spiritual meaning. It is a divine pill to cure the ills of mental restlessness, by helping us to realise Divine Presence *within* and *without*. We are made to feel that God resides in our body, pervading and permeating every cell of it. We also realise that it is by that Divine Light that we are able to see, hear, feel, think, breathe, live and move. Thus the repetition of the prayer cuts at the root of egoism. When egoism is destroyed, peace of the Self is realised. What is wanted is the deep feeling of the Presence while uttering the prayer. Every word is a *mantra*. Here we are able to realise that our existence is God. When we

feel the Presence, fear will depart. Desires vanish. Separateness will disappear. (*Thathra Ka moha ka soka ekathwa manupasyatha*). "Empty thyself; I will fill thee", will be experienced. Thus, seated on the throne of self-realisation, lighted up by the magnificence of *Samadhi (Divine Presence)*, the coronation of the Self will take place, through the realisation of Oneness.

It is not merely a prayer for repetition, but a *mantra* for *japa*, a mental code for meditation and introspection, and a *keertan* for glorifying the Divine. Thus by the repetition of the prayer, we are very near to God's Benign Grace. I can very well assert that Swamiji has given to the world a great Upanishad in the form of this prayer. It is simply UNIQUE.

In the *Brihadaranyaka*, we see the following praise of Supreme Brahman which reveals to us the *immanence* of the Divine. "He, whose body is the eye, who rules the eye from within, whom the eye does not know, He is *Brahman*, thyself." "He whose body is the mind, who rules the mind from within, and whom the mind does not know, He is *Brahman* thyself, - and so on, with the other organs of the body. *Swami Omkar* helps us to experience that immanence of the Supreme through the prayer, when he says therein: "Thou who art interpenetrating the very cells of our beings, Thou who art the eye of our eyes, the ear of our ears, the mind of our minds", and so on.

While repeating the prayer, one should feel the presence of the Divine in the ears, the eyes, the mind etc., and realise that everything shines because of His light. He *illuminates* all the world.

As Swamiji painfully remarks, there are some scholars who may

not like to appreciate simple prayers like this. They would remark that they do not find anything supernatural in it. They want bombastic words to attract their ears. *Swami Sivanada's* writings and *Omkarji's* writings follow the same path. Both use simple but inspiring words which even the ordinary individual can easily understand. Once, it so happened that a disciple of *Sivanada*, who was in charge of printing work in Madras changed some words in *Swamiji's* writings. When *Sivanada* read the proof, he was disturbed and soon sent a wire directing the disciple not to change any of *Swamiji's* words as those words were coming from the heart of a realised soul living in God and, as such, carried much power. So is the case with our *Omkarji*.

May all obtain Peace *within* and *without* by the repetition of this prayer! Salutations to Omkarji!

Om Santhi Santhi Santhi

OBITUARY

- It is to inform with profound regret the sad demise of **Dr. P. Vittal**. He was a long time devotee of our Ashram and has rendered outstanding services in our Ashram's infrastructure building activities and providing amenities to the devotees and visitors to the Ashram. His demise left a huge void to our Ashram which is hard to fill. Ashramites prayed for the departed soul to rest in peace. Om Santi!
- We are grieved to note that **Smt. Radha Reddy Garu** of London left her mortal coil on the 8th January, 2024. She has been a long time devotee and has rendered monetary help in carrying out various developmental activities at our Ashram. May she attain Sadgati!

EQUAL VISION

SWAMI RAMDAS

A king of a state was highly spiritual in temperament and so was a great lover of saints. Whenever any saint or *Sannyasi* came to his palace, he would take him inside and treat him with great hospitality. He would make him sit on a decorated place in his shrine room, worship his holy feet, load him with presents and give him a feast. This was the usual custom with the king. The news of his high respect for saints and the presents lavishly given to them reached the ears of a professional juggler. Taking advantage of the king's devotional nature, the juggler dressed himself in the robes of a *Sannyasi* and with staff and *Kamandal* in hand, appeared in front of the palace and demanded Bhiksha. The *Sannyasi's* arrival was reported to the king. He, at once, came out in all humility and begged the *Sannyasi* to enter the palace. He was taken to the shrine room and duly worshipped with great reverence. Meanwhile, an informer, knowing that the *Sannyasi* was a bogus one, and was receiving honour, worship and rich presents from the king, approached the Prime Minister and told him the real situation. The Prime Minister, at once, came to the palace to inform the king about the mistake he was making. But when he saw him engaged in the worship of the imposter with all devotion, he dared not interfere, and so turned back. Moreover, he was uncertain whether the news he received about him was true or false. Hence he kept quiet. After Puja and feast, the *Sannyasi* left the palace. The next day the juggler having divested himself of the *Sannyasi* robes, announced by tom-tom that he was going to give a performance on an open plain. Thousands of people assembled to witness his magic show.

The news reached the ears of the Prime Minister through the same informer that it would now be easy to expose the juggler and mete out proper punishment for his deception. The Prime Minister, going up to the king, suggested a stroll in the city so that his subjects might see him and he too could understand their condition. The king agreed. The Prime Minister took him to the spot on the *maidan* where the juggler's performance was going on. On the suggestion of the Prime Minister, the king entered the big ring of spectators to see the play.

