



PEACE

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Kaivalyopaniṣat

स ब्रह्मा स शिवस्सेन्द्रस्सो ऽक्षरः परमस्स्वराट् ।

स एव विष्णुस्स प्राणस्सऽकालो ग्रिस्स चन्द्रमाः ।।

*Sa brahmā sa śivassendrasso'kṣarah
paramassvarāt,*

*Sa eva viṣṇussa prāṇassakālo'gnissa
candramāḥ.*

He is the creator and annihilator. He is the Lord of heavens. He is immutable, supreme, self-shining. He alone is the sustainer. He is the cosmic Life. He is the time. He is the fire and the moon.

In the Vedic literature, the three acts connected to the universe, namely, creating, sustaining and dissolving are vividly described. The Cosmic Person, who is the material as well as the efficient cause of the universe, is designated with a different name with reference to each act. God as creator is Brahma, sustainer is Vishnu, and annihilator is Rudra or Siva. The Existence-Awareness Absolute, which is the origin of the cosmos, acquires three different names as the creation is divided into three stages.

(The detailed explanation of this Mantra can be had from *Kaivalyopaniṣat* (mantra 7) Published by Brahma Vidya Kuteer, #501, Deccan Corner Building, Diamond Point, Sikh Village, Secunderabad - 500 009, Telangana, India, Ph. 040- 2750 2035).

(Tattva Prakāṣikā by Swami Tattvavidananda Saraswati)

Prayer

VERSE 5

विधिहरिहरभेदमप्यखण्डे बत विरचय्य बुधानपि प्रकामम् ।
भ्रमयति हरिहरविभेदभावानघटितघटनापटीयसी माया ॥ ५

*vidhihariharabhedamapyakhaṇḍe
bata viracayya budhānapi prakāmaṃ,
bhramayati hariharavibhedabhāvān
aghaṭitaghaṭanāpaṭīyasī māyā. 5*

bata - alas!; *aghaṭitaghaṭanāpaṭīyasī* - capable of making the impossible possible; *māyā* - illusion; *akhaṇḍe api* - even though undivided; *vidhihariharabhedam* - the division of Brahmadeva, *Viṣṇu*, and *Rudra*; *viracayya* - having made; *hariharavibhedabhāvān* – having devotion divided between *Viṣṇu* and *Rudra*; *budhān api* - even the scholars; *prakāmaṃ* - indeed; *bhramayati* - deludes.

Alas! *Māyā* makes the impossible possible. It creates the division of Brahmadeva, *Viṣṇu*, and *Rudra* even in the undivided Brahman. It indeed deludes even the scholars such that they practice devotion divided between *Viṣṇu* and *Rudra*.

(From *tatvapraśāṅgikā of māyā pañcakam*, Published by Brahma Vidya Kuteer, # 501, Deccan Corner Building, Diamond Point, Sikh Village, Secunderabad - 500 009, Telangana, India, Ph. 040- 2750 2035).

(Śrī Śaṅkarācārya's *Māyā Pañcakam*)

MEDITATION

त्वदनुपथं कुलायमिदमात्मसुहृत्प्रियवच्चरति
तथोन्मुखेत्वयि हिते प्रिय आत्मनि च ।
न बत रमन्त्यहो असदुपासनयात्महनो
यदनुशया भ्रमन्त्युरुभये कुशरीरभृतः ॥

*tvadanupatham kulāyamidamātmasuhr̥tpriyavaccarati
tathonmukhe tvayi hite priya ātmani ca,
na bata ramantyo asadupāsanayātmahano
yadanuśayā bhramantyrubhaye kuśarīrabhṛtaḥ .*

Human birth is very precious and hence this body and mind are to be dedicated to the service of the Lord. Not only that, the atman - one's own Self - constantly calls one to a life of renunciation like one's nearest and dearest friend. But, man, alas prefers to live a detestable existence and a suicidal one at that, by pampering the transient body and the senses. He is born again and whirls round and round in the fierce ocean of worldliness, and spends his life in fear and misery.

- from *Sṛtigīta* by Swami Gabhirananda,
Advaita Ashram Publication

*Merry Christmas
&
Happy New Year 2016
and
Subha Sankranti*

*May the Grace of Almighty God Bless you, keep
you, protect you and give you Peace, Peace and
Peace. May God in His Infinite Love and
Mercy keep you and bless you to realise and
reach the heights of consciousness*

Swami Omkar

*Inhale and Exhale the Omkara to control the
mind from all worldly matters and reach the
inner self for the realisation of God.*

*Pujya Swami Omkar may bless you in
your efforts to achieve the goal*

Matha Jnaneswari

CHRIST WAS BORN AGAIN

- Swami Omkar

This is the Holy Christmas Day, the 25th December in 1949. All alone I sit in my new cottage the Nirvana Kutir, which was a stable in the beginning, where the gentle cows of the Ashram used to live in rest and comfort. It is really strange how this stable was made into a small cottage of Nirvana – the living peace.

In the early hours of dawn as I sit and muse on the Glory of the Birth of the Blessed One, I feel such a thrill of ecstasy! He was supposed to have been born at the mid-night hour, when the 25th December begins. Already four precious hours have passed away since His Holy Birth. What have we done in these four hours? Are we going nearer and closer towards Him, hour after hour?

Verily Christ was born in all the devoted and dedicated hearts of all the seekers of Truth in the East and the West. He was born in the stillness of the purified hearts of all the children of God, all over the world. Christ birth, the birth of Christ-consciousness or God-consciousness, is not the monopoly of any Pope or Priest, it is the birthright and common heritage of each and every individual on the face of the earth.

But the question now is, how superficially we celebrate His Holy Birth. There are two kinds of celebrations the OUTER and the INNER. The OUTER WORSHIP is the formal worship- the worship of form and name, with OUTER decorations, new dresses, long prayers and elaborate dinners, finally ending in drinking and dancing.

Whereas the INNER WORSHIP consists of drawing to the Christ birth within, in rising above form and name, merging within, identifying with the STILL SMALL VOICE OF GOD in one's own purified heart. Here the devotee worships the Blessed Christ no longer with words, but with silence in solitude. His very birth, the HOLY BREATH, is an offering to the NEW-BORN CHRIST. He

worships the Christ within each and every breath, glorifying His presence within and without. This is the inner worship.

In the Outer worship, man does not know the value of the precious TIME. He is a slave of every custom and formality. He allows not only hours and days but even weeks and months to roll by in doing nothing, ever living for the selfish self. From the depths of ignorance he is going into deeper depths of darkness.

In the inner worship, the lover of Christ knows the preciseness of the invaluable TIME. He takes care of not only days and hours but even also of minutes and seconds. Such a one worships Christ with each and every breath for EVERY BREATH IS A NEW BIRTH to him. How blessed it is to worship the new born Christ with each and every breath!

How glorious it is to worship Christ within in the present living moment, burying the dead past and ignoring the dim future.

Blessed are they who recognize CHRIST, not only within themselves, but also without in others for all is CHRIST, the one without a second!

May all Homage be unto this indwelling Christ, the Omnipresent One, who is throbbing in every heart, sparkling in every eye and flowing in every breath as ALL IN ALL!

This is offered to Sri Sushila Devi, the living and loving child of the Blessed Christ

Inhale and Exhale Peace

May peace be unto all

Om! Om! Om!

From unpublished article of Swami Omkar

THE WORLD OF LIGHT

-Swami Omkar

The World of Light is the Birthright of every man, yet man is satisfied to live in a world of darkness and confusion, ignoring his Divine heritage, the Effulgent Light. I long to live in the world of Light where there is neither day or night, where there is neither remembrance nor forgetfulness, nor past, present and future. Verily, the world of Light is above time, space and causation.

Whether it is in work or rest, in service or meditation, whether eyes are closed or opened, one is always living in a world of Light, for Light above is the only Changeless and everlasting Reality. But the constant awareness of the ever-present Light is what is needed from personal experience.

In the world of Light, the JIVA- the individual- is Brahman, the Universal. Here, there is only one kind of worship, the worship of Universal. It is ceaselessly going on, flowing like that of the Ganges from the Himalayan heights. It is the worship of SOHAM, inhaling and exhaling Peace with every breath, in each and every moment of one's life.

Duality is the only biggest stumbling block of the world of Light. Ego is the greatest enemy here. With the dawn of Knowledge, the ego is rooted out and annihilated and duality disappears before the Light of lights. How blessed it is to work, move and breathe in the world of Light, not now and then but always, eternally! Blessed are they who can recognize LIGHT in pain and pleasure, in poverty and wealth, in sickness and health, nay, in disgrace and honour, and above all in death and life, for the Light of lights is above all these dual aspects of life. These dual aspects exist only in the dual world of duality, but never in the Real World of Light.

There - in the Kingdom of light, it is ALL LIGHT, within, without, above, below and all around. Nothing else exists there except the one interpenetrating LIGHT. May all Glory may be unto this infinite Light, Eternal Light, indivisible Light.

May this Self-effulgent Light pervade and permeate not only the very cells of our beings, but also the whole Universe from the tiniest atom to the biggest planet. May we all be as sparks of one Light, Rays of the one sun, waves of the one ocean, images of the one God, express nothing but LIGHT in thought, word and deed. Now and Always! This is the prayer of your OMKAR

Om! Om! Om!

Offered to Sri Swami Ramdasji Maharaj, the Light of Anandashram, involving the Richest Blessings of the Light of lights, for the Peace of all.

From the unpublished articles of Swami Omkar

ANY FOOL CAN DO IT

Any fool can be at peace and meditate with closed eyes, but he alone is the wise and most wonderful man who can keep up the ceaseless flow to consciousness while engaged in any action or amidst his very busy work.

It is easy to keep up the ceaseless flow of God consciousness with eyes closed, because one is practically dead to the outer world.

But alas how difficult it is to express the Highest while the senses are engaged in seeing, hearing, smelling, feeling and thinking etc.

Yet it is so easy for the WISE, for the one who has paid the price, the price of Self Surrender. Because the self is surrendered, the ego is annihilated and only the SOUL works, witnesses, writes, eats, laughs and does anything and everything.

May all glory be unto the Wise in knowing the ego is dead.

Hari Om

From the Divine Voice of Omkar.

SERVICES RENDERED BY SRI SHANTI ASHRAM

-Mata Jnaneswari

By the grace of God Sri Shanti Ashram established in 1917 by Sri Swami Omkar, has been constantly rendering great service. Unfortunately people are unable to recognize this genuinely pure service.

