



# PEACE

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## Kaivalyopaniṣat

स एव सर्वं यद्भूतं यच्च भव्यं सनातनम् ।  
 ज्ञात्वा तं मृत्युमत्येति नान्यः पन्था विमुक्तये ॥

*sa eva saravaṃ yadbhūtaṃ yacca  
 bhavyaṃ sanātanam,  
 jñātvā taṃ mṛtyumatyeti nānyaḥ  
 panthā vimuktaye.*

He is all, whatever is existed in the past, and whatever will come into existence in the future, one transcends death by knowing Him. There is no other path for liberation.

A desire fulfilled gives rise to more desires. Knowledge of the true Self makes it possible to solve the problem of desires and fears permanently. The body has its movements, the mind has its emotions and thoughts; you are neither the body nor the mind. You are the spaceless and timeless Awareness. In this realization, there is no place for the fear of death. By the knowledge of the Self, one is forever liberated from the cycle of pleasures and pains, and births and deaths.

*Nānyaḥ panthā vimuktaye*, there is no other path for liberation. Self-knowledge alone can save a human being from the sorrow of limited existence. It is difficult to shed concepts, ideas, desires, and fears that have been nurtured for a long time. While retaining these you cannot overcome sorrow and bondage. You should be willing to sacrifice the finite for gaining the Infinite. To be liberated, you have to rise above all limitations created by ignorance and abide in the true Self.

(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 Prakāśikā by Swami Tattvavidananda Saraswati)*

## Prayer

### PRAY FOR STRONGER SHOULDERS

*Give me, O God, stronger shoulders  
To bear all burdens with a smile:  
I will never groan, I will never murmur,  
I will drink the cup of your choice wine.*

*I know that I can bear my troubles.  
Know that you will help your son.  
And though your ways are quite mysterious,  
Thy will, O Lord, it may be done !*

The wise man never prays to God for lessening his burdens or removing them. He only prays for a stronger back, so that he may bear all burdens with smiles. The weak and ignorant man, when he is passing through fiery ordeals cries aloud. "Lord, do I deserve these?" Yes, he deserves them all. They are all intended. Not a straw moves without the Lord's command. All troubles and trials are there to test your fortitude and equanimity. Every new experience is for your own good. Any one is spiritual, when all is well. The acid test is on, only in the thick of troubles and misery. As such the wise man never groans or murmurs. To the last he drains the cup that is set before him, by the Lord, whether the cup be of choice wine or deadly poison.

Further the Lord never sends us troubles and sorrows, that cannot be borne by us. He gives us only what each of us can bear, and He gives them not vengefully, but to put our mettle to test and enable our soul to grow. Incomprehensible and mysterious are God's ways. Peace belongs to him only, who can say with all his heart, "Not my will, O Lord, may Thine be done!"

OM TAT SAT OM

- Swami Omkar, from the Cosmic Flashes

## MEDITATION

निभृतमरुन्मनोऽक्षदृढयोगयुजोहृदि  
यन्मुनय उपासते तदरयोऽपि ययुः स्मरणात्।  
स्त्रिय उरगेन्द्र भोगभुजदण्डविषक्तधियो  
वयमपि ते समाः समदृशोऽङ्घ्रिसरोजसुधाः ॥

*nibhṛtamarunmano'kṣadr̥ḍhayogayujohṛdi  
yanmunaya upasate tadarayo'pi yayuḥ smaraṇāt,  
striya uragendra bhogabhujadaṇḍaviṣaktadhiyo  
vayamapi te samāḥ samadr̥śo'ṅghri sarojasudhāḥ.*

The aspirants approach and meditate on the supreme Lord variously and He grants them the same realization. The *rāja-yogins* are introspective sages controlling the modifications of the mind attain the Highest through *nirvikalpa samādhi*; some devotees adopt the inimical mode, hate and dread the Lord and thereby become completely absorbed in Him; ladies (the Gopies of *Vṛindāvana*) desiring a physical union with the Lord and the embrace of His comely hands which are poetically comparable to the strong and tapering body of the serpent king (*śeṣa*), reach the acme of devotion and realization; and the *Jñāna-yogins*, representing the "*neti, neti*" method of the Upanishads (lit. Vedas) enjoy *jīvanmukti* and see the same *brahman* in all at all times. All these processes are equally efficient methods to reach the supreme Lord

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

## A PERSONAL LETTER

To One Whom I Love as My Own

**Sri swami omkar**

**DEAR NARYAN** – my living image of God – the only TRUTH

I love you because **God is Love**. I love you because **I cannot live without Love**.

