

PEACE

A Quarterly Spiritual Magazine with a Message for universal Brotherhood

Vol.97

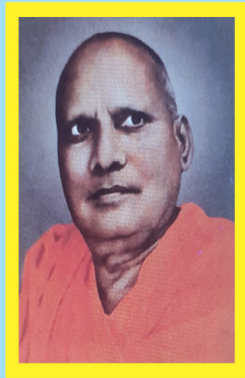
July - September, 2024

No.3



Pranavodhanuh Sharohyatma Brahmatalakshya 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



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**

Editor : Swamini Vinamrananda

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PRAYER

Let us be united. Let us speak in harmony. Let our minds apprehend alike. Common be our prayer; common be the end of our assembly; common be our resolution; common be our deliberations. Alike be our feelings; unified be our hearts; common be our intentions; perfect be our unity.

RIG VEDA

MEDITATION

Dear friends of 'Peace' in East and West! May I request you to join me in a silent meditation to practice the presence of God. Pray! Draw closer and come nearer. Let us feel His presence from top to toe, in each and every cell of our beings- in the feet, legs, thighs, stomach, heart, neck, shoulders, hands. Now coming towards the face let us feel His presence in the eyes, ears, nose, mouth. In the very smell, taste and touch, it is nothing but His presence. We are filled and surrounded by His presence. In the stillness of our beings let us meditate now on the very breath, PRANA- the living energy. As we meditate on the breath, the visible breath becomes invisible. OM. OM. OM. This is an abstract and perfect state of practicing the presence of God. Let us not waver now but be centred in the Universal Energy of "SOHAM". Thus, as we continue the bubble bursts, in the ocean of Glory to find itself as the AKHANDA SAT CHIT ANAND, the Existence Absolute, Knowledge Absolute and Bliss Absolute.

SWAMI OMKAR

"This world is good so far as it is a means to perfect ourselves; and as soon as it ceased to be so, it is evil. So, wife, husband, children, money and learning are good, so long as they help us forward; but as soon as they cease to do that, they are nothing but evil."

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

PERCEIVING THE HIGHEST

SWAMI OMKAR

In the sacred books of the East, there was a beautiful example given, to illustrate, that what we have within will behold without.

Dharmaraj and Duryodhan were two cousins, who were always engaged in conflicting and fighting, having very different temperaments. Their teacher, it seems, once asked both of them to go all over the country, to seek out one good man. Dharmaraj went out and after a long journey returned, with a beaming face, saying that all people were good, and that he could not find even one bad man. Even in the supposed or so- called bad there was some latent good. What he had within, he beholds without. He was an Emblem of purity and selflessness, so he found in everyone the same.

Whereas the other one Duryodhan went out and made a critical study of human beings and returned triumphantly saying, that he could not find even one good man, and all people were bad. He being an incarnation of wickedness, trying to hurt the innocent and helpless souls, he could not perceive any good in anyone anywhere.

How true are the words that what we have within we behold without! How thoughts are reflected just like an image in the mirror! We cannot see anything outside, if we do not have it within. Beauty reflects beauty. Ugliness reflects only ugliness. Love reflects love. Peace reflects only Peace. In whatever way you make faces into a mirror the same way your face is reflected by the law of relativity.

Similarly, if you have God in your heart, within yourself the same God is reflected in the mirror of the world. As everyone is an emblem or an image of God; if we could only practice to see God in each and every one, under all conditions what a great blessing our lives would be, both for ourselves and others!

In a small booklet called 'My Creed', published from our Mission of Peace many years ago, the very first sentence is: -- MY CREED IS TO SEE GOD IN EVERYONE. These words have been a great inspiration to many lovers of Peace including myself.

The second sentence in the same booklet further says: --

I see the formless God before I see the forms. As I see God in them, in all forms, they in return cannot help but feel themselves the emblems and embodiments of God.

As the thoughts in 'My Creed', may be helpful and inspiring in our present theme. I beg to be allowed to add some more sentences: --

In My Creed there are neither friends nor foes, neither near ones nor foreign ones, neither sinners nor saints, neither disciples nor Gurus (Masters), neither beggars nor emperors, neither castes nor colours, neither religions nor nations, neither young nor old, neither men nor women, neither beasts nor birds, neither trees nor plants, neither rocks nor stones, nay, neither dead nor living. It is all God. It is nothing but the different manifestations of God. It is the only Reality or Truth, which is inseparably one with me. Hence, I cannot help but perceive the Highest in the Indivisible Truth.

To cheer the fallen and the defamed, to embrace the so-called foes, to love my revilers, to worship the miscalled outcasts,

and to feel oneness with each and every living creature, nay, with every atom of the universe are the important tenets of my humble creed. To carry life in this finite body only for the good of others, for the welfare of the whole of creation is the chief factor of my creed. To forget myself in serving the sacred children of the Almighty Father, irrespective of the prejudices of religions and the nations, is the central theme of my creed.

My creed is not only to see God in those who are near me but to see Him even in those who are far away from me. It is a creed, blessing one and all with Peace and Love, without expecting the least reward in any form. It is a creed embracing the whole world in the arms of Universal Love, not excluding even the tiniest creature. Verily it is nothing but my own sweet Divinity which is glowing in the eyes of the insignificant creature. As such it is nothing but ignorance to neglect or forsake any of my own brothers and sisters either in the form of angels or men, beasts or birds, plants or flowers.

O! Ye, sad and forlorn. O ye neglected and forsaken, O ye, helpless and broken hearted, O ye high and low, O! ye, learned and ignorant, pray do not hesitate to reclaim your due share of this HAPPY CREED OF PEACE AND LOVE! Do not waste another second wallowing in the mire of ignorance but emerge now and drink freely of the Divinity, for, this moment alone is yours. Do not be afraid to take hold of your Divine Birthright, for this alone is your true heritage and possession. HENCE PERCEIVE THE HIGHEST, NOW AND HERE.

It is very easy to perceive the Highest in all those who are dear and near to our hearts but how very difficult it is to see the Highest in those that are ruthlessly condemning and criticizing

us, trying to do us harm in every possible way! It is only here the spiritual life begins. Anyone can be spiritual when he is loved, petted and adored but he alone is real spiritual soul who expresses and manifests the Highest in spite of trying tests, trials and many tribulations, yea, even from the cross of one's Calvary.

The glory of Christ was that he saw or perceived the Highest even in those who crucified Him. The greatness of Buddha was in seeing the Highest even in a dumb animal that was about to be sacrificed on the altar of superstition and ignorance. The nobility of Krishna was manifested in the expression of His Universal Form and the recognition of the Highest pervading from the tiniest atom to the biggest planet.

We are to perceive the Highest, in our friends as well as in our foes, not for their good or salvation only but for our freedom and salvation. If once we are blessed with the VISION UNIVERSAL, with a taste of the nectar of Immortality or Universal Love, how can we hate or exclude anyone, knowing that the Beloved pervades and permeates all beings and all creatures in the whole universe? Then only we are centered in that great Truth, that in loving anyone we are loving God and in hating anyone we are hating the One Presence or God.

It is a wonderful exercise to practice to perceive the Highest, not only in our dear ones and so-called foes but even in bird, beast or a tiny insect, a tender plant, a twinkling star or a smiling flower. If you are blessed to have a wise enemy, take him into your embrace mentally, as a fond mother takes her baby into her loving arms and then begin to perceive the Highest starting from his feet, legs, trunk, arms, eyes, ears, mouth or tongue, above all his heart, mind and soul thus transfiguring him spiritually. Fill his

whole body from top to toe with His Presence, with the Holy vibrations of AUM. Verily that which is throbbing in his heart, sparkling in his eyes, flowing in his breath, shining in his soul is the same Divinity, the one indivisible Spirit, which is the soul of the Universe and the goal of humanity.

This simple exercise of perceiving the Highest trying to recognize the Divinity in the very cells of those who love us, and also deny us, helps us, and helps those that cannot love and understand us and even tends to hasten the well-being of the world. In a whole bucket of good milk, it is not well to have also a drop of poison. In the all-consuming fire of the Sun, you cannot expect to find even a speck of darkness. Similarly in the flaming fire of God-consciousness or Universal Love, you cannot have even a little of bitterness or exclusiveness. Everyone is the manifestation of the One Presence. All are parts of one Divine Flame. All are the emblems of One Indivisible Love - the images of One Universal Spirit. May all Glory be unto those blessed souls who can perceive the Highest under any conditions.