“Having eyes we see not what ought to be seen. Having ears we hear not what ought to be heard”, remarked a saint. Many enjoy the sight of the buildings and gardens. But very few understand, enjoy and appreciate the sayings that are inscribed by swamiji with great love and care.

For example one saying is mentioned here :

“If wealth is lost nothing is lost; if health is lost something is lost; if character is lost everything is lost and if time is lost it will never come back.”

It is stated that if money is lost nothing is lost. If we ponder over this statement we realise that negative vibrations have been removed (Shani poyindi – the evil influence of the planet Saturn is mitigated). If health is lost something is lost which means health is wealth. If we are not healthy what is the use of all our wealth! Can we increase our longevity? That is the reason why it is said that “those who waste minutes will waste their entire lives.” Even if one second is lost it is lost for ever.

The statement “If character is lost everything is lost”, is absolutely true. Normally it is believed that one who is not educated is as good as an animal. On the other hand, the person without good character is equivalent to an animal. It is very sad that even among the educated there are people who are characterless. It is unfortunate that one forgets the very purpose of being born as a human being in this holy land. Can we get an opportunity to be born as a human

being in this land of action, Karmabhumi that easily! We reap the result of what we sow. Having sown a Neem seed can we expect a Mango crop?

Hindu religion is Sanatana (ancient) Dharma. As Lord Krishna stated in Gita, Dharma existed since the beginning of creation. There is only one Dharma for the entire world. The Hindus are aware of it, but the others are not. "Treat all the beings as oneself" is the belief of this holy land. Therefore we do not hate anyone or abuse any one. The same divinity resides in all beings – this belief makes us not to hate any religion. Just as there is only one SUN for the entire world there is only one God. As electricity has no form so is God without form or attributes. That God is addressed by many names.

Different words in different languages for one word 'water' as Tanni in Tamil, Neeru in Telugu, Pani in Hindi, Jalam or Udakam in Sanskrit are used. But they are all referring to only water. When one realizes this truth there will be no religious quarrels whatever be the cast, creed, colour or religion of people, as they are all the children of one God. If this is remembered we can all live happily.

May Peace be unto all !

(original article is in Telugu published in Shanti, October 1983.
Translated by Shanta Subba Rao)

DEVI

-Swami Sivananda

Devi or Maheswari or Parasakti is the Supreme Sakti or power of the Supreme Being. When Vishnu and Mahadeva destroyed various Asuras, the power of Devi was behind them. Devi took Brahma, Vishnu and Rudra and gave them necessary Sakti to proceed with the work of creation, preservation and destruction.

Devi is the creator of the Universe. She is the Universal Mother. Durga, Kali, Bhagavati, Bhavani, Amba, Ambika, Jagadamba, Kameswari, Ganga, Uma, Chandi, Chamundi, Lalita, Gauri, Kundalini, Tara, Rajeswari, Tripurasundari, etc., are all Her forms. She is worshipped during the nine days of Dusserah as Durga, Lakshmi and Sarasvati.

Devi is the Mother of all. The pious and the wicked, the rich and the poor, the saint and the sinner – all are Her children. Devi or Sakti is the Mother of Nature. She is the Nature itself. The whole world is her body. Mountains are Her bones. Rivers are Her veins. Ocean is Her bladder. Sun and moon are Her eyes. Wind is Her breath. Agni is Her mouth. She runs this world show.

MANIFESTATION OF SAKTI

Sakti is symbolically female; but it is in reality, neither male nor female. It is only a force which manifests itself in various forms.

The five elements and their combinations are the external manifestations of the Mother. Intelligence, discrimination, psychic power and will are Her internal manifestations. Humanity is Her visible form.

She lies dormant in the Muladhara Chakra in the form of the serpentine power or coiled-up energy known as the Kundalini Sakti. She is at the centre of the life of the universe. She is the primal force of life that underlies all existence. She vitalizes the body through the Sushumna Nadi and the nerves. She nourishes the body with chyle

(chyma) and blood. She vitalizes the universe through Her energy. She is the energy in the sun, the fragrance in the flowers, the beauty in the landscape, the Gayatri or the Blessed Mother in the Vedas, colour in the rainbow, intelligence in the mind, potency in the homeopathic oils, power in the Makradhvaja and gold-oxide, will and Vichara Sakti in sages, devotion in Bhaktas, Samyama and Samadhi in Yogins, Vidya, Shanti, lust, anger, greed, egoism, pride are all her forms. Her manifestations are countless.

SIVA AND SAKTI

The Supreme Lord is represented as Siva and His power is represented as His wife- Sakti, Durga or Kali. Mother Durga is the energy aspect of the Lord. Without Durga, Siva has no expression; and without Siva, Durga has no existence. Siva is the soul of Durga, Durga is identical with Siva. Lord Siva is only a silent witness. He is motionless, absolutely changeless. He is not affected by the cosmic play. Durga does everything.

Siva is omnipotent, impersonal, inactive. He is pure consciousness. Sakti is dynamic. The power or active aspect of immanent God is Sakti. Sakti is the embodiment of power.

Siva and Sakti are related as Prakasa and Vimarsa. Sakti or Vimarsa is the power that is latent in the pure consciousness. Vimarsa gives rise to the world of distinctions. In other words, Sakti is the very possibility of the Absolute's appearing as many, of God's causing this universe. God creates this world through Srishti-sakti, preserves through Sthiti-sakti and destroys through Samhara-sakti.

There is no difference between God and His Sakti, just as there is no difference between fire and its burning power. Sakti is inherent in God. Just as you cannot separate heat from fire, so also you cannot separate Sakti from God, the possessor of Sakti. Sakti is Brahman itself. Siva and Sakti are one. Siva is always with Sakti. They are inseparable. Worship of Durga or Parvati or Kali is worship of Lord Siva.

MATTER ENERGY AND SPIRIT

Mother is the creative aspect of the Absolute. She is symbolized as Cosmic Energy. Energy is the physical ultimate of all forms of matter, and the sustaining force of the spirit. Energy and spirit are inseparable. They are essentially one.

Matter is reducible to energy. The Prasnopanishad says that Rayi and Prana – matter and energy – constitute the whole of creation. Matter is the outward index of the inward Power that is expressed by God. The power that originates and sustains the universe is not the jada Sakti or the electrical energy which is the ultimate reality of the scientist, but Chaitanya Sakti, the Power of the immutable consciousness of Brahman. In fact, it is not a power but a power which is Brahman.

THE DIVINE MOTHER

Sakti may be termed as that by which we live and have our being in this universe. In this world, all the wants of the child are provided by the mother. The child's growth, development and sustenance are looked after by the mother. Even so, all the necessities of life and its activities in this world and the energy needed for it, depend upon Sakti or the Universal Mother. The human mother is a manifestation of the Universal Mother. All women are forms of divine Mother.

You are more free with your mother than with anybody else. You open your heart more freely to your mother than to your father. There is no God greater than the mother. It is the mother who protects you, nourishes you, consoles you, cheers you and nurses you. She is your first Guru. The first syllable which almost every quadruped or human being utters is the beloved name of the mother, *Ma*. She sacrifices her all for the sake of her children.

A child is more familiar with the mother than with the father, because the former is very kind, loving, tender and affectionate and looks after the wants of the child. Whatever the child wants anything,

it runs with outstretched hands, to the mother, rather than to the father. If she hears the cry of the child, she leaves her domestic work and runs immediately to attend to the child. In the spiritual field also, the aspirant or the devotee – the spiritual child has more intimate relationship with Mother Durga than Father Siva. Lord Siva is quite indifferent to the external world. He is a Tyagi and a Virakta, he wears the garlands of the skulls of His devotees, rubs the whole body with the Vibhuti or holy ash and remains in the crematorium in an intoxicated state. He is absorbed in contemplation of the Self. He remains in the state of Nirvikalpa Samadhi. He has handed over the power of attorney to His consort, Durga. It is Mother Durga only who looks after the affairs of the world. Lord Siva gazes at Durga, His Sakti. She engages Herself in creation, preservation and destruction.

DURGA – LAKSHMI- SARASVATI

The Divine Mother is everywhere triple. She is endowed with the three Gunas, viz., Sattva, Rajas and Tamas. She manifests as Will or Iccha-sakti. Action or Kriya-sakti and knowledge or the Jnana-sakti. She is Brahma-sakti (Sarasvati) in conjunction with Brahma, Vishnu-sakti (Lakshmi) in conjunction with Lord Vishnu, Siva-sakti (Mahakali or Durga) in conjunction with Lord Siva.

Sarasvati is cosmic intelligence, cosmic consciousness, cosmic knowledge. Lakshmi does not mean mere material wealth like gold, cattle, etc.,. all kinds of prosperity, glory, magnificence, joy, exaltation, or greatness, come under Lakshmi. Appayya Dikshitar calls even the final Liberation as the Moksha-samrajya-lakshmi. Mahakali is the transformative power of Divinity, the power that dissolves multiplicity in unity.

The Devi assumes many aspects according to tasks to be performed by Her – sometimes sweet and tender, and at others, terrible and devouring. But She is always kind and gracious to her devotees. Arjuna, the Pandava hero, worshipped the Goddess before starting the fight, the fight against the evil minded Kauravas.

Sri Rama worshipped Durga at the time of the fight with Ravana, to invoke Her aid in the war. He fought and won through Her grace.

THE NAVARATRI FESTIVAL AND ITS SPIRITUAL SIGNIFICANCE

During Navaratri or the Nine Nights, the whole of India adores the Mother and worships Her with great devotion. Dusserah, Durga Puja and Navaratri are one and the same. On the first three nights, Durga or the destructive aspect of the Mother is worshipped. On the succeeding three nights, it is the creative aspect or Lakshmi that is adored. And on the last three nights, the knowledge aspect or Sarasvati is invoked. The tenth is the Vijaya Dasami day or the Day of Victory.

There is a special significance in the arrangement. When the Devi is worshipped by a devotee in this order, as Durga, She first destroys the evil propensities that lurk in his mind. Then, as Lakshmi, She implants therein Daivi Sampat or the divine qualities conducive to spiritual unfoldment. Then as Sarasvati, She bestows true knowledge on him.

The tenth day commemorates the victory of knowledge over nescience, of goodness over evil. It is the day on which boys are put in the school. Aspirants are initiated on this day, on this memorable Vijaya Dasami day, the carpenter, the tailor, the mason, the artist, the songster, the typist and all technical workers do Puja for their instruments and implements. This is Ayudha Puja. They behold and recognize the Sakti or Power behind these instruments and worship the Devi for their success, prosperity and peace.