I love you because all is God, both within and without, within when eyes closed, without when eyes opened. In the office room where I am writing this message now, on the wall facing me there is the important, life-giving motto written in the bold words.

**WHEN GOD IS WITHIN  
WHY LOOK OUTSIDE**

On the wall behind me, the following soul-awakening motto is also written in bold letters,

**WHEN GOD IS WITHOUT  
WHY LOOK WITHIN**

Both of these vital, inspiring and simple mottos appear to be contradictory. Yet they contain the highest Truth for our practice in our daily life now and here.

When your eyes are opened, see God in the flower, bird, plant, beast and man, in all that you see, in all forms and names. When your eyes are closed, see God within yourself, in the very cells of your being, from the toes to the top of the head.

Thus, God is both within and without, there is never a moment of time either in the past, present or future when God exists not; similarly there is never a speck of space or even an atom, where God exists not.

Thus, He is both within and without, for God is Omnipresent, Omnipotent and Omniscient. Having eyes see you not? Recognize

God now and here and be silent, never to forget Him any more, even for the tiniest fraction of a second. Let your eyes see Him, wherever they wander outside, for God is everywhere, let your eyes see Him when they are closed. Thus God is present both in Pravritthi (in the outer world when your eyes are opened), and in Nivritthi (in the inner world when your eyes are closed).

Face Him in the manifested world. Feel Him within in the inner world of Silence, as you merge within, as you pray and meditate. No more speculation of God's Presence within or without, for He is interpenetrating the very cells of your being, within and without, in the manifested world of form and name also.

All that you have to do is only to practice and practice, now and always, continuously, ceaselessly, without a break or forgetfulness of God, like oil poured from one vessel into another vessel as Taila Dhara.

**In conclusion, let us worship God with every breath, for He is the Breath of the breath. God is the Soham Breath – the Universal Breath, the One Indivisible Divine Energy – the Supreme Power- the Infinite and Eternal Silence.**

Let us have the strength of following the simple Soham ceaselessly, patiently and continuously, without the least break – *Thou Art That* – with every breath; *Thou Art the Soham* with every breath. Behold the glory, the splendour of millions of suns, both within and without.

Tat Twam Asi- That Thou Art

Dear Loving Image of God  
Let me leave you now in Silence  
Supreme Silence – Waveless Silence

Aum Aum Aum  
Hari Om Tat Sat Om

## BURN THE EGO

Swami Omkar

There is a chronic disease and there is the unfailing medicine or permanent cure for it also. The disease is the ego and the unfailing medicine is selfless service. The ego must be destroyed, annihilated and rooted out at any cost for the Peace of the Soul. So long as the tenacious and persistent ego remains, there is neither Peace nor happiness for oneself or anyone else in the nearby surroundings.

The ego cannot be so easily destroyed; you can destroy anything and everything that has a name and form, but not the ego. In fact, the ego has neither form nor name. What is this ego? It is some kind of invisible energy or inherent power which has been existing not only from the beginning of this birth, but from millions of births. The ego in man is an accumulated energy from ages and ages. Hence, it is not so easy to get rid of it. Yet, Peace belongs only to those rare and precious souls who can root out the ego from its very source.

Sages and saints of East and West, the men of realisation have given us the unfailing remedy to eradicate or to crush and destroy this tenacious ego. That remedy is SELFLESS SERVICE. The ego can be easily burnt in the fire of Selfless Service.

Where the service is absent, the self or ego is present. In selfless service the ego gets diminished until it gradually disappears. As a vessel of milk gets curdled by a drop of butter milk, so also the least desire or selfishness spoils the effects or blessings of selfless service.