Dear loving readers of Peace, before you begin to perceive the Highest in others, try to set apart a few minutes in the morning and evening for perceiving the Highest within yourself. Try to be alone and fill your whole being from top to toe - even the very cells with the vibrations of the sacred word AUM. In that state when you feel that you are a mass of Light, a flame of God, resolve to perceive the same in one and all as you engage yourselves, in the respective duties of your daily life. Be true to your resolutions.

Look at the mighty oak tree in the tiny acorn or the banyan tree in the little seed. Behold! The Holy Christ or a compassionate Buddha in the undeveloped embryo. It is time to recognize the

Infinite in all finite forms and names. With the dawn of the day as darkness or night is dispelled so also with the perception of the Highest all clouds of fear, sorrow, sickness and weakness are dispelled.

If I am asked to give out the one message which is the saving power of the suffering world, I raise my voice to repeat PERCEIVE THE HIGHEST, in the individuals as well as in the nations. It is the denial of this Highest Perception which is the root cause of all selfishness and ignorance resulting in caste prejudices, communal feuds and World Wars. If only one could practice to see the sweet face of God in everyone, how could he hurt, plunder or wage war against his own God who is manifesting in different forms

Dear Images of God, introspection has been always the beginning of spiritual life. Just close your eyes, draw in your senses, and merge within. Try to find out, the One, who is perceiving the Highest in you? Who is it that is seeing in you? Who is it that is listening in you? Who is it that is thinking in you? Who is it that is manifesting and recognizing in you? Who is it that is silent in you, in the wondrous stillness of your own purified heart?

Let us bow ourselves in adoration to that Perceiver, the Universal Spirit who is the life and soul of the whole Cosmos. Identifying ourselves with the Perceiver, the Light of lights, let us now meditate on the glory of His effulgent Light, which is all embracing.

Let us ever be the Perceiver perceiving always the Highest in one and all, is the prayer of the one who is perceiving in you the Highest, the only Reality.

Hari Om Tat Sat Om!



THE LIGHT WITHIN (ANTHARATMA)

A Kotesam Subudhi

The Light-within dictates, "Don't forget me. I am the Supreme Lord. I am always with you. Feel me always as Effulgent-Light, standing before you, face to face, with a smiling face and graceful outlook. I am in you, and you are within Me. I am always guarding my Bhakta, the beloved, all round the mortal body in whatever state he is, and at all times. There is no difference between Myself and My Bhakta. I and you are one."

The darkness disappears by the approach of powerful Sun-light. Even so, the power of the smile (Chirunavvu) dispels the veil of Maya.

The Eternal smile (The Chirunavvu) represents the fulfilment of all desires and happiness.

The full smile represents the achievement of Brahman, who is Omniscient, Pure, Immortal, Blissful and Omnipresent.

The whole world is at large filled with the Effulgent-Light.

So, feel always the Effulgent-Light with full smiling face and graceful outlook. The happiness you feel is yours.

Don't forget for a moment the Effulgent Smiling figure. Feel always in the heart, in front of you, all round you, above and below you as if guarding you with His arms.

As you think so you are. Don't think for a moment of your calamities. Think always of the Smiling Face.

The smile dictates, "Love me a little and I will repay your love a million- fold. Even if you do not love me, I cannot but love you; for, I know nothing but love to my devotees."

Hold fast with firm faith, and everything will be revealed to

you gradually.

Worship Him in silence, whole-heartedly.

Practice this meditation continuously from now only, without losing a second, Realisation will be achieved.

God cannot be described. He can be only experienced. Know the Truth by God realisation and the Truth shall liberate you.

You must be cheerful, and keep up a smiling face; you will be alright.

This is the simplest way to attain The Supreme Lord.

Om Tat Sat Om Tat Sat Om Tat Sat Om

Om Santi Om Santi Om Santi Om



◆ Just as a flower gives out its fragrance to whomsoever approaches or uses it, so love from within us radiates towards everybody and manifests as spontaneous service.

SWAMI RAMDAS

◆ Unless one always speaks the truth, one cannot find God, who is the soul of truth.

◆ In a potter's shop there are vessels of different shapes and forms- pots, jars, dishes, plates, etc., but all are made of clay. So, God is One, but is worshipped in different ages and climes under different names and aspects.

◆ The world contains a mixture of truth and untruth. Discard the untruth and take the truth. Even those engaged in worldly activities, such as office work or business, should hold to the truth. Truthfulness alone is the spiritual discipline in the Kaliyuga. Dwell in the truth and you will certainly realize God.

SRI RAMAKRISHNA PARAMAHAMSA

THE GLORY OF THE PEACE PRAYER

C.S.Ramaswamy

The Peace Prayer is unique in its shortness as well as efficacy. At first sight it may look very simple and its deeper significance may not be grasped: A little contemplation will reveal its glory. For one thing, it is quintessence of Vedanta; secondly it is an earnest prayer for revelation and thirdly it contributes to not only individual Peace but universal Peace.

Let me first deal with the point that it is Vedanta in a nutshell. Vedanta asserts that it can bestow on the aspirant, MOKSHA (release) now and here. Moksha is nothing but removal of Avidya. The root of avidya is the sense that 'I am the body'. The Peace Prayer seeks to remove this deep-rooted ignorance now and here by seeking the Adorable Presence.

The first part of the prayer is the counterpart of KENOPANISHAD. The Upanishad begins with the question: "By whose decree do the mind, the vital air and the senses engage themselves in the performance of their functions?" The answer is; "That which ordains these senses, mind and organs to function is the Ear of the ears, the Eye of the eyes, the Mind of the minds, the Life of the lives." Upanishads declare that the Absolute is beyond words and even thoughts, He can be known in knowledge beyond the mind's knowing- by intuition i.e., by being in tune with That. The Peace Prayer seeks this intuition.

Vedanta declares that it is the mind that creates self-limitation "the body am I" idea. This self-limitation or ignorance is Avidya. It is the root of all misery and evil. Pure Being is really Bliss-Absolute. To break the barrier of individuality, and to destroy the sense of separateness, the mind should be dissociated from the body and the senses and linked to the Absolute. It should be

made to dwell on the Absolute till it dissolves in that, or till it becomes one with That. The ultimate Reality is within and without, above and below, north and south, east and west. The Peace Prayer puts one in tune with this all-pervading Reality, and as one dwells on the idea, the mind dissolves in That, it evaporates into Infinity.

The second part of the Prayer is the kernel of Isa Upanishad. The Isa begins with the statement "Whatever exists in this Universe is to be enveloped by the thought of the Supreme." i.e. everything is to be looked upon as God. Later, in this Upanishad we read "when a man beholds the same Atman in every one, where is delusion or grief?" In some other portion of the Upanishad, we have the appeal to Pushan "remove your brilliant disc which hides the Truth". Peace Prayer runs on the same lines.

All Upanishads, in one voice, assert the knower of the Real enjoys immortality and bliss-eternal and what is more, the knower of the Brahman becomes Brahman Himself. Can there be anything loftier, anything more precious than this?

The principal means of obtaining this transcendental knowledge is meditation. The Peace Prayer is effective meditation. As we go on repeating this prayer, the senses and the mind are quelled and the Bliss of Being alone reigns supreme.

The all merciful is sure to answer earnest prayers. If we seek Him earnestly, how can he hide himself?

All this apart, by repeating the prayer, one sends out currents of Peace all over the universe, besides enjoying peace oneself. If a good number of persons repeat this prayer in different parts of the Globe, Universal Peace will not be far off.

May Peace be to all!



INTELLECTUALISM

SWAMI OMKAR

I have been in contact with many earnest souls who are striving to find God through reasoning with the power of their so-called mighty intellects.

It sends into my body a shivering sensation when I see them reasoning God, analysing and diagnosing Him.

Their words are forceful and fiery, as if to tear God into pieces. I often wonder whether they are doing harm for themselves trying to divide and bisect Him.

Can God be mutilated or wounded with words? Can we take a firm hold of the throat of God and thus strangle Him and make Him stand before us?

Then why this unnatural process of chewing dry bones? Is there any life or taste or enjoyment in chewing these dry words with restless minds? How long can we live on imaginary food? Are we not yet tired of these lifeless arguments and endless imaginations?