WORSHIP OF THE DIVINE MOTHER

Worship of Devi or the Universal Mother gives not only prosperity, but liberation from all bondages. It leads to the attainment of knowledge of the Self. The story of the Kenopanishad, known as the Yakshaprasna, supports this view. Uma taught the Truth to the Devas.

Sakti is all. She can do anything. She can make or mar, she can mend or end. For the sake of continuance of her divine play here, She herself, as Avidya Maya, has veiled the Truth from you and bound you to this Samsara. When She is propitiated through the practice of sincere devotion and unconditional Self-surrender, She, as Vidya Maya, removes the veil and enables you to perceive the Truth.

No one can free himself from the thralldom of mind and matter without the Mother's grace. The fetters of Maya are too hard to break. If you worship her as the great Mother, you can very easily go beyond Prakriti through Her benign grace and blessings. She will remove all obstacles in the path and lead you safely into the illimitable domain of eternal bliss and make you absolutely free.

May Parasakti or Devi – the universal Mother Jagadamba – bless you all with wisdom, peace immortal bliss.

From the Divine Life Magazine, Feb., 1999

We are inseparable one in the Great Spirit.

Shall we now merge for a while in the Glory of united Oneness and Universal Love, forgetting all names and forms.

Here there is neither you nor I.

All Divinity it is. All Peace. All Glory.

All walking the same path of Truth so let us relax into deep, deep silence, feeling the Power encircling us and making us One.

May God bless us all.

-Swami Omkar, The Divine Voice of Omkar.

BEING AND DOING

-Swami Chidananda

Wonderful homage to that supreme, eternal, universal spirit, the great Divine Reality, which is permanent and unchanging, absolute and transcending-beyond all the impermanent and ever-changing manifestations and names and forms that are temporary and transient, impermanent and ephemeral. May His divine grace enable us all to move onward and forward from theory to practice, from knowing to being and doing.

Loving adorations to revered and beloved Holy Master, Gurudev Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj, who was a sage of practical wisdom, he spoke and wrote and taught us to be and to do, not merely to know.

One of the branches of chemistry that has always fascinated people is the process called alchemy- a transformation of something from one state into something that is far, far more precious and invaluable – to a priceless state. This branch of chemistry has always fascinated people from times immemorial.

The spiritual life, the spiritual path and the sadhanas of this inner spiritual life and path, are in a way similar to such an alchemy. They are meant to bring about a transformation of our consciousness and awareness from one state to another state, one which is far higher and superior – a priceless, precious state, incomparable in its worth, unparalleled in its uniqueness. It is an inner alchemy. And it is practical; it is not theory.

After imparting a great deal of knowledge through seventeen chapters of the Srimad Bhagavad Gita, the crucial question is put by Lord Krishna to Arjuna in the eighteenth chapter; "I have told you many things. You have heard, and now they are known to you. Now, will you actually *be* what I have wanted you to *be*, and will you *do* what I want you to do?"

Arjuna's answer comes in the affirmative; "Yes, I shall, I will be what You want me to be- a courageous hero, and obedient disciple, not a coward. And I shall do what You want me to do, which is to do my duty, to fulfil my highest duty". This is an eternal pointer to all seekers of knowledge, who must simultaneously with acquiring knowledge, immediately give effect to it in the form of practical spiritual life. It is an applied science of spirituality.

Let us therefore, make up our minds that henceforward our one aim and objective will be to translate theory into practice, to transform all that we have known from knowing into being and doing. May the supreme, Almighty Being and Holy Master help us in this indispensable process, which is vital and essential to success in this great journey whose goal is liberation! May God bless us all!

-from Divine Life Magazine, February. 1999.

SOHAM HAS TWO ASPECTS

In the Hours of Silence, when one meditates on the Universal Energy of Central Power, merged in Soham, one feels that the very Soham has two aspects - the finite and the Infinite, the visible and Invisible, the manifested and Unmanifested. All Sadhakas - the worshippers of Nirguna the formless aspect, can easily feel the visible Soham, but it is given only to one in a million, to feel and recognize the Invisible, the Unmanifested.

But the great consolation is, that as one meditates on the visible, the finite Soham breath, concentratedly. in an unceasing flow of one Pointedness, like a ceaseless current, the finite Soham leads one to its Source, the Infinite Energy the very basis of all manifestations. The finite bubble merges in the Ocean, to find itself as One Akhanda Sat Chit Anandam.

- Swami Omkar, from the Hours of Silence.

RESURGENT CULTURE

-Swami Krishnananda

(Continued from September 2015)

THE UNDERLYING UNITY

In this connection it would be profitable for you if I recall to your memory an interesting system of philosophy expounded in recent times by the famous Professor, Alfred North Whitehead, on the basis of the discourses made by Einstein in his theory of relativity. It is the opinion of Whitehead, not a mere fantastic belief but a rational conviction, that things in the world do not exist as localized bodies or static substances in a three-dimensional space, but are really certain phases of force entering into one another and forming a marvelous completeness wherein everything is a cause and an effect at the same time from different points of view. In an interrelated cosmic family we cannot say which is dependent on what, for all are mutually included and nothing is independent. There can be no being but only becoming and process in this world of relativity. The Vedanta, however, goes above the concept of Whitehead and envisages the Eternal Being existing at the background of the world process. In fact, the conclusions of the theory of relativity shift the entire position of the scientific thinking and even the common place method of popular philosophy, and brings about a reorientation in the conception of matter, motion and force. The discovery that perceptions depend on the position and velocity of the observers make it impossible for one to state anything as an invariable truth about the things of the world. Curiously enough, the observers themselves would be relative to one another, and there would be none to observe the fact of relativity. Here we rise to a tremendous intuition, above all thought, and visualize an incredible infinite which ought to be the real Observer of the whole universe of relativity. The 'ingressive evolution' of Whitehead gives a hint to the terrific unity underlying all evolutionary process. Whitehead himself does not seem to have noticed the great significance of his system, - it points to something beyond what he intended to tell us. We are lifted to the eternal, the immortal.

Let me make the matter clear to you by another observation. You are acquainted with the principles of gravitation, a law by which bodies attract one another in a particular manner. The centres of gravity should be relative, because there is attraction everything towards everything else, under the governance of the same law. Not only material objects and masses of matter but even we as bodies are relative centres of gravity, determining one another in characteristic as well as existence. That there is an internal relationship among bodies, which is exhibited in the form of gravitation and attraction, indicates that the bodies of the universe are in some mysterious way held together by a single force – we may call it the universal centre of gravity. Unless such a centre is accepted the system, the order and the method observed in the working of the universe cannot be explained. Mystic philosophers are used to say that this cosmic centre is everywhere, with its circumference nowhere. We may call this the God of the universe, if we so wish.

We know the world; but what about that by which we know it? How can we know the knower? The great sage Yajnavalkya, prominent in the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad, makes a significant reference in his immortal instructions to his consort, Matreyi, to the awe-inspiring existence of the Self which is the seer and the knower of all things, but which itself cannot be an object of anyone's knowledge. This Self is not an element among many others in the world, for it is the observer of the elements. The two different elements – beginning from two common objects up to the individual as set against the universe, - cannot be known except by a consciousness which is all-embracing. The intimacy that subsists between the knower and the known is accounted for by the objects being phases of *Vishayachaitanya*, or the consciousness in a state of configuration. We understand, then, that matter is nothing but spirit discerned by the senses.

A great French philosopher once sat contemplating on the problem of human experience, on the methods of arriving at truth, and on the possibilities of confronting errors at every step in the hazardous attempt. He thought: May be that I do not see clearly, nor think rightly. It may be that I am forced by some imp to think wrongly and to observe imperfectly and distortedly. It is likely that nothing I

see or know is certain or capable of being designated as uncontradictable truth. Everything may be doubtful. I may doubt the existence of my body, of the world, or even the validity of the very processes of my thought. There is only a sea of doubt, nothing else. Well, accepting this position tentatively, can I come to the conclusion that the true state of affairs is that there is only doubt, doubt about even my own self, and nothing beyond? Though it may be a fact that I have the right to doubt or disbelieve everything, I have definitely no warrant to doubt that I doubt. The fact of doubting itself cannot be doubted. The doubter is indubitable. The doubter exists as an uncontradictable fact. I am, and this cannot be doubted.

And I know that I am finite. I have an innate feeling that I have to be perfect, that I should achieve unconditional perfection. Naturally, this means that I should be unrestricted and be wanting in nothing. In short, I wish to possess the infinite, and I can conceive of it as an idea. Now, this idea of perfection, of infinitude, has arisen in me, and this idea being an effect, must have a cause which is at-least equal to it. The idea arises from me, and therefore I am the cause of it. The idea, having relevance to the infinite, presupposes my own existence as having a similar relevancy. An idea of the infinite cannot be supposed to arise from a finite cause. I should be essentially infinite. We may give this stupendous Being any name, it matters little. That there is an intimate relation between the essence of the subjective knower and the reality of the objective universe cannot be doubted. Infact the two are one and form a unitary being. Reality is non-dual.

For the purpose of clarity in understanding, we may explain the constitution of the universe as in many respects similar to that of our own body. Our body is not an indivisible whole; it is made up of discrete organisms, called cells. Each cell is different from the other, with gap inbetween, and yet we have a definite feeling that we are one impartite personality. The consciousness that is immanent in us as a single being is responsible for this feeling. Such a feeling is expanded to the cosmos would be the feeling of God. This god-consciousness stands opposed to the individual body-consciousness in that the latter has an object to be known outside it, while the former is an integral fullness, a plenum outside which nothing can be. In the assertion of cosmic I, everything existent or conceivable is included.

A great hymn of the Rig-Veda, called the Purusha-Sukta, or the Hymn of the Cosmic Man, visualizes in a grand poetic image the Supreme being as endowed with thousands of limbs, thousands of heads, eyes, feet, and so on. All that was, is and shall be is said to be comprehended within this Almighty Purusha. The idea behind this majestic vision is that the universe is one body, and even as the different limbs of our body are integrated in our personal and individual consciousness, the different limbs of the universe, - including our own bodies, - are integrated as sublimated essences in the Almighty, whom we call God, Isvara, the Essence, the Substance, the Reality, etc. a correct understanding of the significance of this concept of truth will at once reveal to us our position in the universe, our relation to others, and our supreme duty in life. What can be higher duty a responsibility than to strain every nerve of ours in attaining this consummation of our existence in the Absolute! Where can be a goal other than this for us to achieve in the different walks of our life? Viewed in this way, - and there can be no other way worth the name, - the foremost duty of the human being is anything that is directly or indirectly connected with the realization of this highest end. We live for this, we move towards this, and this feeling enters deeply into our hearts, we live the true life, and we are blessed.