The Prime Minister, pointing at the juggler, told the king, "Oh, Maharaja, look at him. Is he not the same person who came to you yesterday pretending to be a *Sannyasi* and received worship and rich presents from you? He can be easily recognised and punished." The king intently looked at the juggler and the light of recognition dawned on him. Without a second's delay, the king, with a delighted exclamation, rushed to the juggler and prostrated with all reverence before him. Standing before the juggler with folded hands, he addressed him thus, "O Supreme Lord, Your Lila is simply wonderful. Yesterday, you came to me at the palace dressed as a *Sannyasi* and today I find You in the garb of a juggler exhibiting Your powers- Your *Lila* is simply wonderful. This is the equal vision or *Samdarshan* described in the Bhagavad Gita.

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- To think of God. That means only one thought prevails to the exclusion of all other thoughts. That thought is of God, which is the Self, or it is the self surrendered unto God. When he has taken you up, nothing else will assail you.

RAMANA MAHARSHI

SPILLED INK

SWAMI OMKAR

One day we were sitting in Sushila Mandir, the newly constructed Kutir of our sister Sushila Devi. It was a day of foreign mail and every one of us was busy writing letters to get the post ready.

Suddenly our Jagadish kicked an ink-bottle in his hurry to reach out the stamps. The whole white and clean floor was flashed with ink. Someone ran to get a basin of water and a rag while another to fetch a lemon to remove the spots from the clean floor.

Then the boys started to rub and scrub the floor with soap and peels of lemon to remove the stains. After sometime they were able to get the floor back to its former condition.

This small incident had an effect on my mind. What a great amount of time and energy was wasted to remove the deep ink-marks on that floor! This puts me in mind of the inner stains and blots that we have within us. Are we making any attempts to remove the stains in us? How we worry ourselves when we find a spot or blemish on our faces? We hesitate even to go out of our homes, until we fix ourselves.

In short, we want to be beautiful externally neglecting the inner beauty which is most essential. We ever worry to be free from the ugliness within us. We present our beautiful faces everywhere with a smile, keeping within ourselves all the ugliness and mire of our uncontrolled passions. If only others could see the inner stains

as they see the outer ones, how we should hate to go out or to show our faces to anyone?

The stains on the outer are temporary marring only the beauty of the physical body, but whereas the stains in the inner are more permanent marring the beauty of the Soul.

My message now is that it is high time for us to be busy to get rid of the inner stains rather than worrying over the outer stains. Let us purify the mind, heart and soul from every kind of blemish, so that we can shine in full glory. Let us try to be pure both outwardly and inwardly, for the Kingdom of Heaven belongs to the pure in heart.

May Peace be unto all!



- Vedic wisdom says that there are many paths to one truth. It does not say, 'This is the only way and if you do not follow this, you will go to hell.' It says that there is only one Divinity, but with many names, forms and many ways of worship. So that broad outlook towards life can come from Vedic education.

SRI SRI

- It is true that the mind is restless and difficult to control. But it can be conquered through regular practice and detachment. Those who lack self-control will find it difficult to progress in meditation; but those who are self-controlled, striving earnestly through the right means, will attain the goal.

BHAGAVAD GITA

THE STATE OF BLISSFUL DIVINE EXPERIENCE

SWAMI SIVANANDA

The meditation is *Samadhi* when it shines with the object of meditation alone, as it were devoid of itself. The thinker and the meditated, become one. The mind becomes the *Dhyeyarupa*. The separate notions 'contemplation' and 'contemplated' and 'contemplator' vanish. In the state of *Samadhi*, the aspirant is not conscious of any external or internal objects. Just as the arrow-maker, having his mind engrossed in the arrow, knows not the king passing by his side, so also the Yogi, knows not anything, when he is deep in his meditation.

Samadhi or blissful divine experience arises when the ego and the mind are dissolved. It is a state, to be attained by one's own effort. It is limitless, divisionless and infinite. When this experience is realised the mind, desires, actions and feelings of joy and sorrow vanish into a void.

Samadhi is of various kinds. But out of them, there are only very few important ones.

The *Samadhi* experienced by a *Bhakta*, is *Bhava Samadhi*. The devotee attains the state through *Bhava* or *Maha Bhava*. A *Bhakta* who meditates on the form of Lord Sri Krishna will see Krishna and Krishna only everywhere when he is established in *Samadhi*. He will see himself as Sri Krishna, Gopis of Vrindavan; Gouranga and Ekanath had this experience. Those who meditate on the all-pervading Krishna will have another kind of experience, the consciousness of the whole Virat.

Again, there are two other varieties of *Samadhi*, viz., *Savikalpa* and *Nirvikalpa Samadhi*. In the first variety there is *Triputi* or the

Triad, viz., knower, knowledge and the knowable or the seer, sight and the seen. The *Samskaras* are not destroyed. In the latter, the *Samskaras* are totally fried or destroyed. There is no *Triputi* in *Nirvikalpa*.

Samprajnata is another name for *Savikalpa Samadhi*. *Asamprajnata* is another name for *Nirvikalpa Samadhi*.

In *Nirvikalpa Samadhi*, there is no ego-consciousness. Ego and mind melt, and fuse in Brahman. The pure mind, assumes the form of Brahman. This is known as *Nirbija Samadhi*. There is no prop for the mind, in this *Samadhi*. The *Samskaras* are fried in Toto. *Savikalpa Samadhi* deepens, into *Nirvikalpa Samadhi*. There is no idea of any kind in *Nirvikalpa Samadhi*. It is thoughtless, absolute consciousness.