I am not saying anything against the intellect. On the other hand, intellect has a glory of its own. We have the highest use for the intellect. It has a part to play in ascertaining the Truth, as Truth, and thus far and no further. It cannot go any further.

How can the tiny intellect comprehend the great glory of God? What can the poor intellect do before the Splendour of Truth? How can we expect a tiny speck of a cloud to understand the glory of the great sun?

When once we realise that God alone exists and nothing else exists beside Him, what necessity is there of reasoning any longer or indulging in vain repetitions? When nothing else exists

beside God or Truth, how can these words and thoughts exist any longer?

If we are convinced of God's presence or existence, then let us try to feel and become one with Him. But let us not waste our precious life and energy in wrestling with God. If so, we will be doing harm to our own selves.

What we grasp and understand by the help of our intellect is to be placed in practice. If not, our knowledge will be a source of misery and burden. Intellectual knowledge without practice may be compared to an ass carrying a heavy load of sandal wood on its back. It realises only the weight of the burden, but never the smell or the utility of sandal wood.

Those who are satisfied with mere intellectualism, are like vultures that soar very high in the air, but their concentration or outlook is always on the putrefied carcasses. As soon as they see a dead body, down they descend from their high flights.

In the same manner, those who are feeling contented with their intellects cannot help but be slaves of flesh and senses. When they stoop down into ignorance, then all their theory of "God is" and "God alone exists" disappears, and they will be grovelling in the mire of darkness.

What do you think of a man, who when entering into a beautiful garden which is full of juicy fruits, instead of eating them and thus satisfying his thirst and hunger, begins to waste his life in counting the leaves on the trees? Such is the utility of considering intellect as everything.

Those who are restlessly engaged in trying to realise God through reasoning or intellectual powers, are wasting their precious lives in counting the leaves of the trees, starving their living soul.

And those, who have risen above intellects ever engaging themselves in silent meditations, enjoying the blessed states of Peace are actually eating the Divine fruits in the garden of God.

The intellect cannot jump out of itself. It can perform only its fixed duty to its limited extent, but if we try to force it any further, we are making a wreck of our spiritual lives.

Intellectual struggles for realising God can be compared to the hopeless and helpless struggles of birds caught in the net. All their struggles are within the net. They cannot go out of the net of reasoning.

It is not by reasoning nor by explaining that God can be realised. It is by merging and dissolving in Truth we will be able to comprehend It in all glory.

Intellectual people always live on the surface; hence they are dry and hollow, both within and without. On the surface there is always hurry, worry and strife, whereas in the depths of inner consciousness, there is inexpressible Peace and endless joy.

But as our great intellectualists are too busily engaged with surface things, they have no time to spare for entering into the deeper states of Peace. So, they are often satisfied feasting over dry bones.

Above all, how can the finite intellect grasp or comprehend the infinite God or Truth? Finite can comprehend only finite things. It is never possible to understand the infinite perfectly.

A pair of tongs can hold anything with the help of our hand, but they are never expected to turn back and hold the very hand by the support of which they are moving.

The same is the case with our mind and intellect. The basis of the mind and intellect is only the Universal Spirit. It is only with

the help or support of the Spirit, our minds and intellects are moving and working.

They can think of anything in the world, but they cannot dare to think or reason about the great God or Truth in whom they are mere nothings. So, their bounden duty must be to silently merge and dissolve in God, understanding the helplessness and hopelessness of any more outer exertions, physically or mentally.

In short, God can be realised only by intuition and never by finite exertions. We need not be restless with unnecessary exertions. Let our exertions be in making our minds and intellects calm and collected.

Intellect is a mere bubble in the ocean of Divine Glory. So, do not make the bubble jump out of itself to fathom the ocean. Let it simply dissolve, losing itself in the formless state of the water.

In the same way, let our intellects merge and identify with the great God or Universal Spirit who is the only Reality and in whom we are inseparably one either in the past, present or future.

May Peace be unto all!



APPEAL

We need to erect a minimum of 15 to 20 stone pillars each estimated to cost approximately Rs.10000/-. These pillars are required to be erected to help the Cows and calves of our Goshala to get relieved of the itching sensation they get occasionally by rubbing their body parts to the stone pillars. As part of Goseva, the devotees may contribute any amount of their choice to fulfil this noble cause. The names of the donors who donate Rs. 10000/ or more will be inscribed on the stone pillar.

Managing Committee
Sri Santi Ashram

PURIFYING THE MIND

SWAMI RAMATIRTHA

(Krishna's Dance on the heads of the Dragon)

There is a beautiful story in the Puranas. It speaks of Krishna jumping into the river Jamuna while his father, mother, friends and relatives stood by, struck dumb with amazement. In their very presence he jumped into the torrent. They thought that he was gone, that he would never rise again. The story says that he went to the bottom of the river and there was a thousand-headed dragon. Krishna began to blow his flute, he began to play the Mantram 'OM', he began to kick down the heads of the dragon one by one, but as he crushed the many heads of the dragon one by one, other heads sprang up and thus it was very hard for him. Krishna went on jumping and dancing upon the crested head of the dragon; he went on playing the Mantram and still jumping and crushing down the heads of the dragon. In half-an-hour the dragon was dead; what with the charming note of the flute and the crushing of the dragon by his heels, the dragon was dead. The waters of the river were turned to blood and the blood of the dragon mixed with water of the river. All the wives of the dragon came up to pay homage to Krishna. They wanted to drink the nectar of his sweet presence. Krishna came up from the river, the amazed relatives and friends were beside themselves, their joy new no bounds, so happy were they to find their beloved Krishna, their beloved one, in their midst again. This story has a double meaning. It is an object lesson, so to say, for those who want to gain an insight of reality into their own Divinity.

That alike represents the mind or rather the lake of the mind, and whoever wants to become Krishna (the word 'KRISHNA' means or stands for Deity God), whoever wants to regain the paradise lost, he has to enter deep into the lake of his own mind, to dive deep into himself.

He has to plunge deep into his own nature, reaching the bottom he has to fight the venomous dragon, the poisonous snake of passion, desire, the venomous dragon of the worldly mind. He has to crush it down; he has to destroy its crests. He has to kick down its many heads, he has to charm, and destroy it. He must make clear the lake of his mind, must clear his mind this way. The process is the same as that followed by Krishna. He is to take up his flute and play the Mantram 'OM' through it. He has to sing that divine, that blessed song through it.

What is this flute? It is simply a symbol for you. Look at the flute. Indian poets attach great importance to it. What great deed was it that the flute performed, that it was raised to such a dignity? By virtue of what great 'KARMA' was it elevated to such a position? Why was it that KRISHNA who was the object of worship, who was loved by mighty monarchs, who was worshipped by thousands of fairy maidens in broad India; how was it that Krishna, the beloved one, the powerful one, the love personified, that Krishna who did not condescend to look at kings and monarchs, why gave he this flute kisses? What raised it to such a position? The flute's answer was, "I have one virtue, one good point I have. I have made myself void of all matter."

The flute is empty from head to foot. "I emptied myself of non-self." Just so applying the flute to the lips means purifying the heart, turning the mind unto God; throwing everything at the feet of God, the beloved one. Just give up from your heart of hearts all claims upon the body, give up all selfishness, all selfish connections, all thoughts of mine and thine, rise above it. Wooing God, wooing Him as no worldly lover woos his lady love; hungering and thirsting after the realization of the true Self, just as a man of the worldly hungers and thirsts for what he has not had for a long time; hungering and thirsting for the Divine; yearning for Truth; craving after a taste of the supreme reality of the Self. Putting yourself in that state of mind, is applying flute to the lips. In

this state of mind, in this peace of heart, when such a pure soul begins to chant the Mantram 'OM'; begin to sing the sacred syllable 'OM', it is putting the breath of music into the flute. Make your whole life a flute. Make your whole body a flute. Empty it of selfishness and fill it with divine breath.

Chant 'OM' and while doing it begin that search within the lake of your mind. Search out the poisonous snake with its many tongues. These heads, tongues, fangs of the poisonous snake are the innumerable wants, the worldly tendencies and the selfish propensities. Crush them one by one, trample them under your feet, single them out, overcome them and destroy them while singing the syllable 'OM'.