THE PSYCHOLOGY OF INNER MAN

Relativity of Perfection

We noted that our essential Self is the highest reality. Even doubt and denial of it really affirm it. In our ordinary external life we are prone to believe that our eyes are the seers of objects. This is the uncritical opinion of the common man. But it is not difficult to perceive that the eyes by themselves have not the power to know things independently. The matter comes into high relief in the states of dream and deep sleep, when, even if the eyes be kept open, nothing can be seen or observed. No sense-organ seems to function in these states. The ears, even if they are kept open, cannot hear sounds. If we place a few particles of sugar on the tongue of a sleeping man, he will produce no reaction and have no taste of it. The very existence of a body is then, for all practical purposes,

negative. The reason, as you will immediately understand it, is that the mind in these two states is withdrawn from the body and maintains no contact with the senses of knowledge. When the mind pervades and activates the senses, they seem to work as intelligent agents of knowledge. But when they are deprived of relation with the mind, they lose all their value. The mind is the real perceiver, and to it even the sense organs, such as the eyes, stand in the position of the objects.

But deeper analysis has shown us that even the mind has an objective character, in as much as it is seen to be deprived of all life in the state of swoon and deep sleep. It is intelligent when it is awake but non-intelligent when it is made to wind up and adjourn its activities. A consciousness higher than the mind enlivens it and gives it meaning. The mind is a psychological organ, not a metaphysical principle. It is on account of the relative activities of the mind that we have a diversity of experience in the world. It is the mind that creates a gulf between the objects and our reactions to them, between existence and value. The distinction is made not only in respect of the things of the outside world but also the different aspects of our own personality, viz., the physical body made up of the five gross elements, - earth, water, fire, air and ether -; the vital body consisting of the vital forces and the organs of motor activity; the mental body consisting of the faculties of understanding, feeling, willing, memory and the like, together with the five senses of perception; and a primal causal element which is experienced by us in the state of deep sleep. For purpose of simplicity we may use the term mind to designate all the psychological functions together. The manner in which the external world is felt by the mind is very much dependent on the latter's constitution and inherent shortcomings.

The above thesis is amply demonstrated in the several experiences of our daily life. Take for example a mother's attitude to her son. It appears that the son of an old mother had to go abroad on military service and did not return home for several years. A rumour seems to have been spread that the son passed away in a foreign land, and the shocking news broke the heart of the mother. The fact however, was that the news was unfounded and the son was alive. Just imagine the situation wherein the condition of the

son is the cause of a psychological experience by the mother. It is not that the health and the life of the son is the cause of the happiness of the mother, for, if that were so, the mother, in the instance cited, ought to have been happy, because nothing untoward had actually happened to the son. Nor can it be said that the sorrow of the son, or even his death, is the cause of the sorrow of the mother, for the mother would have been quite happy even if the son were dead, if only that news would not reach her. What, then, is the central pivot of a conscious experience? Not so much an external object or an event as an internal feeling and a reaction.

LIFE A PROCESS AND ACTIVITY

The philosophy of the Vedanta makes a distinction between existence as such and the experience of any type of existence. We may say, if we would like, that a fact or an existence is absolute so far as it goes, and a subjective experience of it is relative. Human life is a psychological process, and not an immutable existence. A knowledge of the functions of the mind is essential to understand life in its fullness. In the observation of the mind we can have no instrument, such as the ones we use in observing, measuring, examining or cleaning outward things. The mind is the student as well as the object of the study, when life as a whole is the theme that we wish to investigate and comprehend. In a famous image given in the Kathopanishad, the inner self of man is compared to a Lord seated in a chariot, the body to the chariot, the intellect to the charioteer, the mind to the reins, the senses to the horses pulling the chariot, and the objects of the senses to the roads along which the chariot is driven. The Upanishad gives a caution that the supreme state can be reached only by him who has as his charioteer a powerfully discriminative intellect which directs the restive horses of the senses with the aid of the reins of the mind, and not by any one else who may have a bad charioteer. The meaning of the analogy is that the human individuality and personality are outer forms and instruments to be properly used by the inner directive intelligence towards the great destination of life, and not to be taken as ends in themselves or mistaken for reality as such.

Not only the body and senses but even the self conceived as

a limited individual centre of consciousness is a process of intense activity, moving, changing and evolving incessantly. The individual self is the basis of knowledge as well as action. Due to confinement to a spatial existence the individual self is dominated over and harassed by certain urges, felt within itself, pointing to certain external objects and states. The desire for food, clothing and shelter, for name, fame, power, sleep and sex, often appears in human individual as a violent force which cannot be easily subdued or even intelligently controlled. These deep-rooted urges are an immediate consequence of the self's restriction to the dualistic perception of the world and an arrogation of the ultimate selfhood to itself, while the truth is otherwise. The individual has a morbid habit of unconsciously asserting itself as the centre of experience and considering the other contents of the universe as adjectives or subsidiary elements meant to bring satisfaction to it in some way or the other. In this respect, we should say that all forms of human knowledge are different types of activity to achieve certain ends other than themselves. Man never is, he is always to be. This predicament as it would be clear, a corollary of the feeling that we are localized entities forming a mechanical whole, which we call the universe, of which it seems that we can never have a simultaneous knowledge. Our perceptions are always in a series, we know things one after the another, and not at one stroke. We never see one and the same picture at two given moments in a cinematographic projections, but yet we seem to see a continuity of existence of forms on account of very quick succession and motion of the pictures. Strictly speaking, we never see one and the same thing in a particular act of perception, but the rapidity of the psychosis is so tremendous that there is an illusion of the perception of a static existence. And above all, there is that absolute Self behind all mental functions, from which these draw sustenance, and borrow existence as well as light.

... to be continued

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GOD'S LOVE FOR HIS DEVOTEE

-Swami Ramdas

There was a sepoy in the service of a State. He was put on duty as guard. One night when he was as usual on duty as a sentry, he saw at a distance devotees going in a procession singing God's name. At this, the sepoy was overcome with devotional fervor. He ran giving up his duty and joined the Kirtan party and started singing God's name in their company. The whole night was spent in Kirtan and the Sepoy returned to duty only in the morning. Soon after, he was ordered to appear before his commanding officer to answer the charge of absence from duty the previous night. The Sepoy explained what had happened. Though the charge was a serious one, he was left off with a warning.

The following night also he was on duty and again the same Kirtan party was seen passing nearby singing God's name. Though the Sepoy had been warned the previous day for his lapse, he could not resist joining the Kirtan party again. He spent all night with the party he returned to the post in the morning. After reaching his place of work, he thought it would be better for him to go and report himself to the commanding officer about his absence from duty and he did so. But the commanding officer could not understand what the Sepoy was saying. He said, "Why do you say you were absent from duty? Thinking that you would absent yourself from duty and join the street singers, I myself came at midnight to the sentry post to check if you were there. And I saw you there on duty. So where is the question of your absence?"

At this the Sepoy was stunned. He could guess how God was so gracious to him as to stand sentry assuming his form so as to save him from punishment. This incident completely changed his vision and life. He renounced everything and dedicated his life entirely to God.

From stories as told by Swami Ramdas

GIVE UP THE SENSE OF "I" AND "MINE"

- Swami Satchidananda

It was on this day, 88 years ago that our beloved Purushotham Papa presented to the world a rare gift in the form of Mataji Krishnabai. All of you are well aware of her life, attainments and teachings, how she toiled day and night to give peace and happiness to all those who came to her. She wished that everybody should get that peace which is of the eternal. Unfortunately, most of those who came asked for only that peace which belonged to the relative plane, that is they wanted to have their material needs fulfilled, thinking that such fulfillment would give them peace. It did give them peace but not long-lasting.

On this occasion we remember beloved Mataji more intensely than ever before. Such a remembrance should make us feel her presence more closely, and understand what she expected of us. Pujya Mataji wanted everyone who came in contact with our beloved Papa to aspire for the highest realization and be satisfied only by attaining that goal. She was supremely happy whenever she saw anybody with such an aspiration.

Based on the teachings of beloved Papa, she emphasized the easiest path of chanting Ram Nam constantly, and contemplating on Ram as the Supreme Being and Absolute Existence, who had manifested as the entire universe and was seated in every heart. She advised also that side by side, we should do all activities as service to Him, which means that we should be in tune with Him, constantly by Nama, Dhyana and Seva,

She made the path still simpler by telling us that there was absolutely no need for us to renounce anything externally, that is, there was no necessity to give up one's possessions, properties and families and resort to solitude in the Himalayas, which was very difficult. According to her, we were only to achieve inner renunciation, that is to renounce of "I" and "mine". This could be done living in the world, in whatever condition and circumstances we are placed. What is needed is only a change of attitude towards things. Instead of

feeling that “this is mine”, “I did this”, etc. we have only to take it that it is He who does everything and everything belongs to Him and everything is He. Sadhana done with this attitude is sure to bring very quick results without any outward change in us.

Though the above mentioned Sadhana may appear to be very easy, it actually requires a great amount of effort on our part to erase the sense of “i-ness” and “mine-ness” and accept everything as He and His. This requires a very strong foundation of chanting of Ram Nam and remembrance of God. To make this more effective and bring quicker results, Pujya Mataji has been suggesting that we should love everybody as our own and serve them physically, mentally and materially, whenever an occasion arises.

Loving everybody is possible only when we try to develop a wider vision and feel that it is Beloved Papa alone who has manifested as everybody and everything and that to love everyone is to really love Him. This practice takes away the possibility of our having dislike, hatred or jealousy towards anybody under any circumstances, as this negative feeling towards anybody means dislike, hatred and jealousy towards Beloved Papa Himself.

So the first thing we have to practice, with the constant chanting of Ram Nam, is to see our Beloved Papa in everybody and in everything. When this practice becomes stronger and stronger, the negative feelings belonging to lower nature will naturally disappear and make the mind pure.

As devotees of Beloved Papa and Mataji and as aspirants, we have to watch our thoughts every moment to see that our thoughts and actions are in the right path. If not, correct them immediately so that we may not slip down. Vigilance every moment is necessary so that we may not stray away from the path but walk straight towards the supreme Goal pointed out by Beloved Papa and Mataji.