Nirvikalpa means, that in which there is no *Vikalpa*. That, which is not associated with any idea, is *Nirvikalpa*. No imagination, no functioning of mind, or intellect. All *Vrittis* totally cease. There is only pure Consciousness or Awareness. All the *Samskaras* and *Vasanas* are fried in Toto. All names and forms are burnt up. *Asti-Bhati-Priya* only remains. *Asti-Bhati-Priya* is *Sat-Chit-Ananda*. That whichever exists is *Asti*; that which shines ever is *Bhati*. This is Absolute Consciousness. And that which gives Happiness is *Priya* this is unalloyed Bliss, *Ananda*. In *Nirvikalpa Samadhi*, the mind is freed from distraction and attachments. It rests unmoved like the flame of a lamp sheltered from the wind.

In *Samadhi* or Super consciousness the student gets, merged in the Lord. The senses, the mind and the intellect ceases in the Lord. The senses, the mind and the intellect cease functioning. Just as the river joins the ocean, the individual soul mixes with the Supreme soul. The *Samadhi* bestows Supreme Knowledge,

and one is freed from the wheel of birth and death, and gets *Kaivalya (Moksha)* or Liberation.

The knowledge gained through the senses, in the relative world, is not the highest knowledge. It cannot give you permanent satisfaction and everlasting felicity and peace. It is limited knowledge. There is always a sense of void in you, in spite of your intellectual attainments of all sorts. There is an urge, in your mind to attain transcendental knowledge, the knowledge of the Eternal by which everything is known. *Yasmin vijnate sarvam idam vijnatam bhavati*. This divine knowledge is beyond the reach of the senses and the mind. The senses and the mind cannot penetrate into the heart of the ultimate Truth or the Infinite. They are finite instruments. The intellect and the mind have got their own limitations. They can operate only in the earth plane. It is through intuitive insight, that you can attain this transcendental knowledge of the Absolute in *Samadhi*. It is only through *Samadhi* that you can get access into the Inaccessable.

Dharana or concentration, *Dhyana* or meditation, *Samadhi* or super conscious state, are the inner limbs (*Antaranga*) of *Ashtanga Yoga* or *Raja Yoga*. They constitute, the *Antaranga Sadhana*. They complete the psychic and mental discipline. These three- *Dharana*, *Dhyana* and *Samadhi*- constitute *Samyama*. They are practised at a time. They are stages in the mental effort of concentration. Meditation follows concentration and *Samadhi* follows meditation.

In *Samadhi* the mind becomes one with the object of its concentration. The meditator and the meditated, the thinker and the thought, the subject and the object become one. In concentration the mind is simply fixed on the object. In meditation

the mind is filled with one idea of the object alone. All other thoughts are shut out.

In *Samadhi*, the mind is stilled, the *Chitta* is silenced and the thoughts are controlled and all surging bubbling emotions are subdued. The Yogi passes into the transcendental calm or the stupendous ocean of silence and attains the transcendental knowledge of Brahman or the Eternal.

Samadhi or ecstasy is blissful union. The mind melts in the Eternal or *Atman* like salt in water or camphor in flame. It is a state of pure consciousness. The mind has always *Vrittis* or modifications. If the mind of man is freed from these through concentration and meditation he becomes Brahman. *Manaso vrittishunyasya Brahmaikarataya sthitih.*

Samadhi is a means of liberation or freedom from births and deaths. It leads to the direct intuitive perception of the Truth or the Infinite. It puts an end to all troubles of life and the causes of rebirth. It annihilates the impressions or *Samskaras* which give rise to fresh births. It helps one to tide over even *Prarabdha* even though all the fruition of his past *Karmas* has not ended.

Faith (*Sraddha*) or confidence in the power of Yoga, power (*Veerya*) for the concentration of the mind, memory (*Smriti*) for contemplation. *Samadhi*, the final aspect of Yoga, *Prajna*, discernment or the direct perception brought about by meditation, become the means for the attainment of *Samadhi*.

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- Reshape yourself through the power of your will; never let yourself be degraded by self-will. The will is the only friend of the self, and the will is the only enemy of the self.

BHAGAVAD GITA

THORNS DENIED PRICK NO LESS KEENLY

SRI RAMAKRISHNA PARAMAHAMSA

Once, finding it difficult to reconcile the contradictory doctrines of man's free will and God's grace two disciples of the Master went to him for a solution of the same. The Master said, "Why do you talk, of free will? Everything is dependent upon the Lord's will. Our will is tied to the Lord's, like the cow to its tether. No doubt we have a certain amount of freedom even as the cow has, within a prescribed circle. So man thinks that his will is free. But know that his will is dependent on the Lord's."

Disciples: "Is there then no necessity of practising penance, meditation and the rest? For one can as well sit quiet and say, "It is God's will; whatever is done, is done at His will."

Sri Ramakrishna: "Oh! To what effect, if you simply say that in so many words? Any amount of your verbal denial of thorns can never save you from their painful prick when you place your hand on them. Had it been entirely with man to do spiritual practices according to his will, everybody would have done so. But no; everyone can't do it, and why? But there is one thing: If you don't utilise properly the amount of strength He has given you, He never gives more. That is why self-exertion is necessary. And so everyone has to struggle hard even to become fit for the grace of God. By such endeavour, and through His grace, the sufferings of many lives can be worked out in one life. But some self-effort is absolutely necessary. Let me tell you a story.

Once, Vishnu, the Lord of Goloka, cursed Narada, saying that he would be thrown into hell. At this Narada was greatly disturbed in mind; and he prayed to the Lord, singing songs of devotion,

and begging Him to show where hell is and how one can go there. Vishnu then drew the map of the universe on the ground with a piece of chalk, representing the exact position of heaven and hell. Then Narada said, pointing to the part marked 'hell', "Is it like this? This is hell then!" So saying he rolled himself on the spot and exclaimed he had undergone all the sufferings of hell. Vishnu smilingly asked, "How is that?" and Narada replied: "Why Lord, are not heaven and hell Thy creation? When Thou didst draw the map of the universe Thyself and point out to me the hell in the plan, then that place becomes a real hell; and as I rolled myself there, my sufferings were intense. So I do say that I have undergone the punishment of hell." Narada said all this sincerely and so Vishnu was satisfied with the explanation.