Build up a character, make firm resolutions, make strong determinations and take solemn vows so that when you come out of the lake or river of the mind, you may not find the waters poisoned; so that the waters will not poison those who drink from them. Come out of the lake having purified it altogether. Let people differ from you, let them subject you to all sorts of difficulties, let them revile you, but despite their favours and frowns, their threats and promises, from the lake of your mind, there should flow nothing but divine, infinitely pure, fresh water. Nectar should flow out of you so that it may become as impossible for you to think evil as for the pure fresh spring to poison those who drink from it. Purify the heart, sing the syllable 'OM', pick out all points of weakness and eradicate them. Come out victorious having formed a beautiful character. When the dragon of passion is destroyed, you will find the objects of desire worshipping you, just as the wives of the dragon under the river paid homage unto KRISHNA after he had killed the snake.

MORAL: Mind can be purified by killing, one by one, all selfish desires or wants and singing the syllable 'OM'.

OM

OM

OM

The Vision of Non-duality Bestows Fearlessness

SWAMI JYOTIRMAYANANDA

Sri Vasishtha said: O Rama, the Pure Self alone exists. It is the Pure Self that assumes the different forms and conditions of the world-process. Birth, death, fear, sorrow, pleasure and pain are different manifestations of the Self.

When you realise the Self that is beyond the seer and the sight, you become free of the cause of pain, sorrow and suffering.

In this Divine vision of the non-duality of the Self, there is no room for the development of raga and dwesha(attachment and hatred). Devoid of the impressions of attachment and hatred, you cannot experience suffering in the world. When the two poison fangs are removed from a snake, it becomes a source for sport in the hands of snake charmers. In the same way, with the removal of raga and dwesha, the world becomes delightful for a sage.

There is neither the desirable nor undesirable in this world because all this is essentially one's innermost Self- the Absolute.

The Absolute Self is devoid of the subjectivity as well as the objectivity of the limited mind. The Self is different from the knower and the known. It is the serene light of the Self that becomes refracted into the knower and the known through the prism of mind.

No one dies, no one is born. The ocean of Consciousness alone exists. Waves rise and fall without disturbing the fullness of the ocean. In the same way, the waves of illusion continue to surge while the ocean of the Divine Reality is ever immutable and unaffected.

The dark veil of night is gradually lifted as the sun rises. So too, with the rising of wisdom, the world is gradually dissolved into Brahman.

There is no reason to grieve at the idea of encountering death. Since the Self cannot be destroyed, the phenomenon of death will bring

about renewal in the physical residence of the soul. With this understanding, death should be considered a festive occasion, not a pathetic event. Rejoice. O dull-witted ones: death is going to present new apparels and destroy the tattered garments of the soul.

If you say death is going to destroy you completely and that there is no rebirth, then you also must rejoice, because all the feverish struggle of life will eventually end. However, do not simply believe rebirth and death; disbelieve even your present existence.

However, this is impossible for you to do. You cannot ever imagine your non-existence. You are essentially the Self. The idea that you are the physical body is an expression of illusion.

If you are afraid of negative conditions you may encounter after death, why not be afraid of those conditions even while you are alive? Do not perform sinful deeds that cause negative conditions, whether in this life or the life to come.

Instead of entertaining the negative thoughts, "I am going to die. Alas! I am dying. I am nearly dead," entertain positive thoughts lit with the light of reason and understanding. Assert, "I am Pure Consciousness. I am the deathless Self. I abide in the Absolute Self. I am infinity and eternity." By changing your angle of vision, you will overcome all forms of grief, as well as the fear of death.

A sage performs virtuous deeds and discards sinful deeds by the mere fact of possessing a highly purified mind. However, he is beyond virtue and vice. He abides in the fearless state of Pure Consciousness.

When confronted with life's adverse developments occasioned by the fructification of past karmas, a sage is not inwardly shaken. He withdraws himself into the all-transcending silence of the Self and allows the violent waves of the world-process to roll on without causing any

injury to him. He withdraws himself into the invulnerable cave of nirvikalpa samadhi and is unaffected by the raging storms of adversities.

A sage considers birth, death and all worldly developments as worthless and insignificant as straw. Devoid of subtle desires and in the possession of supreme knowledge, he wanders like one ignorant of his great achievements. In all conditions he is ever immutable and fearless because he is not this passing personality. He is the Absolute Self.



◆ Realise, realise that you are the infinity within. Know that. The very moment that a person knows himself to be that, the very moment that a man realises his true nature, he is free, above all danger, above all difficulty, above all suffering, above all tribulation and pain. Know that, be yourself!

◆ Truth is not only Eternal but also unlimited and infinite. It is all-embracing. It is the religion for all, irrespective of their caste, creed or nationality. In fact, it is great and glaring, and never sectarian. It is liberal. Other religions have all been founded by individuals. But this Sanatana Dharma is not based on the teachings of any one single person.

◆ All personal power is limited; it binds you just as much as any possession or property binds you. Chains are chains, whether of iron or gold; they enslave you all the same.

SWAMI RAMA TIRTHA

◆ Do your best and then relax. Let things go in a natural way, rather than force them.

◆ The sense of being a separate egoic self begins with the astral, not with the physical body. The soul is individualized spirit.

PARAMAHAMSA YOGANANDA

BE MAD FOR GOD ALONE

(About Divine Ecstasy for Lord Krishna)

The episodes in the life of Sri Krishna especially associated with Divine love for the Gopis of Brindavan appealed to the Master and would throw him into ecstatic mood.

Krishna God incarnate, lived years of His boyhood in Vrindavan as a cowherd. He tended His cows on the meadows along the bank of the Jamuna and played His flute. The milkmaids could not resist the force of His Divine attraction. At the sound of His flute, they would leave their household duties and go to the bank of the sacred river. Their love for Krishna destroyed their attachments to worldly things. Neither relatives nor the criticism of others could make them desist from seeking the company of Krishna. In the love of Gopis for Krishna, there was not the slightest trace of worldliness. It was the innate attraction of the God for pure souls as of the magnet for iron. The author of Bhagavata has compared this love to the all-consuming love of a woman for her loved. Before the onrush of that LOVE, all barriers between man and God are swept away. The devotee surrenders himself completely to his Divine Beloved and in the end becomes one with Him. Radha was the foremost of the Gopis, and Krishna's chief playmate. She felt an indescribable longing for union with Him. A moment's separation from Krishna would tend her heart and soul. During many a moonlit night, Krishna would dance with Radha and the Gopis in the sacred groves of Vrindavan and on such occasions, the Gopis would experience the highest religious ecstasy. At the age of eleven, Krishna was called to be King of Mathura. He left the Gopis promising them, however, His Divine Vision whenever they concentrated on Him in their hearts. For centuries and centuries, the lovers of God in India have been worshipping the Divine by recreating in themselves the yearning of the Gopis for Krishna. Many of the folk songs of India have as their theme,

this sweet episode of Krishna's life. Sri Chaitanya revived this phase of Hindu religious life by His spiritual practice and his divine visions. In his ecstatic music, Chaitanya assumed the role of Radha and manifested the longing to be united with Krishna. For a long period, Sri Ramakrishna also worshipped God as his beloved Krishna, looking on himself as one of the Gopis or as God's handmaid.

One must be guileless. One can't be guileless without great deal of spiritual discipline in previous births. A hypocritical and calculating mind can never attain God.

Don't you see that God incarnates Himself in a family where innocence exists! How guileless Dasaratha was? So was Nanda, Krishna's father. There is a saying 'Ah how innocent a man he is! He is just like Nanda!' One must show highest respect to one's mother, for she is the very embodiment of the blissful mother of the Universe.

Master to M: Ah! How wonderful was the yearning of the Gopis for Krishna. They were seized with divine madness at the very sight of the black Tamala tree. Separation from Krishna created such a fire of anguish in Radha's heart that it dried up even tears in her eyes. Her tears would disappear in steam. There were other times when nobody could notice the depth of her feeling. People do not notice the plunge of an elephant in a big lake.

M: Yes Sir, that is true. Chaitanya, too experienced a similar feeling. He mistook a forest for the sacred grove of Brindavan and the dark water of the Ocean for the Jamuna.