Om Om Om

From The Points to Ponder, Anandashram Publication

श्रीगणेशाय नमः
श्रीमच्छङ्करभगवत्पादाचार्य विरचितं

माया पञ्चकम्
Śrī Śaṅkarācārya's
Māyā pañcakam

-Swami Tattvavidananda Saraswati

(Continued from September, 2015)

VERSE 2

श्रुतिशतनिगमान्तशोधकानप्यहह धनादिनिदर्शनेन सद्यः ।
कलुषयति चतुष्पदाद्यभिन्नानघटितघटनापटीयसी माया ॥ २

śrutiśatanigamāntaśodhakānapyahaha
dhanādinidarśanena sadyaḥ,
kaluṣayati catuṣpadādyabhinnān
aghaṭitaghaṭanāpaṭīyasī māyā. 2

अहह *ahaha* – lo and behold!; अघटितघटनापटीयसी *aghaṭitaghaṭanāpaṭīyasī* – capable of making the impossible possible; माया *māyā* – illusion; श्रुतिशतनिगमान्तशोधकान् अपि *śrutiśatanigamāntaśodhakān api* – even those who explore the Upanishads of the hundreds of branches of the Vedas; धनादिनिदर्शनेन *dhanādinidarśanena* – by displaying wealth, etc.; सद्यः *sadyaḥ* – at once, चतुष्पदाद्यभिन्नान् *catuṣpadādyabhinnān* – no different from quadrupeds, etc.; कलुषयति *kaluṣayati* – sullies.

Lo and behold! The power of *māyā* makes possible the im-

possible. It taints even the scholars of the scores of Upanishads and tempts them forthwith by presenting wealth, etc., before them. This *māyā* also makes human behaviour as that of animal.

The power of *māyā* is tremendous. It has the capacity to make things that are not possible or that never existed seemingly appear. *Mithyā* is defined as *sva-atyanta-abhāva-adhikaraṇe bhāsamānatvam*, that which seems to appear in a locus where it does not exist at all. The best-known illustration of this is the rope-serpent; a serpent is seen where it is not. Here one must pay attention not to the serpent, but to the fact that the rope is the substratum for the appearance and absence of the serpent. The serpent is non-existent. It is a creation of the mind, and the fact of its being perceived, though not exactly a recollection of a serpent, is something similar to a recollection. It is *māyā* that makes this happen. A similar situation arises (obtains) with reference to Brahman. Brahma *satyaṃ jagat mithyā*; Brahman is real and the world is unreal. Like there is no actual serpent on the rope, there is no jagat in Brahman, in spite of its appearance. Brahman is the substratum for both the appearance and the absence of the jagat. The jagat is relative to the mind and the senses and it is finite, multitudinous, and divided. Brahman, on the other hand, is infinite, absolute, one-without-a-second, undivided, and indivisible. In this, we see that the appearance is entirely the opposite of its substratum. Such an occurrence is called *vivarta*, or *viparīta vartanam*; we end up seeing in Brahman all that Brahman is not. There is no correlation between what we see and what truly is.

Space, time, and causation are the three sides of the prism that is the mind. We look at the timeless and spaceless Brahman reflected through this prism and see the jagat bound by space and time and divided into causes and effects, means and ends. Indeed, 'mind' is merely another name for delusion. In the absence of thought, there is no time. Similarly, there is no motion and no causation in the absence of thought. It is the power of *māyā* that brings about such improbable occurrences.

Kaluṣayati. Māyā makes the individual confused, frustrated, and unhappy. It is not only nondescript or uneducated people who are misled, but also great scholars who are deluded. While one could say the uninitiated suffer anyway due to their ignorance, the wonder is that those who have studied and thoroughly examined the Vedas and Upanishads are equally taken in by the appearances created by *māyā*. The Vedas are only four, but each Veda consists of multiple branches, each of which contains an Upanishad. The Rigveda has a hundred and one branches, the Samaveda has a thousand, the Yajurveda has twenty four, and the Atharvaveda has eleven, adding up to more than eleven hundred in all. The idea here is that there may be some who have studied many of these Upanishads and it is expected that they have overcome the delusion of worldliness, yet they also fall a prey to the workings of *māyā*. The intention is not to denigrate the scholars of Vedanta. *Śrī Śaṅkara's* position on this must be understood accordingly.

Indeed, those who know only the scriptures know nothing. A religious person may also be well versed in the scriptures. He dutifully performs rituals and prayers so that he may gain heaven upon his death. To him, life truly begins only after death; the present life is merely a preparation for life after death. He is quite satisfied with this situation and has no pretensions about it. However, the focus of Vedanta is different. It is all about gaining liberation just here and now. The study of the scriptures and the teaching of Vedanta are thus not to be compared. In Vedanta, the study of the scriptures is not an end in itself; it is but a tool for the realization of the truth. Therefore, merely knowing the scriptures truly amounts to knowing nothing. It is clear that, in presenting his vision thus, *Śrī Śaṅkara* could be brutally forthright in the *prakaraṇa* texts.

There are many schools of philosophy, like advaita, dvaita, bauddha, etc. Each one may claim that their theory alone is right and every other theory is wrong; after all, unless every other theory is wrong, any one theory cannot be right! Somehow, this kind of notion drives people. They fight over the superiority of karma over

bhakti and vice versa, or over whether bhakti is superior to *jñāna*. One goes about comparing and contrasting multiple theories, and everybody assumes his own theory to be right. In fact, theories are in themselves neither right nor wrong. Every theory is, after all, an effort to express the inexpressible or explain the inexplicable. Therefore, individual theories do not matter; ultimately, what matters is whether the theory stands up to the test of life. For instance, let us suppose that I have the vision that *jñāna* is supreme. However, to commit to this vision, I have to put it into practice; I have to live the vision. A person who truly lives a life of devotion is superior to a scholar of the scriptures. He will eventually come to know the truth, because his devotion will create the opportunity for him to gain Self-knowledge. Conversely, no degree of scriptural scholarship can save the one who continues to live a life steeped in worldliness. It is not mere theory but one's earnestness to test the theory that serves to liberate. While the study of books is desirable in the beginning, it must subsequently be replaced by direct insight.

Money and the pleasures have a peculiar power of disturbing and deluding even great scholars. One may be very knowledgeable and deliver a brilliant lecture on dispassion, eloquently quoting *Śrī Śaṅkara*, *Patañjali*, and other savants, yet himself fall a prey to worldly riches. For instance, the mere sight of a luxury car may suffice to neutralize all the dispassion that a person has assiduously cultivated, just as the very sight of the food on a buffet table may be the undoing of a person on a diet. It takes very little to mislead and delude a person. Such is the power of *māyā*.

There is a saying that goes, *sarvasaṃsāradoṣāṇāṃ tūṣṇaikā dīrghaduḥkhadā*, among all the afflictions of worldliness, greed causes the most prolonged suffering. One can fall into the trap of *māyā* very easily. The alluring persuasions of wealth or luxury seem to suffice to entrap him. Yet, at that time, what becomes of all his learning? *Bhāro'vivekinaśśāstraṃ bhāro jñānaṃ ca rāgiṇaḥ*, the learning of the scriptures is a burden to the person lacking the discernment between the Self and the non-Self, in the same way as

is the knowledge of the scriptures to the person given to worldly attachments. Professing one thing while living by something else is a huge contradiction that not only creates conflict within the individual, but also requires the person to develop two 'faces' or maintain two identities in being one kind of person in public view and another in private. The common man has no such scholarly pretensions; he identifies himself with the body.

Aśāntasya mano bhāro bhāro'nātmavidō vapuḥ, the mind is a burden to the restless and agitated person, just as is the body to the one lacking in the knowledge of the Self. A mind that is attached to the world becomes the inner tormentor. As we identify with and obsessed and get over the body, it becomes a trap and makes us suffer. Therefore, acquiring some scholarship by picking up a theory or two is not a great help and not what is required to overcome the bondage of the world. All theories fall short of the reality. The reality transcends all descriptions. Advaita or the concept of oneness is great not as a theory, but as a vision for one to live by. The expression of oneness in dynamic situations is love, entirely directionless and without motive. For instance, I love the woods, the mountains, the sky, the wind, the earth, the birds, the animals, and every human being that comes before me; I don't know good or bad people, I don't know mine from another's, I don't know friends or foes, and I don't know male or female even. I only know Atman, the life in all. In the absence of such uninhibited love, holding on to a theory, however glorious, doesn't serve any purpose. This is the spirit of what is conveyed in the second verse.

Catuspadādyabhinnān means no different from animals, etc. As we have seen earlier, *Śrī Śaṅkara* doesn't mince words in expressing his views. Here he says that those who are easily deluded and attached to the things of the world are, in spite of their scholarship, not much different from animals. I would like you to interpret the use of the word 'animal' in the correct sense. It is not used as an epithet of scorn or blame. Instead, it is *Śrī Śaṅkara*'s comparison of the attitude of an animal in a given context with that of

the individual in a similar context. He has used this simile in the *adhyāsa bhāṣya* as well, in his introduction to the Brahmasutras. There the revered *ācārya* uses the word *paśvādibhiścāviśeṣāt* and proceeds to explain it. We perceive the world as multitudinous and consisting of the opposites of good and bad, liked and not liked, etc. If that were the entire truth, in which way would we be different from an animal?

Śrī Śaṅkara says, *yathā hi paśvādayaśśabdādibhiśśrotrādīnāṃ sambandhe sati śabdādivijñāne pratikūle jāte tato nivartanta anukūle ca pravartante*. Describing the behavior of a cow here, he says that when a cow hears a favorable sound, like that of the master bringing the feed, it moves towards it, and if it hears an unfavorable sound, like that of the master advancing menacingly with a stick in hand, it turns away. In fact, I was once walking along a dirt road adjacent to a cattle farm, where cows and calves were out grazing lazily in the meadow. At that time, there came from a distance the sound of a pickup truck, which made the cattle suddenly stop grazing and look up. They watched as the truck slowly lumbered across the meadow. The truck carried their evening feed and they seemed to know it. One of the cows, a big one, began bellowing, 'Amba,' and soon all other cows and calves followed suit. I was reminded of this allusion by *Śrī Śaṅkara* and it was then that I understood his description. Indeed, we are no different from these animals; when the bell rings to announce lunch or dinner, we know its importance. We abruptly stop whatever we are doing and take quick and determined steps towards the dining hall!