- Let thy Bhakti blaze up into a conflagration of divine fervour and burn down for thee all the negative elements in thy character. Do Japa. Do more and more Japa.
- Efficiency is the capacity to bring proficiency into expression.
- The tragedy of human history is the decreasing happiness in the midst of increasing comforts.
- Until we discover this Spiritual Centre in ourselves, the God in us, we will be confused, miserable, unsatisfied and disturbed, an enigma to ourselves and to others.
- Actions are the louder expression of thought. The quality of thought is ordered by the nature of our inner belief and faith.
- Perfect morality can be declared and lived up to only by him who has sought to live and discover his real identity with the Self, which is ONE-WITHOUT-A-SECOND, EVERYWHERE, IN ALL BEINGS AND FORMS.

SWAMI CHINMAYANANDA

TWO PRECIOUS MOMENTS

SWAMI OMKAR

There are two precious and priceless moments in the lives of all seekers of Truth and all those who always try to reach the goal of the precious human birth. Such blessed souls whether they belong to the East or the West, are not only serving themselves, but also their nation and the whole of humanity. What are those two precious moments?

1. The period of selfless service where self-interest is replaced by selfless interest for the welfare of humanity rising above the ego.

2. The period of God-consciousness where body is no body, mind is no mind and world is no world and where everything is filled with self-effulgent Light, the goal of humanity.

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

Which one is greater of the two, the Man of Selfless Service or the Man of God-realisation, is not the question with which we are concerned now. Each man is great in his own sphere of life. Both are serving the cause of humanity, glorifying *service* and *meditation*. Each is doing his part for the good of the world. What counts and what is most important in both the planes of life is complete selflessness.

A selfish man is a burden to Mother Earth whether he is engaged in action or in inaction. A selfless man is the great blessing to humanity whether he is a *Karma Yogi* serving God's children in His manifested forms or a *Jnana Yogi* given to meditation and silence serving through his ideal life of Peace.

My friends, it is for you now to introspect your lives and to recall your sacred moments of *service* or *silence* and to see whether you are serving God through service or meditation. My prayer is that you should make the best use of your lives in the service of His children and reach the goal of precious human birth, before the *call* comes from the Great Beyond. Verily, he who is blessed to combine both *Service* and *Silence* centred in selflessness and thus can serve the humanity considering the whole world as his Home is the great and real benefactor to all the world.

May all Homage be unto such!

May Peace be unto all!

OM! OM! OM!



- Refraining from all evil, not clinging to birth and death, working in deep compassion for all sentient beings, respecting those over you and pitying those below you, without any detesting or desiring, worrying or lamentation- this is what is called Buddha. Do not search beyond it.

DOZEN

- Both the good and the pleasant approach a man. The wise man pondering over them discriminate and choose the good in preference to the pleasant. The fool, for the sake of the worldly well-being prefers the pleasant.

Katha Upanishad

QUEEN RAMPYARI

A good king once visited a weaver's colony and entered one house to see for himself how they live and work. The father weaver was so happy that his king stepped into his house. The king saw a girl sitting at one corner, fair, beautiful and simple. The father of the girl was so happy that his daughter Rampyari was attracting the attention of the old king, and so the weaver started talking of the glories of his daughter.

He said, "She can spin golden threads out of even hay, and she does it very fast."

When the king heard this, he said, "If this be true she shall be my daughter-in-law. Let her come with me to the palace." So said, the king departed. She, poor thing got only just time to pack a few things- her father was very unhappy, but could do nothing. The daughter prayed to the Lord for help:

Sri Ram Jai Ram Jai Jai Ram, Sri Ram Jai Ram Jai Jai Ram

Sri Ram Jai Ram Jai Jai Ram, Sri Ram Jai Ram Jai Jai Ram

She prostrated at the feet of her parents and departed with the officers, who were waiting to take the girl to the palace as wished by the king.

The king ordered immediately a whole room of hay, and Rampyari was given three spinning wheels and the royal king commanded, "Come on, before dawn tomorrow you must spin the entire hay into golden threads." They closed the door upon the poor girl, and went away. The whole day she wept. She could not make even an inch of golden-thread out of hay. How could she? And, surely, the king would punish her and her parents. All Rampyari could do was to pray.

Sri Ram Jai Ram Jai Jai Ram, Sri Ram Jai Ram Jai Jai Ram

Sri Ram Jai Ram Jai Jai Ram, Sri Ram Jai Ram Jai Jai Ram

The night came. She could not sleep. She had not even started spinning- and how could she? From straw what can we spin out? She wept..... and weeping, Rampyari surrendered to her Lord,

and chanted in her heart-

Sri Ram Jai Ram Jai Jai Ram, Sri Ram Jai Ram Jai Jai Ram

Sri Ram Jai Ram Jai Jai Ram, Sri Ram Jai Ram Jai Jai Ram

What is that? Is it true? May be thieves? May be the soldiers? May be the king himself has come in the night to see her at work- Lo! Again! It is clear! A soft knock. Is it a knock? Yes-yes. It is. Let me see who it is- thus chanting the Lord's names for courage, the girl got up:

Sri Ram Jai Ram Jai Jai Ram, Sri Ram Jai Ram Jai Jai Ram

Sri Ram Jai Ram Jai Jai Ram, Sri Ram Jai Ram Jai Jai Ram - and opened the door!