Master: Ah! If anyone has but a particle of such Prema! What yearning! What love! Radha possessed not only one hundred per cent of Divine love but one hundred twenty-five per cent. This is what it means to be intoxicated with ecstatic love of GOD. The sum and substance of the whole matter is that a man must love God, must be

restless for Him. It does not matter whether you believe in God with form or God without form. You may or may not believe that God incarnates Himself as man but you will realise Him if you have that yearning. Then He himself will let you know what He is like. If you must be mad, why should you be mad for things of the world? If you must be mad, be mad for God alone.

-By courtesy of Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna



◆ Why shouldn't you strengthen your own vibrations through fellowship with people seeking Self-realisation, and by group meditation with them? This practice will fortify your own spiritual convictions, you will find that many seemingly insuperable barriers in your life will crumble and dissolve in the waters of meditation. Your devotion and love for God will commingle with devotion and love of others. Divine bliss will radiate from you, helping all persons you meet.

PARAMAHAMSA YOGANANDA

◆ Dharma is in your mind, not in the forest. Don't believe others; just listen to your mind. You don't have to go anywhere else. Wisdom is in yourself, just like a sweet ripe mango is already in a young green one.

AJAHN CHAH

◆ This was the great work of Krishna: to clear our eyes and make us look with broader vision upon humanity in its march upward and onward. His was the first heart that was large enough to see the truth in all; His were the first lips that uttered beautiful words for each and all.

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

TRUE EDUCATION

Swami Vivekananda

The character of any man is but the aggregate of his tendencies, the sum total of the best of his mind. As pleasure and pain pass before the soul, these leave upon it different pictures and the result of these combined impressions is what is called a man's character. We are what our thoughts have made us. Each little thought is a little hammer blow on the lump of iron that our bodies are, manufacturing out of it what we want to be. Words are secondary. Thoughts live, they travel far. And so, take care of what you think.

When a large number of these impressions are left on the mind, they coalesce and become a habit. It is said, 'Habit is second nature.' It is first nature also and the whole nature of men. Everything that we are is the result of habit. That gives us consolation because if it is only a habit, we can make it and unmake it at any time. The only remedy for bad habits can be controlled by good counter habits. All the bad habits can be controlled by good habits. Go on doing good, thinking holy thoughts continuously. That is the only way to suppress base impressions. Never say any man is hopeless, because he only represents a character, a bundle of habits, which can be checked by new and better ones. Character is repeated habits and repeated habits alone can reform character.

Coming to the great leaders of mankind, we always find that it was the personality of the man that counted. Now, take all the great authors of the past, the great thinkers. Really speaking, how many thoughts they have thought? Take all the writings, that have been left to us by the great leaders of the mankind; take each one of their books and appraise them. The real thoughts, new and genuine, that have been taught in this world up to this time, amount to only a handful. Read in their books the thoughts that they have left to us. The authors do not

appear to be giants to us, and yet we know that they were great giants in their days. What made them so? Not simply the thoughts they thought, neither the books they wrote nor the speeches they made, it was something else that is now gone, that is their personality.

My idea of education is Guru gruhavaasa. Without the personal life of the teacher, there would be no education. One should live from his very boyhood with one whose character is a blazing fire and should have before him a living example of the highest teaching. In our country the imparting of knowledge has always been through men of renunciation. The charge of imparting knowledge should again fall upon the shoulders of Tyagis.

There are certain conditions necessary in the taught and also in the teacher. The conditions necessary for the taught are purity, a real thirst after knowledge and perseverance. Purity in thought, speech and act is absolutely necessary. As for thirst after knowledge, it is an old law that we all get whatever we want. None of us get anything other than what we fix our hearts upon. There must be a continuous struggle, a constant fight, an unremitting grappling with our lower nature, till the higher want is actually felt and victory is achieved. The student who sets out with such a spirit of perseverance will surely find success at last.

In regard to the teacher, we must see that he shows the spirit of the scriptures. The whole world reads Bible, Vedas and Korans, but they are still only words, syntax, etymology, philology- the dry bones of religion. The teacher who deals too much in words and allows the mind to be carried away by the force of words loses the spirit. It is the knowledge of the spirit of the scriptures alone that constitute the true teachers. The second condition necessary for the teacher is sinlessness. The question is often asked 'Why should we look into the character and personality of a teacher? This is not right. The sine qua non of acquiring

truth for one's self, or for imparting it to others is purity of heart and soul. He must be perfectly pure and then only comes the value of his words. The function of the teacher is indeed an affair of the transference of something and not one of mere stimulation of existing intellectual or other faculties in the taught. Something real and appreciable as an influence comes from the teacher and goes to the taught. Therefore, the teacher must be pure. The third condition is in regard to the motive. His work must be out of love, out of pure love for mankind at large. The only medium through which spiritual force can be transferred is love. Any selfish motive, such as the desire for gain or name, will immediately destroy the conveying medium.

May Peace be unto all!

Om! Tat! Sat! Om!



◆ He (Krishna) is the most rounded man I know of, wonderfully developed equally in brain and heart and hand. Every moment of his is alive with activity, either as a gentleman, warrior, minister, or something else. Great as a gentleman, as a scholar, as a poet.

◆ When that divinely appointed teacher comes, serve him with childlike confidence and simplicity, freely open your heart to his influence, and see in him God manifested. Those who come to seek truth with such a spirit of love and veneration, to them the Lord of Truth reveals the most wonderful things regarding truth, goodness and beauty.

◆ The Guru is the means of realisation. There is no knowledge without a teacher.

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

◆ Beyond the senses are the objects, beyond the objects is the mind, beyond the mind is the intellect, beyond the intellect is the great Atman.

SWAMI PARAMANANDA

LIFE IS FIRE BUT NOT SMOKE

SWAMI OMKAR

Dear friend! Did you ever see a small, cheap kerosene lamp? It is a very crude thing, made of tin in a triangular shape. It is generally used by poor people who cannot afford costly lights. They frugally pour a little quantity of kerosene oil into it, adjust the wick, and then light it for the night.

But how it emits smoke, continuously, filling the whole room with nothing but black soot! If you lift your eyes towards the roof or glance around the walls where it is used, you find everything covered with black soot. It is not at all healthful to live or much less sleep in a room keeping a kerosene light burning all through the night. By morning one feels a sense of giddiness and a coating of soot lies even on one's clothes, and the nostrils are filled with it too.

If you use a hurricane lantern or some other light that has a good burner with a protecting chimney, you will have very little smoke or no smoke at all. Candle light also does not give as much smoke as a kerosene lamp. As for the electric lights they are smoke proof and they do not spoil wall or clothes. Then there are the natural lights of the stars or the moon, which are not only free from every kind of smoke but fill the soul with their soft, soothing radiance.

Lastly comes the light of the Sun, the symbolic flame of the Eternal One, the living God, which is free from every form of smoke through eternity and pours life, health and splendour, into all the earth.

Starting from the very finite, the tiny kerosene light that emits nothing but smoke, we have gone on till we come to the self-shining splendour of the burning sun, which is the light of the whole earth and reflects the glory of the Sun of the universe.

Dear Loving reader of PEACE! Now I want to ask a question of you. No, no, I want to ask yourself a simple mental question. Just close your eyes for a minute as you read this message and ask your inner self, examining your mind and heart, your daily life of activity, and your words and thoughts, and see whether you are emitting from your life, death-dealing smoke or life-giving fire, for your fellow sisters and brothers.

Is your life to be compared to that of the finite kerosene lamp, or a hurricane lamp shining out into the night, brightening dark corner? May be your life is shining without the least smoke, like that of a gas light or electric light, but how blessed are those lives, that are shining like that of the stars or the moon or sun, soothing, healing lending new life and beauty to all!

Alas! How rare are the blessed lives that are shining with the splendour of Sun of suns, dispelling darkness from the face of the earth, radiating ceaselessly, life, light and love towards the whole of creation!

Be true to yourself. Know where you are, critically examine your life, and thus try to rise from one stage to another stage, until you reach the heights where there is no more smoke, but limitless Light, the Fire of Cosmic Glory, within, without and all around.

If one lives for himself catering to the selfish ego, ignoring all else, denying God or Truth, such a life is nothing but a density of smoke. It is dangerous and harmful to live with or contact people who are the embodiment of selfishness and darkness of Soul.

Dear friend! It is time for you to write or make a note- not on paper with ink, but in your very heart, with your very life blood that selfishness is smoke and selflessness is fire. Wherever there is selfishness, in whatever form it may be, there is smoke, and wherever there is selflessness there is Divine Fire.