Śrī Śaṅkara elaborates on the innate behavior of the cow further, when he says, *yathā daṇḍodyatakaram puruṣamabhimukhamupalabhya māṃ hantumayamicchatīti palāyitumārabhante*; when the cow sees the master angry and wielding a lathi, it knows that he intends to beat it and starts moving away. In doing so, the cow perceives and infers correctly. In the same way, in a world that we perceive as multitudinous and divide into the opposites of good and bad, we also identify with the body-mind and

employ perception and inference as the primary means of cognition to project attachment and aversion. At this point, *Śrī Śaṅkara* seems to be asking how we are any different from the animals. You must note that he is not saying that we are animals. The idea is that we should be aware that all that exists is one, in spite of the seeming appearance to the contrary. There is no friend or foe; there is only Divinity. Living beings are many but Life is One. If the vision of oneness is lacking despite the study of the scriptures, indeed, how are we any different from the poor animals? Even highly educated people are no different than animals in their view of the world as varied and in their basic behavior of developing attachments and aversions. All of this is wrought by the power of *māyā* to mislead. The message here is that we must be cautious and on our guard at all time so as to not be overwhelmed by *māyā*. The study of advaita is therefore one thing, while the ability to live by the vision of advaita is a challenge that is altogether different.

to be continued...

ROOT OUT THE LATENT DESIRE

Do you wish to be perpetually happy? Then give up seeking and expectation whatever it may be, has its root in subtle Desire. Hence, root out the latent desire from its very source. Destroy it from its very roots. Burn it completely in fire of God-consciousness, the Splendour of Millions of Suns, your true Heritage. As Sun of suns you have nothing to beg, seek or expect from any one. On the contrary you can afford to give and give, to share and pour out Life, Light and Love, ceaselessly on one and all. Verily, it is the Giver who is ever happy, not the recipient.

- Swami Omkar, from the Hours of Silence.

PRACTICE OR LIVE THE LIFE

- Edited by Sista Subba Rao

Continued from September 2015

You can only attain this supreme knowledge, this divine love, by unremitting endeavour in self-discipline and by gaining victory after victory over yourself.

Train your mind in strong, impartial and gentle thought, train your heart in purity and compassion, train your tongue to silence and to true and stainless speech; so shall you enter the way of holiness and peace and shall ultimately realise the immortal love. So living without seeking to convert, you will convince, without arguing you will teach; not cherishing ambition, the wise will find you out and without striving to gain men's opinions, you will subdue their hearts. For love is all-conquering, all powerful and the thoughts and deeds and words of love can never perish.

It is no less selfish and sinful to cling to opinion than to cling to impure desire. Knowing this, the good man gives up himself unreservedly to the spirit of love, and dwells in love towards all, contending with none, condemning none, hating none, but loving all, seeing behind their striving, suffering and sorrowing hearts. He that loveth his life shall lose it. Eternal life belongs to him who will obediently relinquish his petty, sorrowing, sin-loving, strife-producing, personal self, for only by so doing can he enter into the large, beautiful, free and glorious life of abounding love. Herein is the path of life, for the straight gate is the fate of goodness.

"How am I acting towards others? What am I doing for others? How am I thinking of others?" Are my thoughts and acts towards others prompted by unselfish love, as I would think others should be to me; or are they the out-come of personal dislike, of petty revenge, or of narrow bigotry and condemnation? As a man, in the sacred silence of his soul, asks himself these searching questions, applying all his thoughts and acts to the spirit of the primary precept of the

CHRIST, his understanding will become illuminated, so that he will unerringly see where he has hitherto failed; and he will see what he has got to do in rectifying his heart and conduct, and the way in which it is to be done.

A truth is first perceived and afterwards realised. The perception may be instantaneous, the realisation is almost invariably a process of gradual unfoldment. You will have to learn to love, regarding yourself as a child, and as you make progress in learning, the divine will unfold within you. You can only learn to love by constantly meditating upon love as a divine principle and by adjusting day by day, all your thoughts and words and acts to it. Watch yourself closely and when you think, or say do anything which is not born of pure unselfish love, resolve that you will hence-forth guard yourself in that direction. By so doing you will every day grow purer, tenderer and holier and soon you will find it easy to love, and will realise the divine within you.

A man can only consciously ally himself to the Vine of Love by deserting all strife and hatred and condemnation and impurity and pride and self-seeking, and by thinking and doing loving deeds. By so doing he awakens within him the divine nature which he has heretofore been crucifying and denying. Every time a man gives way to anger, impatience, greed, pride, vanity, or any form of personal selfishness, he denies the Christ, he shuts himself out from love. And thus only is Christ denied and not by refusing to adopt a formulated creed. Christ is only known to him who by constant striving has converted himself from a sinful to a pure being, who by noble moral efforts has succeeded in relinquishing that perishable self, which is the source of all suffering and sorrow and unrest and has become rational, gentle, peaceful, loving and pure.

He who is overcome by force is not thereby overcome in his heart, he may be a greater enemy than before, but he who is overcome by the spirit of peace is thereby changed at heart. He that was an enemy has become a friend.

The pure-hearted and wise have peace in their hearts, it enters into their actions, they apply it in their lives. It is more powerful than strife, it conquers where force would fail. Its wings shield the righteous. Under its protection the harmless are not harmed. It affords a secure shelter from the heat of selfish struggle. It is a refuge for the defeated, a tent for the lost and a temple for the pure.

When JESUS said “without Me ye can do nothing.” He spoke not of his perishable form, but of the universal spirit of love, of which his conduct was a perfect manifestation and this utterance of His is the statement of a simple truth for the works of men are vain and worthless when they are done for personal ends, and he himself remains a perishable being immersed in darkness and fearing death, so long as he lives in his personal gratifications. The animals in man can never respond to and know the divine, only the divine can respond to the divine. The spirit of hatred in man can never vibrate in unison with the spirit of love, love only can apprehend love, and become linked with it. Man is divine: man is of the substance of love, this he may realise if he will relinquish the impure, personal elements which he has hitherto been blindly following and will fly to the impersonal realities of the CHRIST spirit.

The children of light who abide in the kingdom of heaven see the universe and all that it contains as the manifestation of one law, the law of love. They see love as the moulding, sustaining, protecting and perfecting power immanent in all things animate and inanimate. To them love is not merely and only a rule of life, it is the law of life, it is life itself, knowing this, they order their whole life in accordance with love, not regarding their own personality. By thus practising obedience to the highest, to the divine love, they become conscious partakers of the power of love, and so arrive at perfect freedom as masters of destiny. Love is perfect harmony, pure bliss, and contains therefore no elements of suffering. Let a man think no thought and do no act that is not in accordance with pure love, and suffering shall no more trouble him.

If a man would love and partake of its undying bliss, he must practise it in his heart, he must become love. He who always acts from the spirit if love is never deserted, is never left in a dilemma or difficulty, for love (impersonal love) is both knowledge and power. He who has learned how to love has learned how to master every difficulty, how to transmute every event and condition in garments of blessedness and beauty.

The way to love is by self-mastery and travelling that way, a man builds himself up in knowledge as he proceeds. Arriving at love he enters into full possession of body and mind by right of the divine power which he has earned. “Perfect love Casteth out fear”.

The law is that the heart shall be purified, the mind regenerated and the whole being brought in subjection to love, till self be dead and love is all in all, for the reign of law is the reign of love. And love waits for all, rejecting none. Love may be claimed and entered into now, for it is the heritage of all. Ah, beautiful truth ! To know that now, man may accept his divine heritage and enter the kingdom of heaven. Oh, pitiful error! To know that man rejects it because of love of self. Obedience to one's selfish inclinations means the drawing about one's soul, clouds of pain and sorrow which darken the light of truth, the shutting out of oneself from all real blessedness; for whatsoever a man sows that shall he also reap.

REASON

Bring reason to bear on all things. Test all things. Be eager to know and understand. Logical in thought, be consistent in word and action. Bring the searchlight of knowledge to bear on your condition of mind, in order to simplify it and remove its errors. Question yourself with searching scrutiny. Let go off belief, hear say and speculation and lay hold on knowledge. He who stands upon knowledge acquired by practice is filled with a sublime, yet lovely confidence and is able to speak the word of truth with power. Master the task of discrimination. Learn to distinguish between good and evil, to perceive the facts of life, and understand them in their relation to one to another.

Awake the mind to see the orderly sequence of cause and effect in all things, both mental and material. Thus will be revealed the worthlessness of pleasure-seeking and sin and the glory and gladness of a life of sublime virtue and spotless purity.

A man's mind and life should be free from confusion. He should be prepared to meet every mental, material and spiritual difficulty, and should not be intricately caught (as many are) in the meshes of doubt, indecision and uncertainty, when troubles and so-called misfortunes come along. He should be fortified against every emergency that can come against him, but such mental preparedness and strength cannot be attained in any degree without discrimination and discrimination can only be developed by bringing into play and constantly exercising the analytical faculty.

The man who is afraid to think searchingly upon his opinions and to reason critically upon his position will have to develop moral courage before he can acquire discrimination. A man must be true to himself, fearless with himself, before he can perceive the pure principles of truth before he can receive the all revealing light of truth.

The more truth is inquired of the brighter it shines; it cannot suffer under examination and analysis. The more error is questioned, the darker it grows. It cannot survive the entrance of pure and searching thought.

To prove all things is to find the good to throw away the evil. He who reasons and meditates learns to discriminate, he who discriminates discovers the eternally true.

He who will use the light of reason as a torch to search for truth will not be left at last in comfortless darkness. Come now, and let us reason together, sayeth the lord. "Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow".

Many men and women pass through untold sufferings, and at

last die in their sins because they refuse to reason, because they cling to those dark delusions which even a faint glimmer of the light of reason would dispel, and all must use their reason freely, fully and faithfully, who would exchange the scarlet robe of sin and suffering for the white garment of blessedness and peace.

INTEGRITY

As the bubble cannot endure, so the fraud cannot prosper. He makes a feverish spurt in the acquirement of money and then collapses. Nothing is ever gained, ever can be gained by fraud. It is but wrested for a time, to be again returned with heavy interest. But fraud is not confined to the unscrupulous swindler. All who are getting or trying to get money without giving an equivalent are practicing fraud whether they know it or not. Men who are anxiously scheming to get money without working for it are frauds and mentally they are closely allied to the thief and a swindler under whose influence they come sooner or later and who deprives them of their capital.

To be complete and strong, integrity must embrace the whole man, and extend to all the details of his life and it must be so thorough and permanent as to withstand all temptations to swerve into compromise. To fail in one point is to fail in all, and to admit, under stress, a compromise with falsehood, howsoever necessary and insignificant it may appear, is to throw down the shield of integrity, and to stand to the onslaught of evil.

The man who works as carefully and conscientiously when his employer is away as when his eye is on him will not long remain in an inferior position. Such integrity in duty, in performing the details of his work, will quickly lead him into the fertile regions of prosperity.