Three ugly looking ladies were standing there! They were really ugly: one had big broad feet, another had a big hanging lower-lip, and the third had a broad ugly thumb. The poor girl was frightened. But the ugly ladies softly said: "We have been sent to you by the Lord to help you. You please close the door. We shall finish the work for you." The poor helpless girl was silent. She was so full of her devotion for the Lord. Rampyari felt overwhelmed by His Grace, and cried out in gratitude:

Sri Ram Jai Ram Jai Jai Ram, Sri Ram Jai Ram Jai Jai Ram

Sri Ram Jai Ram Jai Jai Ram, Sri Ram Jai Ram Jai Jai Ram

Then she noticed that the three ladies were working with miraculous speed. They were spinning out fine golden-threads from the hay! By morning the entire hay was spun into threads. Leaving the thread, in reels over reels with the girl, the ugly ladies went away.

When the king came and saw that really the hay had been woven into golden threads, the king was surprised. He said to his ministers, "May be there is some trick in it. Nobody can do such a thing. Therefore, fill up the room with hay, remove all these reels. Let her weave the entire hay by tomorrow morning." The guards round her room were doubled and alerted. The king went away. The girl was again in trouble, but she was feeling a great confidence

deep within her. Though she was also afraid of the king, she was sure her Ramachandraji will not desert her. Therefore, she started again crying to the Lord for help and protection. She sang:

Sri Ram Jai Ram Jai Jai Ram, Sri Ram Jai Ram Jai Jai Ram

Sri Ram Jai Ram Jai Jai Ram, Sri Ram Jai Ram Jai Jai Ram

The hay was brought in. The soldiers left. The girl was again alone. She was unhappy. She could not escape. She could do nothing. She had her food, and feeling sleepy, lay down and slept. The prince saw the golden thread, a whole heap of them, spun by the smart girl... He wanted to see her. And the prince came in, saw the beautiful girl and thought: "Even if she won't spin so well I will marry her!" The prince went away. The poor Rampyari was alone. She started weeping as evening came, for she had not spun anything. Night came. What else she could do! She started crying and singing, and again, singing and crying:

Sri Ram Jai Ram Jai Jai Ram, Sri Ram Jai Ram Jai Jai Ram

Sri Ram Jai Ram Jai Jai Ram, Sri Ram Jai Ram Jai Jai Ram

Lord's grace has no end. Again-the knock- Tuck-Tuck-Tuck-soft, sure, determined. Now Rampyari was not afraid. She went and opened the door. The smiling three ugly women were there- they walked in- took up the work- finished it- and at dawn they got themselves ready to go. The poor girl was all the night sitting in one corner, and mentally chanting in all devotion:

Sri Ram Jai Ram Jai Jai Ram, Sri Ram Jai Ram Jai Jai Ram

Sri Ram Jai Ram Jai Jai Ram, Sri Ram Jai Ram Jai Jai Ram

As the ladies were ready to leave, Rampyari went and fell prostrate at their feet, and said, "You know I am a poor helpless girl. You helped me two nights. I have nothing to give you except this simple ring. Please accept it from me." The ugly women laughed, and became uglier. They replied, "No. We won't accept anything from you. If you want to show your gratitude then you can do one thing for us."

Rampyari said, "Oh! Yes. Whatever you want you can get from

me."

"Now listen," said the eldest of the ugly ladies, "tomorrow when the king sees the threads, he will be convinced, and so the marriage with the prince will be fixed. After the marriage, there will be the great banquet. In that invite us as your poor old cousins. See that we get seats nearest to you on the same table. That is what we want." Rampyari promised this- and why not? She was ready to give her life for these women. They went away happy.

Next day when the king saw the threads woven out of hay, in reels and reels, he was beside himself with joy and admiration. Immediately, the marriage was announced. Preparations were set on foot. In a week's time was the wedding. On the wedding day the three ugly ladies came. Rampyari ran to them, received them, introduced them as her relations, and conducted them to the dinner-table. Everybody was surprised how so beautiful a queen could have such ugly cousins! But nobody expressed it.

The most curious one asked one of the ugly three, why her feet were so broad. She replied, "Because I spin always." Another approached the other ugly lady and asked, "Why is your lip so large?" she replied, "By wetting the thread I spin." A third asked the last of the ugly one, "Why is your thumb so big?" she, smiling horribly, replied, "Because I use to twist the threads into smooth shape."

All the time the prince was listening to these interesting talks. He cried out, "Then I will no more allow my charming wife to spin hereafter." Everybody was surprised. The queen Rampyari understood and looked at her "cousins". They winked at her knowingly. Rampyari got up and sang, and all the court joined with her:

Sri Ram Jai Ram Jai Jai Ram, Sri Ram Jai Ram Jai Jai Ram

Sri Ram Jai Ram Jai Jai Ram, Sri Ram Jai Ram Jai Jai Ram

(Adapted by a Swami)



MAHAVIRA

(Divine Life Society, Durban, South Africa)

LORD MAHAVIRA was born in 599 B.C. and lived for seventy two years. He abandoned his home in 569 B.C. and attained omniscience twelve years later. He was the last Thirthankara.

"Maha" means "great" and "Vira" means "Hero". "Thirtha" literally means a ford, a means of crossing over; metaphorically it denotes a spiritual guide or Philosophy which enables one to cross the ocean of recurring births and deaths. "Kara" means "One who makes". The whole word means a Jain holy teacher.