Look at the faces of people around us, including the faces that are dear and near to us, do you find any fire- Divine Fire- illuminating fire in them? Watch the people as they speak in the homes, as they pass in the streets, in the fairs, in the congregations- alas! How few and rare are those great souls who are free from smoke or selfishness, and are a blessing to humanity leading others by setting examples, through their ideal peaceful lives!

It is sad to see that there is too much smoke emanating from many a life, filling the world with its greed, avarice, jealousy, fear, sorrow, depression, passion, lust, anger, self-pride, cruelty of man to man and man to beast, and a thousand other forms of selfishness, the root cause of all, being ignorance.

In spite of the thick smoke, pouring into the atmosphere, the great consolation is, that man's birthright is not smoke but FIRE, the sacred Fire- the light of millions of suns. How strong and divine we feel at the thought that our heritage is never the vitiating smoke but the Light of lights.

There is no need of grovelling in darkness any more. No more need of staggering with wavering foot steps or walking with stooped shoulders, wearing long and mournful faces, emitting and spreading dangerous and most death-dealing smoke.

Let us radiate the Divine Fire which is our common heritage. Let us assert and manifest our Divine birthright- the Cosmic Fire. Let us sing the song of freedom with irrepressible glee, that - LIFE IS FIRE BUT NOT SMOKE. Let all clouds of ignorance be dispelled with the splendours of the sun's divine fire.

Avaunt! Smoke, darkness, selfishness, aloofness, ignorance in every form, ye have no place here any longer in the heart dedicated to Divinity, where Divine Fire is constantly generating and gushing out ceaseless waves of light. Glory! Glory! Glory!

All Glory be unto this Interpenetrating, Infinite, Eternal and Indivisible Divine Fire, which is filling and permeating the very cells of our beings. It is Light- the one effulgent Light in stillness as well as in activity!

The heart throbs, because of the warmth of the Divine Fire. The pulse beats because of the presence of the Fire. The breath flows because of the existence of the sacred Fire. Verily, it is the stillness of the heart, the beat of the pulse and the flow of the breath. O! may we bathe ourselves in these sacred floods of fire. Let us sway and float in this all-pervading fire of Divinity.

As emblems of Divine Fire, may nothing but the sacred fire, go out from us in rays of light and flashes of glory, in our thoughts, words and deeds, filling the whole universe with great conflagrations of Cosmic Fire, uniting the individuals and binding the nations in the bonds of common brotherhood as the one family of God, for we are all emanations or sparks of the Universal Father who is all light, the Cosmic Fire, the Divine Electric Energy.

May the Divine Fire create Love, Unity, and Understanding among the peoples in North, South, East and West and may peace abide in the hearts of all is my prayer.

Hari Om Tat Sat!



◆ What man dwelling on the decaying mortal plane, having approached the undecaying immortal one, and having reflected upon the nature of enjoyment through beauty and sense pleasure, would delight in long life?

◆ He who is without discrimination and whose mind is always uncontrolled, his senses are unmanageable, like the vicious horses of a driver.

SWAMI PARAMANANDA

An itinerant Sadhu, in the course of his wanderings, came to a village and settled himself down in a temple for some days. He used to sit quiet and serene on one of the verandahs of the temple. He was hardly going out, and spent all his time inside the temple. The Pujari of the temple, finding in the Sadhu high spiritual qualities, gave him at mid-day a part of the food offered as Naivedyam. The Sadhu lived only on one meal a day. This went on for some days. One day, the manager of the temple happened to pay his periodical visit to the temple for inspection. He saw the Pujari in the act of giving food offered to God to the Sadhu. The manager did not like this. He told the Pujari, "Why do you feed this lazy fellow? He is sitting quietly without doing anything. Such people do not deserve to be given food. So I order you not feed him anymore."

The Pujari obeyed. The Sadhu did not mind the stoppage of food to him. He would go out at mid-day, beg for food in two or three houses, and having satisfied his hunger, return to his seat in the temple in about half-an-hour's time. Thereafter, he would continue to sit silent in his Asan until the next day. Thus the Sadhu continued to live in the temple.

About a week later, the manager, as usual, came and saw the Sadhu sitting quietly as before at the same place in the temple. He came to know from the Pujari that the Sadhu did not receive any food from the temple and that he was satisfying his hunger by begging.

Now, the manager, getting interested in the Sadhu, was curious to know why he was sitting the whole day doing practically nothing. He went up to the Sadhu and, sitting near him, asked him "Sadhuji, what is the meaning of your sitting the whole day without stirring out?"

The Sadhu replied, "I will give you the answer in five minutes. Please wait."

The manager waited. Five minutes passed. But no answer came from the Sadhu. The manager reminded the Sadhu about his question. The Sadhu again said, "Brother, will you wait for five minutes more to get the answer?" The manager, with a little impatience, told the Sadhu, he would wait for five minutes more but would not do so any longer.

Again five minutes passed. Still the Sadhu was silent. Then the manager questioned him a little sternly, "What is this Sadhuji, ten minutes have passed and you have not yet answered my question?" The Sadhu calmly replied, "Brother, will you please wait for another five minutes?" The manager was impatient and excited at what the Sadhu said. He stood with his watch in his hand and told the Sadhu finally, "Look here, Sadhuji, I have a lot of work to attend to. I cannot afford to idle away my time like you. I give you five minutes more for the answer. If you do not fulfil my wish, I will go away.

The manager waited for five minutes more and no answer came. In a huff, grumbling and in an irritated mood, the manager went out of the temple. When he had gone a few yards, he stopped and reflected- "I cannot sit at one place for 15 minutes quietly, whereas the Sadhu is there on the veranda all the 24 hours except for a short period. What tremendous power and control he has over his mind!" His admiration for the Sadhu became very great. He turned back and, entering the temple, called the Pujari and said, "Pujari, from tomorrow, you should feed the Sadhu from the offerings of food to the Deity as you were doing before as long as he chooses to stay in the temple." After saluting the Sadhu in all humility and reverence the manager left.

Verily, to control the mind and sit steadily at one place without the thought of moving about is not a joke. Only rare souls who have subdued the mind by concentration upon God can do this.



YOU ARE EVER UNITED WITH GOD

SWAMI CHIDANANDA

Blessed immortal Atman, all of you fortunate sparks of the great Light of lights beyond all darkness are doubly fortunate and thrice blessed that in this earth life of yours, day-after-day, you have the supreme privilege of commencing one more day in close proximity to this source of divinity whom the world knew as Swami Sivananda. He is the centre of divinity in this Ashram and it is he who verily constitutes this Ashram.

People come to the Ashram not to see bricks and walls or mere activities, not to see dining halls or printing presses. People come here for something which they are not able to get in their own place: the possibility of exposing themselves to a divine presence that immediately elevates, consoles and soothes, a presence which brings to them an awareness of themselves and why they are here. Spending time, money and energy they journey long distances to come to this subtle something which constitutes this Ashram and similar such Ashrams- centres of transforming force, uplifting power and awakening. They come, they breathe it in, they bask in it, they enter into it and they go home fulfilled.

But you who reside in Gurudev's Ashram, you have the double fortune of being continuously in this environment for which others come to get a little exposure and experience, which is sufficient to keep them uplifted for the rest of the year. They come and go and crave to come and go again; many wish to come and never to go back home. But for you who live here, it is a gift that is always continuously available. Thus, indeed should you be able to see clearly what your coming together in silent fellowship in this spot means in terms of the values which people are thirsting after and for which they are prepared to make great effort to partake in even for a short period.

That is our daily nourishment and daily bread without the asking for it. To you who are thus blessed with this daily spiritual nourishment, I have the privilege to offer certain very salient definitive truths which have to be woven together. Many ingredients go into making a tasty dish, and many numbers are used in a mathematical equation to get an ultimate result. Even so, in the spiritual life it is many ingredients that go together to ultimately produce a transformed higher state of being, and these ingredients are spelled out in a very definite and specific way in our scriptures.