Honesty is the surest way to success. The day at last comes when the dishonest man repents in sorrow and suffering; but no man ever needs to repent of having been honest. Even when the honest man fails, as he does sometimes through lacking other of those pillars, such as energy, economy or system; his failure is not

the grievous thing that it is to be an dishonest man; for he can always rejoice in the fact that he has never defrauded a fellow-being. Even in his darkest hour, he finds repose in a clear conscience.

Invincibility is a glorious protector but it only envelops the man whose integrity is perfectly pure and unassailable. Never to violate, even in the most insignificant particular, is to be invincible against all the assaults of innuendos slander and misrepresentation. The man who has failed in one point is vulnerable and the shaft of evil like the arrow in the heel of achilles will lay him low. Pure and perfect integrity is proof against all attack and injury, enabling its possessor to meet all opposition and persecution with dauntless courage and sublime equanimity. No amount of talent, intellect, or business acumen can give a man that power of mind and peace of heart which come from an enlightened acceptance and observance of lofty moral principles.

Let the man of integrity rejoice and be glad when he is severely tried, let him be thankful that he has been given an opportunity of proving his loyalty to the noble principles which he has espoused and let him think; "now is the hour of holy opportunity. Now is the day of triumph for truth. Though I lose the whole world, I will not desert the right." So thinking, he will return good for evil and will think compassionately of the wrong doer.

The slanderer, the back-biter, and the wrong-doer may seem to succeed for a time, but the law of justice prevails; the man of integrity may seem to fail for a time; but he is invincible and in none of the worlds, visible or invisible, can there be a forged weapon that shall prevail against him.

to be continued..

- from the *Book of Meditation for everyday in Life* by James Allen, published by Geeta Pracharak Sangham, Secunderabad. Andhra Pradesh, India.

DISTURBANCES IN CONCENTRATION

- Swami Rama Tirtha

First obstacle - Faith in unreal cause

You cannot fully enjoy the pleasure of self-surrender or total abnegation till you are in the habit of attributing the real cause to the worldly objects, or till you do not take God to be the only cause of all phenomena in this world. In Arabic, Persian and Urdu languages they have a common word "Sahab" which means "cause". "Sahab" also means rope. Maulana Jala of Room has written, this rope of "cause and effect" is found tied to the necks of all persons (pots) in the well of this world. Do you know how it operates? As you already know, this lifeless rope has no power of its own to work. At the top of the well, it is God who is revolving the pulley to work with the rope. But unfortunately, we see only the rope working and not the God who is real cause of all causes in this world.

According to Brihadaranyaka Upanishad (4,5,8,9,10) – "When the drum is beaten, it creates a thunderous sound which we cannot stop, unless we prevent the drum from being beaten or the man who beats the drum from beating it. When a conch-shell or bugle is blown, we cannot stop its sound, unless we prevent the man from blowing it. When a vina or violin is played, a sound is produced. We cannot stop it unless we prevent the man playing upon it from doing so."

The sounds created by drums, bugles, violins and harmoniums can be stopped or controlled, when we are able to control these instruments or the persons playing upon them. Similarly, the worldly phenomena of "cause and effect" will be quite under our control, if we steadfastly catch hold of God, the All Supreme. But, unfortunately, you only acknowledge the recommendation of some big and influential person, power, authority, wealth, and house etc. as the cause of the fulfillment of your hopes and desires in this world. Unfortunately, you do not take refuge in Godhood, with the result that you are frustrated, disappointed and made to suffer.

It is said, when Krishna was a child, he used to eat butter or drink the milk of Gopikas. He would then himself besmear the mouths of the calves with some curd or butter. The inmates of the house would take them to be thieves and then they beat them unnecessarily.

O dear ones! There is one and only one cause of everything in this world, and it is God alone. Other so-called causes are like poor calves with besmeared muzzles. They are like beggars or bankrupt people who have their names as “millionaire or multi-millionaire.” Why be deluded? Do not be misled by external worldly forms. They are not the real cause. So long as the girl is not married, she plays with the dolls. But after marriage, she puts aside the dolls and enjoys life with her husband. Similarly, when we have come to realize God to be the only real cause of all the causes, why should we be defrauded by the unreal causes? Please, do not act like children.

In puppet shows, the dolls dance. One doll beats the other and it dies. So, too, men are beguiled by these seeming causes, not knowing that the real cause of all these phenomena is God alone. He is the wire puller, who manoeuvres the entire puppet show in this world. He is “*Antaryami*”, the one who actuates the inner self.

In the flute one tune comes after the other. In a song one word comes after the other. All these tunes or words in a song are inter-related and inter-dependent. People are mistaken because they forget that the real cause of all these words and tunes in a song is the singer, the flute player, (Bansi Dhar).

Let us take another example. There is a high building. The top floor is based on the floor just below it. This floor of the building is in turn based on the one lower still, and so on. You will see all the other floors of the building are ultimately supported by the ground floor. That is how the people generally base the continuity of cause and effect. But they forget that the original and the real cause of all these storeys of the building is the builder, the owner of the house, (the real Doer).

Placing your hopes on the seeming worldly causes is hoping against hopes. In the battle of Mahabharata, when Krishna could

not get his Sudarshan (Sword wheel), he took up the wheel of the broken chariot. Seeing this, even the old Bhishma was amused. Let you not commit the same mistake again. To keep your hope in the seeming worldly causes or support, is like lifting the wheel of the broken chariot. It will not do. Remember your real Self, open your eyes and see things, as they really are. Do not be deceived. Come out of the quagmire of deep rooted ignorance. Realize that you are the same, the same original Source of all the sources, and the root Cause of all the causes. Just have a glimpse of your real Sudarshan, your real Self. The sun trembles, the air is restless and the sea is in constant confusion, due to your fear. Even death is in perpetual wandering from place to place in obedience to you. It is you who command and control the whole universe. Know your Self.

O dear friend! To be dependent on the worldly objects is to die in bondage. The life of helplessness is like that of a dead body in the grave. The self effulgent body of the man who is unattached and free from egoism, emits Divine light, as if from a brilliant chandelier. That work shall never be accomplished in which you are attached to its external characteristics, in false hopes and expectations. Your expectations and aspirations ensure you in the seeming attractions of this world, as a fish is enticed by its bait. Do your work with a detached, unselfish and dedicated point of view. “O Lord! This is your own work and therefore, I undertake to do it. Your Will is my will. I do not stand to lose or gain anything, if the work is done or not done. My happiness lies in my oneness with You. I am happy if You do the work or even if You spoil it. It is all up to You. I have nothing to say.” If a work is done with such dedicated intention and a detached point of view, the entire world and its laws are sure to come forward immediately to help you. Can any one dare refuse you? Can there be any obstacle in God’s own work? There is a sloka in the middle of Bhagwadgita which equally balances, so to say, at its centre of gravity. It is like this :-

“Those who are always in communion with Me and worship Me alone with concentration and attention are under My care. I take the entire responsibility upon Myself for supplying all their needs and protecting all that is already with them.”

This promise of the Lord can never be false, even though the flame of the fire may go downwards or the Sun may rise from the West and set in the East. It is the firm promise of Lord.

Dear friend! It is shameful to be afflicted with sorrow, even in human life. Only those persons should suffer from sorrow and affliction whose parents are no more. Why lament? Fortunately your Father, Lord Rama, is ever alive. Just see the miracle. Give up all your worries and expectations. Do not entertain any selfish desire. Only be firm in your Divinity. You will see that all the gods will be prepared to help you at all cost. According to Shruti Yajurveda (A, 31 Mandal 21):-

“The Gods said: “O Aditya! Those Brahmans who will feel your presence in this way, will control the gods i.e., by worshipping Brahma in proper way, the heart is sure to be enlightened. By the presence of Divine light in one’s heart one is absorbed in Brahma, consequently all the gods come under one’s control.”

In the Chandhyogya Upanishad it has been mentioned :-

“He, who realizes that Atma is Omnipresent, neither sees death nor experiences pain or suffering. Such a man sees Atma in everything and gets all his requirements in every way.”

The Vedas have also said in no uncertain terms: “When a man gets Divine sight, i.e., when a man realizes His Omnipresence, pain suffering and death cannot dare approach him. By knowing Atma, you can know every thing. And also, you can get everything.”

From the Woods of God Realisation, Swami Rama Tirtha Prasthan, Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh.

THE SELF, THE SUPREME BRAHMAN

-Swami Venkatesananda

Rishi Vasistha while explaining to Lord Rama about the true self and its behaviour in different situations mentioned that Self itself is the Brahman.

एन शब्दम् रसम् रूपम् गन्धम् जानासि राघव ।

सोयमात्मा परम् ब्रह्म सर्वम् आपूर्य समस्थितः ।।

*ena śabdaṁ rasaṁ rūpaṁ gandhaṁ jñāsi rāghava
so ‘yamātmā paraṁ brahma sarvaṁ āpūrya saṁsthitaḥ*

This Self, the supreme Brahman, which permeates everything, is that which enables you to experience sound, taste, form and fragrance, O Rama.

The Self is transcendental and Omnipresent; it is non-dual and pure. In it there is not even a notion of another. All these diversities like existence and non-existence, good and evil, are vainly imagined by ignorant people. It matters not whether this imagination is said to be based on the not-self or self itself.

Since there is nothing other than the self, how can there be desire for another? Hence, notions like, “this is desirable” and “this is not desirable” do not touch the self. Since the self is desireless and because the doer, the instrument of action, and the action itself are also non-dual- it does not get involved in action. Since that which exists and that in which it exists are identical, one cannot even say it is. Since in it there is no desire whatsoever, there is no notion of inaction in it.

There is naught else, O Rama. You are the very existence of this absolute Brahman. Therefore, free yourself from all notions of duality and live an active life. What have you to gain by doing all kinds of actions again and again? And, what will you gain by desiring to be inactive? Or, by adhering to scriptures? O Rama, rest in peace

and purity like the ocean when it is not agitated by wind. That self, by which everything is completely permeated, is not to be gained by travelling far and wide. Do not let your mind wander among the objects of the world. You yourself are the supreme self, the infinite consciousness; you are naught else.

O Rama, the sense of doership (the notion “I do this”) which gives rise to both happiness and unhappiness, or which gives rise to the state of yoga, is fictitious in the eyes of the wise; to the ignorant, however, it is real. For, what is the source of this notion? This notion arises when the mind, spurred by the predisposition, endeavours to gain something; the resultant action is then attributed to oneself. When the same action leads to the experience of its fruition, the notion “I enjoy this” arises. The two notions are in truth the two faces (phases) of the same notion.