Mahavira was born of Siddhartha, the King of Kundalipura, and queen Trisala, also known as Priya Karni. He lived a life of absolute truthfulness and chastity and had no possessions of any kind. He was obedient to his parents serving them with great faith and devotion. He remained unmarried and later in life became an able statesman.

Lord Mahavira was not the founder of Jainism but rather a reformer of the faith. In Jain metaphysics time is divided into cycles. During a period of a half-cycle, twenty four Thirthankars are born, with long intervals between each birth. They appear on earth in order to preach anew the Jain doctrines. Lord Mahavira was the twentyfourth, and like the others, is claimed to have been omniscient.

Even as a child, Mahavira was always immersed in the contemplation of the Self. He knew¹ at the pleasures of the world are transient and that they strengthen the fetters of Karma. He understood that renunciation leads to the attainment of eternal bliss.

People were quite surprised at the virtuous nature of Mahavira even during his boyhood. He was very much interested in meditation, music and literature, and spent thirty years of his life in these pursuits.

Through his clairvoyant vision, Mahavira saw that he was passing through innumerable births. He thought, "How many births have gone by fruitlessly. I clearly see that the Soul is essentially separate from matter. I have already wasted thirty years of my life during which I practised no penance or renunciation in order to attain pure knowledge. The infatuation which is at the root of all evils has not yet been destroyed."

Prince Vardhamana, as he was also called, became extremely penitent and resolved to give up all worldly objects and pursuits. He relinquished his attachment to parents, friends and relatives. He reflected on the twelve important matters of meditation according to Jain scriptures.

1. All worldly objects are temporary, 2) The Soul alone is the only resort, 3) This world is beginningless and crooked, 4) there is nothing to help the Soul but the Soul itself, 5) the body and mind are essentially separate from the Soul, 6) the Soul is essentially pure and the body and the mind essentially impure, 7) the Soul's bondage is due to the inflow of the Karma into it, 8) every being should stop this inflow, 9) emancipation is attained when the law of action and reaction no longer operate, 10) emancipated Souls remain in the foremost of the filled spaces, 11) in this world, to have the birth of a human being and to meditate on the nature of the Soul are the greatest blessings, 12) to have the three Jewels as described by the omniscient is the only morality.

Mahavira reflected upon these matters and finally decided to abandon his home.

His mother said, "My beloved son, you will not be able to beat

the severity of the austerities. There is yet time for this. Now you must help your father in governing the kingdom and after some years you can become a monk.

Mahavira said, 'Adorable mother, the objects of the world are as evanescent as water bubbles. How can one attain happiness in this world, the abode of disease, sorrow, pain and death? I must leave the world now!'

He distributed his wealth to the poor and retired to the forest. He even discarded the piece of cloth he was wearing and went about absolutely nude. He faced the north and said, "Salutations to the realised sages." With his own hands he removed five tufts of hair from his head and became a monk.

He practised rigorous austerities, fasted for many days and meditated on the pure nature of the Soul.

The celestials tempted Mahavira, surrounding him with a group of handsome women, but he remained unmoved and unperturbed. He attained omniscience and for thirty years afterwards preached his message of peace. He wandered in Magadha, Mithila and other places and even kings became his disciples.

Om! Om! Om!



• Just as the fire is the direct cause for cooking, so without Knowledge no emancipation can be had. Compared with all other forms of discipline Knowledge of the Self is the one direct means of liberation.

ADI SHANKARA

• Make the body the field, good works the seed, irrigate with God's name; make thy heart the cultivator; God will germinate in thy heart and then shall thou obtain the dignity of Nirvana.

GURU NANAK

IS DHARMA PRACTICABLE?

SWAMINI SARADAPRIYANANDA

The two goals of Artha and Kama i.e. wealth and enjoyment are understood and appreciated by one and all. The evil effects of uncurbed desires for earning and enjoyment are understood to some extent although not practiced strictly. Those who practice self-restraint in these aspects in life enjoy a healthy body and a mind rid of perversions. Those who live a life of unbridled sensualities find their health and hope gone. To keep up what is left out of their wrecked life, they begin to follow strictly the injunctions of the physicians in matter of food, activities etc.

When it comes to the goal of Dharma, ninety nine per cent of the people reject it outright as impracticable and meaningless in the present context of the corrupt and competitive world. How can one afford to be honest when all others are taking care of their self-interests by dishonest means, ask these votaries of unrighteousness. They are prepared to follow Dharma if all others in the society do so. Which should change first, the society or the individual?

A society is not something which exists by itself. A group of individuals living together in a geographic area sharing their ideas and ideals, having some common interests and facilities together is called society. It is only a concept of the totality of individuals thus sharing together. So the society will be what the individuals are. If the individuals believe in Dharma and follow scrupulously the principles of righteousness, then the society as a group will reap the benefits of such righteous living. In such a society, a child can hope to get proper protection and education; a woman can

eke out her life honourably even if she has no one to look after her, an old man can look forward to a peaceful conclusion of his life without jerks and bumps. This is the least that an individual seeks from the society in which he lives. If an orphan child is twisted and tortured into becoming a criminal, a young woman is kidnapped and forced to live an immoral life, if a young newly-wedded wife is burnt away mercilessly by her own husband and in-laws, and if an old man peacefully spending his life with the savings of a life time is one day found dead with a battered head..... whose fault is it? Is it not the fault of the individuals that comprise the society?

A father who is offering bribes and recommendation letters in order to get a seat in the school for his son who does not deserve it, is sowing the seeds of poison in the society as well as in the mind of his son..... others in the society will imitate his example for their sons. His own son will come to believe that dishonesty pays when he has no qualifications.