It is said that the ingredients that prepare you for illumination through Brahma Upadesha are Viveka, Vairagya, Shadsampati and Mumukshutva. The Yoga Vasishtha says Vichara, Satsanga, Santosha and Shanti are absolutely essential and are the gatekeepers to liberation. Patanjali spells out in a very specific way the five Yamas and Niyamas. In certain places the ingredients are precisely given, but then we have to bring them all together. Are these supreme Vedantic truths declared by great men of illumination meant only for a certain stage of evolved spiritual life, or can they be applied day-after-day to enrich our life in a tangible way? The question is whether they are confined to some high metaphysical dimension, or are they meant to be applied here and now in our daily lives?

We start with the highest ultimate declaration: Brahma satyam Jagan-mithya, jivo -brahmaivanaparah. (Brahman is real, the world is unreal, and the individual soul is no different from Brahman.) even so, your own reality is hidden behind passing factors which limit your vastness, immeasurability and boundlessness. These limiting factors are called Upadhis. Everything except the truth within us is an Upadhi which changes and passes.

You shine; The Light is your reality; not the temporary state called darkness. The blue sky is the reality, not the clouds. The full moon shining

radiantly is the reality, not the temporary eclipse. Your divinity is your reality, not this temporary human status you are dreaming. Shining purity is your reality, not the temporary state of a muddled consciousness with all types of miscellaneous thoughts. Bliss and peace are your reality- not restlessness, agitation, depression, grief or sadness- but joy and happiness.

The ancient Sadhana of Vedanta is declared to be 'Neti, Neti' (not this, not that). You go on rejecting all that is non-Self, all that is other than the eternal, unchanging Brahman; choosing Sat and not Asat. 'Neti, Neti' is an affirmation of the reality of the truth and the negation of everything other than truth. This is the continuous process going on through an active enquiry and discrimination. The process of Viveka was described as actively discriminating and separating the reality from the unreality, the truth from the mere passing experience.

Then the ancient prayer Asato ma Sat Gamayais added. This is what we ask of Thee, Universal Consciousness, the source and origin of our being: "From the unreal, lead us unto the eternal Reality." This great prayer should be sounding in our hearts and should be made concrete and true in our daily lives. Ever seek the Reality and reject that which is unreal-constantly, again and again. This great prayer should be your constant inner activity, always ascending towards the truth and turning away from that which is a passing appearance.

Thus, if you bring all these ingredients together-this inner prayer, the process of Neti,Neti and the clear perception between the AtmaandAnatma, the Svarupa and the Upadhis- then there is a gradual flowering of your divine consciousness. If you are a Bhakta you say, "I am Thine, I do not belong to the world; I am part of You."

As you move through life and come into this presence, as you start the day with this proximity to a great awakening impulse, you must commence this process of affirming the truth, living in the truth and

rejecting the unreality at every step, transcending the appearance and rejecting the mere relative truth. Sadhana should be this process of living in truth, affirming the Reality and ever refusing to give credence to a temporary relative reality. And what is this truth? That God, the glorious divine presence, dwells within you. You are ever in proximity to the Divine Presence; He is never absent. You are all that God implies—perfection, peace, light, knowledge, strength.

Quite apart, from a merely intellectual or philosophical process, Vichara needs to be a practical Abhyasa. Vichara should be the foundation of your life. It should shape your character; it should govern your actions and sustain you by becoming part of your Sadhana. It should be actively applied at all times. The need for this in its various functions is to keep you going in the direction of the goal; you should not swerve away from it and lose precious time which you cannot afford to lose. It is also required to keep your life to the closest possible in accordance with the ideal you have set for yourself. Your conduct, thoughts, words and actions need to be in consonance with the principle you have adopted for yourself in your spiritual life.

All seekers and devotees of God need to have a certain set of principles to guide them in order to attain the highest welfare. One must keep before oneself some great sublime principle in order that one's life may be a process of advancing towards the ideal, and in that context Vichara is the touchstone. One should ask, "Am I living according to my ideal or not?"

The reality of this situation is that you are ever united with God and God is ever seated within you. If this is forgotten, then that which is a passing situation catches hold of you and that unreality becomes the truth. You become enslaved. Why? Because you are not keeping up with this Sadhana of affirming and living in the truth that you are in God and God is within you. We ever live, move and have our being in

God. God dwells in us as the very essence of our consciousness. This therefore is the inner Sadhana, the spiritual life and ascent to illumination. This is called the progressive process of Yoga.

Think well about these truths that partake of your very intimate life, which constitute life itself in the true sense of the term.

God bless you all. Hari Om!



◆ Trouble and disease have a lesson for us. Our painful experiences are not meant to destroy us, but to burn out our dross, to hurry us back Home. No one is more anxious for our release than God.

◆ You must cease to think that you are a mortal being if you would find lasting happiness. Practice this truth in your daily life.

◆ To fly away from problems may seem the easiest solution. But you gain strength only when you wrestle with a strong opponent. One who doesn't have difficulties is one who doesn't grow.

◆ This world will always have turmoil and trouble. What are you worried about? Go to the shelter of God, where the Masters have gone, and whence they are watching and helping the world. You shall have safety forever, not only for yourself, but for all those loved ones who have entrusted to your care by our Lord and Father.

◆ Those who seek prosperity for themselves alone are in the end bound to become poor, or to suffer from mental inharmony; but those who consider the whole world as their home, and who really care and work for group or world prosperity..... find the individual prosperity that is legitimately theirs. This is a sure and secret law.

PARAMAHAMSA YOGANANDA

ENDURING THE OPPOSITES

SWAMI DAYANANDA SARASWATI

Sitoshnaadivishayataam; may you endure heat and cold, etc. Sitha means cold and ushna means hot. They are a dvandva, a pair of opposites. So, this word means it is sometimes cold or sometimes hot with reference to the weather. The word aadi stands for varieties of opposites, like maana- respect and apamaana-disrespect, or gain and loss etc. Vishayataam, may you put up with all these opposites without complaint. You have to put up with the opposites anyway, but generally you do so with complaints.

You say, 'Oh, it's so hot, so hot, so hot.'

'Then why don't you do something about it? Get into a fridge or go to a place where it is very cool, like Ooty.'

'But I don't know anybody there in Ooty. There's no one there to take care of me.'

'Okay, then go to Rishikesh.'

'Oh, Rishikesh is hotter than here.'

'Then you can keep going up. Go up to Gangotri.'

'Oh, Gangotri is too cold.'

'That's all right, come down to Uttarkashi.'

'Uttarkashi is okay, but where will I go for food? What is the bhikshaa there? Lunch it is roti and dal, night it is dal and roti. How I can stand that?'

'All right, then be wherever you are.'

'No, here it's too hot.'

So, what shall you do with this person? You cannot do anything. You cannot deal with this kind of person. So here, for a mumukshu it is pointed out that you should endure everything without complaint.

Janaanaam kripaa naishturyam:do not react to the praise and censure of others. Sometimes people have got kripaa and they praise

you. Sometimes they censure you also. Here kripaa means prasamsa, praise. People have great appreciation for you and therefore they praise you, flatter you, but do not get flattered. Or they will censure you, but do not become flat. So, the advice is, 'Don't get flattered or flattened!'

People will praise you based upon their own judgement and say you are a great mahatma. Then afterwards, when they do not get what they want, they will put you down. You are what you are and they will praise you from their own standpoint. You do not know what things they have on their scales for measuring you. If you do not fulfil those things, then you will fall in their image of you. Once you fall in their image, you become upset because they are so important for you. Why? Because they flatter you. This is a problem for mahaatmaas. People will praise you and they will put you down also. You cannot stand that so that is why he says from the beginning, kripaa naishthuryam utsriyataam. Utsriyataam means parityajyataam, may that be given up. Even if there is censure, do not censure yourself. Do not try to please people either. Appeasement does not work at all. Do not try to please them just because they censure you. Simply leave them alone. Duniya to badaa vistaar hai! -the world is a very vast place.

When people censure you, the world is very vast. You can go away and leave them alone. Everybody has got accommodation in this world. Do not try to appease them. Appeasement never works. I have seen this and learnt the hard way. You should never take up appeasement work. Those who need appeasement need treatment. It is a waste of time and not helpful for you or the other person. Therefore, let them say you are bad, it does not matter. Leave them alone. You have not taken charge of people in the world. Bhagavaan is there, he will take care of them. You need not bother about it. You take care of yourself, that is enough.