Whether one is engaged in action or not, whether one is in heaven or in hell, whatever may be the psychological conditioning, that itself is experienced by the mind. Hence, to the ignorant and conditioned person, there is this notion: “I do this” whether he is doing something or doing nothing; but such a notion does not arise in the enlightened or unconditioned. When the truth concerning this is known, the conditioning is weakened and thenceforth the wise man, even while acting in this world, is not interested in the fruits of those actions. He lets action happen in his life, without attachment to those actions; and whatever be the results of these actions, he regards them as non-different from his own self. But such is not the attitude one who is immersed in the mental states.

Whatever the mind does, that alone is action; hence, the mind alone is the doer of actions, not the body. The mind alone is this world-appearance, this world-appearance has arisen in it and it rests in the mind. When the objects as well as the experiencing mind have become tranquil, consciousness alone remains.

The unconditioned consciousness blissfully plays its role in this world-appearance as if in a play. Since it is the mental conditioning (which exists to the ignorant) which determines the nature of the

action and of the experience, and since it is absent in the enlightened, the latter is ever in bliss. His actions are non-actions. Hence he does not incur merit nor demerit. His behaviour is like that of a child; and though he appears to be in pain, he is not. He is totally unattached to this world-appearance and to the actions of the mind and the senses. He does not even entertain the notion of liberation, nor that of bondage. He sees the self and self alone.

From the Supreme Yoga, Published by the Chiltern Yoga Trust, P.O. Elgin Cape Province, South Africa.

KARMA OF THE ALL KNOWING

Often I go to meditate facing the rising sun on the south Plateau.

It was a happy morning and I was in a deep state of meditation feeling the Light within and without.

Unwillingly I rose from the slab of stone on which I was meditating and retraced my steps towards the gates of Kailas. While the birds were singing and the little flies were flying around my head, I wondered what they were singing. I reached the Ashram feeling the Presence with in and without and inhaling the fragrance of the sweet flowers and cool breeze.

Low and behold! My spectacles were not with me, what had I done with them?

Then I remembered that I had left them on the stone where I had been sitting.

What a karma !

Then with my two canes, hobbling, again I had to go down the hill to get my glasses. Yes I was forced to go there again.

I sat and meditated again trying to fathom out the miracle and law of Karma.

Om Tat Sat Om.

- Swami Omkar, from the Divine Voice of Omkar.

THE GRACE OF THE LORD

-Swami Sivananda

ON CONQUERING PASSION

An aspirant wrote to the Master: "I have practiced criminal law for five years. I have one weakness which is always agitating my mind and ventured to place all the naked facts before you in the hope that it may be possible for me to mend myself. During my college days, I don't know how it happened, but the devil in me prompted me to visit prostitutes. I am married and have children. In spite of my intellectual background and my conscience, I succumb to the temptation of visiting prostitutes. I detest it, but sometimes I am carried away by emotion. What pains me is the fact that I am conscious that what I do is a sin against myself, against my wife and my children; still I do it. I want inspiration and guidance to correct myself. Will you tell me what is wrong with me? Is there any hope for me or am I hopelessly and completely lost in the wilderness?"

The Master sent a lengthy reply

I rejoice to go through the letter. It portrays very well your noble self's true inner aspiration to lead the divine life and attain the supreme goal of life – God-realisation.

The lust that assails you is not part of your real nature; if it was, then such sublime thoughts as you have penned in your letter would have never arisen. You are pure and full of spiritual impressions. You have obviously inherited the lust, or it has been acquired through some bad association in childhood or boyhood. It is a passing cloud. It has passed away the moment you decided to write your letter to me. The light of purity is now shining brilliantly in you. Look at it. Meditate on it. Forget the past. Forge ahead along the road of purity, towards the pinnacle of glory.

Lust is like a dog. The more you drive it away, the more it will follow you. Ignore it. Then it will quietly follow you at a distance for a little while and discovering that you are ignoring it, it will go away. Attend to your spiritual practices and work. Go your own divine way

with determined steps. You will then completely be rid of all traces of lust and other weaknesses. There is no doubt about this.

Keep yourself busy day and night. Never remain alone after dusk. Conduct Kirtan in the evening. Read some elevating spiritual literature along with the members of your family and friends. Start from today. Never let the mind dwell on the past – not even to congratulate yourself on your transformation. Keep it fully engaged until you actually fall asleep.

Japa, Japa, Japa of Lord's holy Name is the only remedy for every kind of evil. For atleast a month from now, let the entire evening be devoted to a round of Japa, Kirtan, study and meditation. If you do not need to work in the evening, you can continue this habit for ever.

Do not take any kind of stimulant after 3 p.m. – no tea, no coffee, no betel leaf, no spiced food. Take a very light meal at night, if possible only milk and fruit for some time atleast.

It is vital that even during the day you do not read any kind of obscene literature or look at obscene pictures. Keep your mind fully occupied and always at a high spiritual level.

The most important point to remember is that you should not dwell constantly upon the weakness and upon the precautions you are taking to overcome it. Make a firm resolve: 'I will be pure in thought, word and deed from this moment. The Lord will bless me with strength.' Forget the past. Go on with your spiritual practices.

I am sending you by separate post a rosary. Kindly do Japa of the Lord's Name with it. Wear it always around your neck if you can; or atleast wear it from the time you arrive home in the evening till you go to bed, it will act as a holy reminder, as a talisman.

I am also forwarding you some spiritual diary forms. Kindly maintain it from today. Be frank, be truthful in filling it. Send me a copy of the diary every month. I will serve you and guide you to become a thoroughly changed man, a superman.

May God bless you with prosperity, health, long life, peace and liberation.

On prayer

Another correspondent wanted to know how to pray. In his letter he asked: "What is prayer and how is it to be done so that it will please God? A black marketer prays to God to expiate his conduct. He invokes more strength and courage to carry on his game of fleecing others."

The Master replied: Those who really wish to pray to God know that prayer and righteousness are synonymous. The 'prayer' of the black marketer is no prayer but an extension of his eagerness to escape punishment. If it was sincere and earnest prayer, then in accordance with the promise given by Lord Krishna in the Gita, he will bestow intelligence on the man, intelligence that ought to enable him to reach His Lotus Feet, intelligence that will enable him to understand at once that the Lord is all-pervading and therefore, the very Self of those whom he wishes to cheat.

Depending upon the depth of the sincerity of the prayer, the transformation will come sooner or later. The force of the evil impressions (black-marketing impressions), may be such that even after a spell of prayer the man might return to the nefarious job; but each such time he will find that the force of rebellion within him is gaining strength. This is a good sign and if he continues to pray, he will soon be reclaimed to righteousness.

On the contrary, the man who is inwardly convinced that black marketing is the proper thing to do and prays either to divert the attention of the public or to bribe God, is deceiving himself. Prayer even in his case is good, for he is better than the one who does not do even that; and it is bound to have its own good results in due course. But the mounting evil will eventually return to the source, measure for measure. Few have the eye to see in the man steeped in poverty, in misery, in incurable diseases, a once (perhaps in the previous birth) very prosperous millionaire whose greed had blinded him to the inexorable law of Karma.

-from Divine Life Magazine, February, 2000

WORLDLY LOVE IS FALSE

- Swami Ramdas

There was a saint living near a village. A Bhakta was going to him daily. He used to tell the saint that he was very much loved by his parents and more so by his wife. He was speaking about this to the saint everyday. So the saint one day wanted to show him the reality about his relatives' love. He asked the Bhakta to go home and pretend that he was suffering from a serious stomachache. He also gave him a pill and asked him to swallow it. The effect of the pill was that he who took it would apparently look like dead even though he was fully awake and aware within.

The Bhakta agreed, went home, pretended that he had a serious stomach-ache, took the pill and lay down like a dead man. All his relatives including his parents, wife and children, were weeping over his death. In due course, the saint came to the house and enquired what the matter was. They explained everything to him and requested him to bring back the dead one back to life. The saint said, "Yes I can bring him back to life if any one of you will give your life for his in exchange."

Addressing the mother of the Bhakta, he said, "You love your son so much. Why don't you give up your life for his sake? You are already old and you won't live long." At this the mother stopped weeping and said, "How can I give up my life for the sake of one son? My younger sons will be sorry if I die. So I cannot do what you say." Then he suggested the same thing to his father who also similarly expressed his unwillingness.

Then asked the Bhakta's wife, "Can you at least not give your life for your dear husband? What is the use of living without him, as a widow?" To this she replied, "If I am destined to become a widow, who can help it? My parents would be shocked to hear about my

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ASHRAM NEWS

Pujya Mataji's 85th birthday celebrations were celebrated on 13-10-2015 at main Ashram. On this occasion the poor were fed and clothes were distributed. On the same day a musical program was performed by the disciples of Kakinada Ashram centre. The birthday of Chacha Nehru also called as the Children's day was celebrated on 14-11-2015 at the ashram school and sweets were distributed to the children. Competitions were conducted on the occasion in Public debate, Art and painting, Essay writing and quiz among the school children and the winners were encouraged with prizes.

The birthday celebrations of Pujya Mataji were also celebrated at Kotagiri, Visakhapatnam and other branches of the Ashram.

With the guidance and supervision of Pujya Mataji, Sri Samba Murty garu performed the the Geeta Yajna with the Homam from 13-12-2015 to 21-12-2015. During this period, Brahmacharini Suhita Chaitanya gave discourses on 15th Chapter of Geeta.

From 2-10-2015 to 12-10-2015 Sri Suryabhaskarendra Sarswati gave discourses on Esavasya Upanishad.

As a normal routine, food grains were distributed among the old in the head quarters as well as in all the branches of the Ashram.

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death. Moreover, I have to look after my children – so I cannot give up my life.” Thereafter, all his children were asked in turn and only negative replies came from them.

The Bhakta who heard all the talk, jumped up from the bed and told the saint, “I thought these people really loved me. Now you have revealed to me the truth. I am not going to remain with these people any longer. Let me follow you.” That is the sort of love relatives in the world bear for one another.

From stories as told by Swami Ramdas, Anandashram Publication.

ATTACHMENT AND DETACHMENT

It has been said that treading the path of Truth is more difficult than walking on the sharp edge of a sword. But, through proper practice the very difficult path becomes very easy. ATTACHMENT to the world is the root of all bondage and DETACHMENT is the source of perfect freedom. See how your breath is detached from the body though flowing through it. At the time of birth it has entered the body. At the time of death it will leave the body.

So let the wise man meditate upon his own breath, It is the easiest method by which one can attain detachment and Peace.

Om! Om! Om!

- Swami Omkar, from the Hours of Silence

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