When a student does not apply himself to the study of the lessons, but manages to get a pass in the exams by copying or bribing, he is spreading poison in the society because others will get the same ideas from him. His own mind now warped with impious and ignoble thoughts will not give him any more sensible ideas but will drag him from corruption to degradation.

When a son or daughter-in-law pushes out the old parents to live a lonely loveless life, he or she is surely forging his own old age by the thoughtless act, because his own children see and follow the same example.

As long as individuals are conscious of what they want for themselves and do not pay attention to what they have to do to

keep up the smooth functioning of the society, so long the society will be bad, corrupt and unsafe to all. When they realise that in the good of the society is their happiness dependant, they become conscious of their duties rather than rights. The demand for rights is the first sign of discontent and all unrighteousness follows sooner or later.

The recognition of the rights of other persons and our duties makes us persons of responsibility and scrupulous about what we do and how we do. It makes for a peaceful society. An old man can reasonably spend a peaceful life. An orphan child can grow up under proper protection of Government or institutions into respectable manhood. A woman can live with honour and a man can get the fruit of his honest labour.

In the present juncture of dishonesty and corruption, it may be difficult to visualise all these results. It may be difficult to have the courage to take up the right path and lead one's life boldly on the correct path. Still if we don't do it, we are doomed. A society and an individual can live only with their innate goodness and not on shallow pretences. Dharma has to be made practicable by all of us if we want peace and joy. There is no other way.

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- God does not know anything, because his nature is the ever-real whole, other than which nothing exists to be known.
 - If one realises at heart what one's true nature is, one will find that it's infinite wisdom, truth and bliss, without beginning and end.
 - The things you think of as existing do not exist. But that which you know not if it exist or does not, That alone exists.

RAMANA MAHARSHI

FORM-IV
(SEE RULE - 8)

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I, Publisher, Sri Santi Ashram, hereby declare that the particulars given above are true to the best of my knowledge and belief.

M.V.V.Satyanarayana

Publisher

The Mission of Peace,
Sri Santi Ashram

ASHRAM NEWS

MOTHER ASHRAM: 20-01-2024 and 21-01-2024: Parama Pujya Swami Omkarji's Birthday was celebrated with utmost devotion and reverence by the devotees, inmates and staff of the Ashram. The celebrations started with Omkar Ashtothara Satanaama Archana of Swamiji Maharaj by Pujya Swami Padmanabhananda Maharaj and Swamini Saradananda Saraswati in Omkar Mandir. Pujya Sri Jnaneswari Mataji then blessed the gathering by reading out Pujya Swamiji's Birthday message delivered on his 85th Birthday. Then Pujya Swami Padmanabhanandaji Maharaj eloquently spoke on Swami Omkarji's message on ajapa japa or Soham Japa and how Pujya Swamiji blessed the devotees with the precious gift of Ajapa Mala for attaining liberation in this very life itself. However he cautioned the devotees who assembled that though this is the easiest way to attain liberation, it is available only to those who are living a life of Nivritti Dharma. Swamini Sumitrananda of Kakinada spoke on Omkara Dhyanam and Swami Ramananda of Sri Ramanashram, Rachapalli spoke on how to focus the mind on contemplative meditation. To commemorate 100 years of publication, a centenary special issue of 'SANTI' magazine was released by Pujya Sri Jnaneswari Mataji on the auspicious occasion of Pujya Swamiji's Birthday. The programme concluded with distribution of Prasad.

26-01-2024: 75th Republic Day was celebrated with patriotic fervour in the Ashram School. Swamini Vinamrananda Saraswati unfurled the National Flag in the School premises. The programme was attended in large numbers by the Ashramites, Students, Teachers and the Correspondent Sri P. Hari Kumar Sarma of the School. Swamini Vinamrananda while addressing the gathering exhorted the students to inculcate humane values and grow up to become responsible citizens and contribute their mite to the all-round development of our Nation.

KOTAGIRI BRANCH: Our Volleyball girls under 17 team participated in the State level Republic Day and Bharathiar Day sports meet held at Trichy. District level Volley Ball matches were organised by Sri Ramakrishna Mutt at Ooty and our girls' team under 14 returned with laurels as District winners. Our Taekwondo team has proceeded to Madhya Pradesh on 25th December to participate in the National level Taekwondo championship. We are proud to announce that the following medals were won by our students at the National level competition:

1. Kanishkar- Gold. 2. Nithishkumar- Silver. 3. Nandhini- Bronze.
4. Mythili- Bronze.

The following students won the medals in the State level Taekwondo matches held from 8th to 11th of January at Chennai:

1. Pravishan R – Gold. 2. Dhanya K – Gold. 3. Logesh P – Gold. 4. Thanishka S – Silver. 5. Madhesh – Bronze.

The Parents Teachers meeting was held on the 6th January and most of the Parents who were present at the meeting were appraised of their ward's progress.

Many competitions on the academic side and creative fields were conducted to bring out the hidden talents amongst the students in the second week of January and the participants will be awarded with Certificates and Shields on the 9th February, during our Annual Day function.

To commemorate the International Youth Day, the following students were honoured with memento with their Photo and Certificates on the 12th of January at Ramakrishna Mutt, Udhagai for the competitions held in the month of November, 2023. Our Correspondent Sri P. Saibaba accompanied the students to the awards function. Rahamat Nisha N and Lathika R secured I prize in English Elocution competition, Nandhana P, Jithika A D, and Lakshana R were awarded with I prize in Tamil Elocution and

Dhanushree M was awarded with I Prize in Essay Writing. Kaviyarasan S and Amrutha Varshini G were awarded with II prize in Tamil Recitation and Pradeesh G was awarded with II Prize in Tamil Essay writing and Mathumitha S was awarded III prize in Tamil Essay writing.