(from Sadhana Panchakam)

WHO IS A BRAHMANA

(VAJRARUCHIKOPANISHAD)

Salutations to Thee, the ever-blissful and all wise, the witness of all activities of the intellect, the knower of the Vedanta, the supreme Brahman-infinite and endless.

By the knowledge of which sages reach the extremely wondrous Brahmana-hood meditate upon that state as Thy own Self which is the essence of Brahman.

We shall now expound the scripture Vajrasuchi which has the potency of dispelling ignorance, which is adverse to those who are ignorant, but which is an ornament to those who are wise.

It has been laid down by the Smritis in accordance with the injunction of the Vedas that there are four Varnas (castes), Brahmana, Kshatriya, Vaishya, and Sudra, of which the Brahmana caste alone is the highest.

But there is a query there- who is to be called a Brahmana? Is it the self, the body, birth, knowledge, act, or the man of virtue.?

If it is said that the Jiva or the self is Brahmana, then it is not, because of the identical form of the Jiva in all the exceedingly unknown manifold bodies because the occurrence of the many bodies is due to Karma, though the Jiva is one, because the same Jiva is obtained in all the Sariras, the Jiva is not Brahmana.

If it is contended that the body is Brahmana, then it is not because the bodies of all mortals from the Chandala upwards, being composed of the five elements, are identical in form, because birth and death, virtue and vice are equally to be seen in all. Because of the absence of a rule of distinction in colour, such as a Brahmana ought to be white in colour, a Kshatriya red, a Vaishya yellow and a Sudra black, and because there falls upon the sons when the bodies of their parents are burnt, the sin of having killed a Brahmana, the body is not Brahmana.

If it is observed that birth (in a particular caste) determines Brahmana-hood, then we say, it does not. There have been many great seers born of different beings of different origin. Rishyasringa was born of a deer; Kausika came from grass, Jambuka was born of a Jackal, Valmiki rose from an ant-hill, Vyasa was born of a fisherwoman, Gautama issued forth from the back of a rabbit; Vasishta was born of Urvasi, Agastya came out of a vessel; thus, have we heard it said. Even among other kinds of beings besides these, there have been Rishis who have propounded the higher wisdom. Therefore, caste does not assign the status of a Brahmana.

If knowledge is said to determine Brahmana-hood, it does not. There are many, evident even among the Kshatriyas and others, who have had a vision of the Real. Therefore, knowledge is not the criterion of a Brahmana.

If action is held to be determinative of Brahmana-hood, it is not. Being impelled by Karma- it is seen to be the same in all beings, as Prarabdha, Sanchita and Agami- people perform their actions. Therefore, Karma does not make up for a Brahmana.

If it is said that the virtuous is a Brahmana, he is not. There are many among the Kshatriyas and others who are givers of gold. Hence the virtuous is not a Brahmana.

Then who is a Brahmana?

It is the opinion and conclusion of all Srutis, Smritis, Puranas and Itihasas that he alone is a Brahmana who sees with an inner eye as clear as crystal the second-less Atman, which is devoid of caste, quality and action, of all the blots such as the six-fold changes of body and mind, which is the eternal form of Existence-Knowledge-Bliss, the still basic Reality; which pervades in and through all beings, which fills both within and without even as the Akasa, which is of the nature of boundless Infinite Bliss, which can be known by intuitive experience alone, and

which shines through inner light. He is a Brahmana who, thus purified by the inner vision, is rid of the vices like passion and desire, who has controlled his inner and outer senses, who is free from avarice, thirst, longing, and other passions, whose mind is untouched by pride and egoity, and who has all these signs of a liberated soul. The occurrence of Brahmana-hood is through no other path.

Contemplate upon the ONE-without-a-second, the Life, Light and Love as Brahman; contemplate upon the Atman, the absolute EXISTENCE-KNOWLEDGE-BLISS as Brahman. Thus reiterates the Upanishad.

Peace! Peace! Peace!

Om Tat Sat!

Translated by Mahadev

◆ We imagine that we will realise that Self sometime, whereas we are never anything but the Self.

RAMANA MAHARSHI

◆ When you have found true happiness by realising the Self, that is, by realising that your true nature is absolute peace and bliss, you are not in conflict with anybody, your vision is equal and your activities turn to the service of everyone, then it is that you become the true instrument of God.

◆ Forget not the central truth that God is seated in your own heart. Don't be disheartened by failures at initial stages. Cultivate the spirit of surrender to the workings of His will in you and outside you until you have completely surrendered up your ego-sense, and have known He is in all and He is all, and you and He are one.

◆ We have to take the whole universe as the expression of the one Self. Then only our love flows to all beings and creatures in the world equally.

SWAMI RAMDAS

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

ASHRAM NEWS

MOTHER ASHRAM:15-8-2024: On the occasion of 78th Independence Day celebrations, National flag was hoisted in the School premises. The staff, students and Ashram devotees and inmates participated in the event with pride and fervour. Swamini Vinamrananda and Swamini Saradapriyananda graced the occasion. Swamini Saradapriyananda spoke on the sacrifices made by many great people of our country in making the country free and independent and their qualities of selfless service and national pride should be emulated by the students for their holistic development so that they can contribute their mite for the prosperity of our nation.

26-8-2024: The Ashram wore a festive look on the eve of Sri Krishnashtami and Inmates and other devotees of the Ashram participated in the celebrations with great devotion. Pujas were conducted in Sri Krishna Mandir and the programme ended with distribution of Prasad.

KOTAGIRI BRANCH: New staff members were warmly welcomed by the fraternity and they were given an opportunity to share their background and teaching philosophy.

As every year, to maintain the competitive spirit and enthusiasm among the children, M/s Chellaram Trust have awarded cash prizes to the rank holders for their excellent performance during the last year's 10th Board examinations. Mrs Ammaji Saibaba and Mr. Nitish Sivakumar also joined in the celebrations by enhancing the prize amounts. The following is the list of students who have been awarded cash prizes:

School 1st: Sarathi - Rs.35000/-; School 2nd: Malini K - Rs.30000/-

School 3rd: Dharshana S - Rs. 25000/-

School 4th: Dheekshit S: Rs. 20000/-

School 5th: Ilaiyarasan E- Rs.7500/- and Divyadharshini D: Rs.7500/-

Pujya Swamiji's Aradhana was performed by the Staff and the Students on the 10th June with a sense of devotion.

On 12th June the new batch of students who have taken admission to eleventh standard were warmly welcomed. The Principal and other Senior Staff addressed the students advising them to work hard with dedication to reach the high goals they set for themselves. Staff in their

address asked the students to have a balanced approach to both curricular and co-curricular activities to achieve holistic development in their academic pursuits.

On June 13th, an awareness campaign for students of class 6th to 9th about the Kavalan SOS app. was held in our School to enable them to install the app. in their phones and use it in cases of emergency like child kidnapping and girl abuse.

The LKG class was commenced on the 18th with great enthusiasm and excitement. The young kids in toe with their parents were warmly welcomed by the teachers and staff. The classrooms were colourfully decorated to make the children enjoy the school environment.

On June 21st, our school celebrated International Yoga Day with great enthusiasm and soaring spirits. The event was graced by Mr. Siva Kumar, Inspector of Police and presided over by Mataji. The students performed 'Pot Yoga' and 'Yoga Dance' showcasing the students' agility and creativity. The Principal, addressing the gathering emphasised on the role of Yoga in modern day's hectic lifestyle to keep oneself healthy.

◆ The Sages gave to the Supreme the name A-U-M which stands as the root of all language. The first letter 'A' is the mother-sound, being the natural sound uttered by every creature when the throat is opened, and no sound can be made without opening the throat. The last letter 'M', spoken by closing the lips, terminates all articulation. As one carries the sound from the throat to the lips, it passes through the sound 'U'. These three sounds therefore cover the whole field of possible articulate sound. Their combination is called the Akshara or the imperishable word, the Sound-Brahman or the word God, because it is the most universal name which can be given to the Supreme.

SWAMI PARAMANANDA
from the Kathopanishad

◆ Suffering is caused by the misuse of free will. God has given us the power to accept Him or reject Him. He doesn't want us to encounter woes, but will not interfere when we choose our actions that lead to misery.

PARAMAHAMSA YOGANANDA

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

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Via) Sankhavaram 533446, Kakinada District,

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Email : srisanthiashram@gmail.com

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APPEAL FOR SUBSCRIBERS OF PEACE MAGAZINE

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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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