May Selfless Service be the panacea for all the ills of life and to burn and destroy the persistent ego, the root cause of all agony and suffering in the world! May all Homage be unto that Divine Fire, the effulgent Light of lights!

MAY PEACE BE UNTO ALL!

## ETERNAL HAPPINESS

Mata Jnaneswari

Every one wants to be happy in this world. But one is not making the right kind of effort. Why did Pujya Swamiji establish Santi Ashram in 1917 itself? If there is peace there is happiness. Very few people realize that there is a vast difference between permanent happiness i.e., Bliss and short termed happiness.

If one wants to move up from the animal level to the divine level, if one wants to realize the goal of life, having taken birth as human being one has to make considerable effort. Every birth day of Swamiji is celebrated in the Ashram. The purpose of this celebration is that every one should make the effort to be an ideal human being.

On 26-12-1982 Gita Jayanti was celebrated. This celebration is observed only for this Universal Scripture every year. Those who try to understand the significance of the holy text (and implementing the teachings in life) will not only enjoy eternal peace and happiness but also will be liberated.

People will never understand why this invaluable human birth is bestowed on us. To realize this we need a lot of merit acquired in the past life. Because of the meritorious deeds done in the past we have taken birth in this holy land, India. We should not waste away this life. We do not know when we shall die. Therefore we should not waste even a single minute. To quote Swamiji "those who waste minutes will fritter away their whole life." Every minute should be properly utilized to realize God, to get liberation. Externally it may appear to be difficult but internally one experiences happiness. The stories about God definitely give us happiness and do help us to develop detachment.

Those who are spiritually inclined should try to develop divine qualities discarding satanic or negative qualities as mentioned in great detail in the Bhagavad Gita. This effort is only to attain eternal bliss. "Everything is permeated by Krishna" is the song that was sung everyday in the Ashram as instructed by Swamiji. Those who

practice thus are indeed very fortunate as they experience bliss. Swamiji used to frequently tell us that our enemies are within us and to conquer them alone we have obtained this precious human birth. Therefore we should not waste a single minute.

Swamiji used to tell us that we should cultivate the habit of speaking less and speaking for the benefit of others. He used to quote the adage “Noru Manchidaite, uru manchidi” meaning that if one's speech is pleasant the whole village will be pleasant unless one consciously practices this one cannot be sweet tempered all the time.

Those who have taken birth in the holy land should realize the value of time. What is the purpose of this human birth? We should love our holy mother land and also righteousness dharma and make every effort for their growth. True peace depends on righteousness and bliss depends on peace.

This body is to be utilised to help others. What is the true and permanent help? Genuine help is to support those who try to attain eternal happiness. Helping those in difficulties serving the poor and the needy – those activities appear as service. But true service is to show the path to attain permanent happiness.

When hunger and thirst are permanently assuaged one experiences peace. This real peace we get when we realize that we are the embodiments of true happiness. When we can see God in every one and love them, we can attain this eternal peace, which is the goal of human birth.

OM OM OM!

(original article is in Telugu published in Shanti, March1983.  
Translated by Shanta Subba Rao)

## **SPIRIT OF INDIAN SPIRITUAL INHERITANCE**

Swami Sivananda

The true greatness of the Indian spiritual inheritance consists in the secret and glorious methods it has delivered to us for allaying of life's sorrows and unhappiness and for acquiring for the circumstance of human existence the infinite peace and perfection of the Divine. Human grief cannot be alleviated as long as the human individual is immersed in ignorance and strives merely for his individual pleasure and good. The genius of India has, to its immortal honour, soared above the conventional ties and the bonds of society, grasped the spiritual truths, realized it and proclaimed to the world, for the welfare of all mankind, that “Life is One” and not many.