Our founder His Holiness Omkarji's 129th Birthday was fondly remembered on the 21st January. All the Teaching and Non-Teaching staff assembled for a Bhajan and a delicious lunch was served to everyone.

75th Republic Day was celebrated with great enthusiasm on the 26th Day of January. Our Correspondent Sri. P. Saibaba unfurled the National Flag and took the flag salute and delivered the Republic Day message to the children.

The Annual day of our School was celebrated on a festive note on the 9th February, 2024. Sri M V V Satyanarayana, General Secretary, Santi Ashram, Sri P H K Sarma, Sri P Saibaba and Mr. Shanmyapriya Ilangoven graced the occasion and addressed the congregation of Students and their Parents with thought provoking and inspiring speeches. Dr. Aswin (alumni of our school) shared the old memories of his School days. There had been a lot of fun and frolic with a number of students showcasing their talents. We are happy to announce that we have received the approval for up gradation of our school to Higher Secondary level. The efforts of the Management in this regard are laudable.

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- The path of virtue should never be given up even when assailed by lust, fear, greed or even danger to life.

MAHABHARATA

- Backbiting is more grievous than adultery. God will not pardon the backbiter until his companion (whom he has wronged) pardons him.

MUHAMMAD

APPEAL

1. We, at the Mission of Peace, Sri Santi Ashram, Totapalli, East Godavari District, India, are glad to inform the devotees of Sri Santi Ashram worldwide, that, Ministry of Home Affairs, New Delhi, accorded approval for the registration of Ashram under the provisions of FOREIGN CONTRIBUTIONS (REGULATION) ACT, 2010
2. The Ministry of Home affairs, New Delhi, vide its letter bearing No. 0100019772018, dated 17-12-2019 approved registration and allocated the No. and the same is as hereunder: Registration No. 010170343
3. In view of the approval, our Ashram is now eligible to receive the contributions from the donors residing in foreign countries and in the currency of the respective country, Viz. US \$ or Euros etc.
4. In accordance with the guidelines of Home Ministry, we have opened a separate and exclusive account for receiving the contributions from foreign national and NRI's and the details are as hereunder :

Name of the account : The Mission of Peace
Name of the Bank : State Bank of India,
New Delhi Main Branch
Savings Bank account No. : 40127798428
SWIFT Code : SBININBB104
Address of Bank : State Bank of India, New Delhi Main
Branch, 11 Sansad Marg. New Delhi,
Pin Code - 110001. INDIA
E-mail ID of the Bank : fcra.00691@sbi.co.in

5. We, at the Ashram, Pujya Mataji and members of the Managing Committee, hereby request the devotees of Mission of Peace -Sri Santi Ashram to contribute liberally for the over all development of Ashram by remitting the amount to the above referred account.
6. The donors are requested to furnish their e-mail ID also and convey the details of the contributions to any of the following e-mail ID's to enable us to follow up and also keep you apprised of the utilization and developments arising therefrom.
srisanthiashram@gmail.com mattavvs07@gmail.com
adityamn07@gmail.com
7. The blessings of the Almighty God and those of Pujya Sri Swami Omkar and Pujya Sri Jnaneswari Mataji would always be showered upon you all.

For and on behalf of Santi Ashram
The Managing Committee

APPEAL FOR CONTRIBUTIONS / SUPPORT

Sri Santi Ashram is conducting various activities in the areas of educations, medical aid, poor feeding, running and maintaining a Goshala with more than one Hundred Cows and residential facilities to Vanaprastha seekers etc. To support these activities your generous contributions are welcome.

1. Feeding : a) for one day : Rs. 5000/- and above.
b) Privileged Donors : Rs. 25000 and above.
(Feeding done one day on a day of choice every year)

2. Educational Fund
3. Gosamrakshana Fund
4. Old Age Welfare Fund
5. Library Fund
6. General Fund

Donations to the Ashram are exempt from I.T. under Sec. 80(G) of I.T. Act
Donations may be addressed to :

The Secretary,
The Mission of Peace-Sri Santi Ashram
Via) Sankhavaram 533446, Kakinada District,
Andhra Pradesh, India, Ph. 7382009962
Email : srisanthiashram@gmail.com Website : www.srisantiashram.org

APPEAL FOR SUBSCRIBERS OF PEACE MAGAZINE

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Those who intend to send the amount by way of a Bank Draft may send it in favour of 'Sri Santhi Ashram' accompanied by a letter indicating subscriber's address for prompt delivery of the Magazine. Those who are interested in receiving the soft copy of the magazine may please provide their email address along with the subscription.

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(Via) Sankhavaram - 533446 Kakinada Dist A.P.

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1. Satsang and Meditation (Morning and Evening)
2. Multilingual Library having an extensive collection of Books on Religion, Philosophy, Puranas, Epics and those written by Various Mahatmas.
3. Promotion of Religious Harmony.
4. Balwadi, Upper Primary and high Schools.
5. School for the Hearing Impaired. (Visakhapatnam)
6. Children's Hostel for the economically challenged. (Thotapalli)
7. Children's Hostel for the Hearing Impaired. (Visakhapatnam)
8. journals - Santi (Telugu Monthly) Peace (English Quarterly)
9. Vanaprastha Home (Thotapalli)
10. Santi Vidyalaya Matriculation School. (Kotagiri)

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