### **UNITY, NOT DISSENSION**

Among the petty disharmonies between one person and another, the nations of the world seem to be separated from each other, and this uncompromising notion of division and separation is the mother of war and destruction. Deceived by the spectacular advancement of scientific knowledge, modern mind in all countries and continents, has not cared to understand the fundamental meaning of life, and sought its satisfaction in a sensational floating upon the apparently attractive scum of existence. Such has been the spirit in which science has taken its marvelous strides in progress, that it has nothing in its constitution to drive it towards a grasp of the deep and significant changes that man undergoes beneath his scalp, towards understanding the potentialities of man as a mind, as a heart, as a spirit, as a creative entity, towards directing his aspirations, towards aiding the blossoming of the noblest forces that lie buried and latent in his bosom.

### **VALUE OF LIFE**

Redounding to the eternal credit of the genius of India, there lies the momentous fact that at the very dawn of civilisation, it has raised the deepest issues of life, questioned the limitations of human existence, ventured forth for a solution into the realms of that infinite power that is found 'feebly' interpenetrating this world of physics,

physical experience, materialistic philosophy and 'sputniks', and discovered that guiding, governing and sustaining permanent ground upon which is played the tragicomic drama of life and the pride of men that are dressed in brief authority.

If there is anything valuable in life as a whole it is the knowledge of the solution of the apparent riddle of existence, the knowledge of the essential nature and the real destiny of man, the knowledge of man's real relations to others, to the universe, to the Transcendent, and this knowledge is the glorious heritage of India. The spiritual men of India, who are also the men of God, men who have imposed upon themselves the disciplines that lead them to Perfection, to living the good life, the ideal life, the divine life, the life in the inner Reality and for the happiness of mankind, for the solidarity of the world, have discovered the road to Success and Achievement, discerned the clues to progress and perfection, in a strict adherence to the rhythms of the universal laws and the eternal verities that guide, in accordance to the genius inherent in them, humanity as a whole and all manifestation to the final denouement in a Divine Existence.

### **SUPREME GOAL**

The attitude of life, which the spiritual minded Indians develop, was based upon the nature of the End or the Goal to be attained through the instrumentality of the phenomenon of life—life which is a step, a stage, and not the end in itself. This attitude embodies the righteous law, the Dharma, and to it, the universe becomes what it intrinsically is, the Dharmakshetra, or the arena for the display and the justification of the prowess of the right action, the action whose whole spirit moves towards the realisation of the absolute Good that is the Nature of the Infinite Being.

The ideal of Dharma forms the substratum upon which is built the structure of the whole life of man, who wishes to resolve the riddle of his personal life, win victory over the struggle of existence, be crowned with a strange and ethereal joy even while he is living in the tarnished environment of the world, of this imperfect earth that is subject to change, sorrow, and death. Dharma is virtue, and virtue is that which leads one to the most perfect condition, the condition that

is identical with the ultimate success constituted of the joy of life, unlimited, unfettered and unalloyed, complete beyond expression.

### **LOVE**

As the highest virtue that man may practise, Ahimsa is both a negative withdrawal and a positive assertion of the "mind." It is refraining from doing, speaking and thinking anything which will cause pain and sorrow to any other individual, to any living being. This represents the negative aspect of the discipline of Ahimsa. Its positive aspect is brought out by an expression of universal love, love that has no partiality, love that excludes nothing, love that cares not for the effect of love.

The ideal of universal love is a spontaneous self-fulfilment in the delight of a discovery of Oneself, of the universally selfsame, our own, inner consciousness in all. Until this is done, no civilization is genuine, no culture is true, nothing is perfect and lasting. In one word, it is the light of the absolute consciousness that is undifferentiated that Ahimsa, which is more a matter of spirit than an effect of a mere act, is practiced.

### **TRUTH**

Immediately succeeding the devotion to the principle of Ahimsa, comes the practice of the excellence of truth. To the spiritual genius, truth is more than the truth speaking; it is God or the Absolute; it is that which triumphs over untruth. Again, truth is that which is right, untruth is wrong; that which elevates one and takes one nearer to God is right, that which brings one down and takes one away from God is wrong; and that God towards which our whole inner being must rise, is the indivisible unity of conscious existence, the infinity of delight and awareness.

Control over passions constitutes the essence of truth; self denial or refraining from greedy indulgence is truth; to permit the spiritual element in us to triumph is truth; truth is a life in the eternal. Untruth is change, decay and death. Love is truth, hatred untruth; harmony is truth, disharmony untruth. There is no greater sin than hatred – the pungent word and insolent attitude, the arrogance and

uncharitability, the egoistic self-assertions and vehement action of the selfish impulse. Relative truths are valid only in so far as they do not run against the grain of absolute truth which is eternal.

### **SELF-RESTRAINT**

The third canon is self-control which is holding in check the instinctive urges that try to drag the individual away from the experience of truth. Self-control is a universal rule unexceptionally applicable to all men and all women at all places and in all ages. It is the very key to supreme beatitude. Indulgence in externalities, in sensuous objects, in physical pleasures, is the effect of the failure of the individual to discriminate the spiritual value from the material chaff, truth from untruth. Desire to have contact with and enjoy outward things is the outcome of the ignorance of truth that is God, truth that is Infinite Existence.

Self-control is the restraint of the outgoing tendencies of the senses and the mind, and the centering of the same in the active participation of truth-existence. This self-control, this energisation of consciousness, this Tapas, this restraining of one's externalising, self-diffusing energies and founding oneself upon that one Cosmic Being, is Dharma that supports the life and law of the universe, integrates the being of man, and spreads before the vision of man the creative God-centered life.

Adharma is selfishness and egoism, which lead to self-imprisonment, suffering and failure in life. Absolute righteousness means the sacrifice of the self for universal well-being, the well-being pertaining not merely to the earth but to the highest spiritual reality, the well-being of keeping consciousness in its poise, liberated from the distraction engendered by the darkness of ignorance, separateness, division, limitedness. It is the opposite of 'I-ness' or 'mine-ness' which belong to the nature of the world of bondage.

### **MEANS TO AN END**

Life on earth is not self-sufficient and, hence there is a perpetual flux of states to reach other states of superior knowledge and happiness. Life in this world and in this body is only a preparation, a

step for the higher divine life. That which we see and hear of is not the all; the Real is beyond this. To reach the Real, the present life acts as a ladder or a field of activity, that affords the conditions and the scope for the individual to establish its relations with the most exalted Divine Life.

Wrong it is to restrict the outlook of our life to the perceptible phenomena and to judge our sense of values in relation to the objective worth of things. The grandeur and greatness of our life rest upon the measure to which we have raised ourselves into the law of the Supreme Being. Dealing with one another are justified only so long as they do not deviate from the eternal law of one's spiritual nature.

Neither social welfare nor national betterment is possible by mere clinging to shadows and forgetting the essential substance. This substance of truth does not belong to any particular person, for it is the being and life of whatever that is. That which is one is common can only be all inclusive in a self-identical existence, this is the fullness of attainment and the culmination of all the aspirations and ideals of life.

### **SOCIAL IDEAL**

In this integral spiritual view of life is rooted the ethical basis of social and domestic relationship. Society is the collective body of individuals determined to pierce the veils and enter the realms of the Immortal being with the power of a unified and common aspiration and struggle to grasp the Highest: 'Unified we live; divided we cease to live. Human relationship is not meant to signify anything less than the attempt to live in everyday life the spiritual, egoless love that is at the background of all existent beings.

The love of the Supreme means the love of everything of the universe. The Indian ideal would stress upon the teaching "love thy neighbour as thyself" by adding "because thy neighbour is thy own self." Altruistic love is the expression of the eternal union in infinite life. If family or society or nation is understood as a means to separate one from another, however much large the scope of its inclusion of

human beings may be, such a family, such a society, such a nation, cannot triumph. All relationship is expected to dissolve in the absolute unity of existence, excluding nothing from itself.

This goal of life should be borne in mind in the process of daily activities, if our actions are to be free from selfishness, and at-one with the universal movement of nature. Life is a divine worship. The proper conduct of family, the administration of the country and the society is a part of the Universal Government which looks at the entirety of beings with a strictly impartial eye. We live because God exists and our life has to be perfect and just as even God is perfect and just. We exist in God's Being; we breathe and move in Him.

### **ROLE OF THE TEACHER**

The knowledge of this unity of life and the proper moral and ethical attitude required to start the process of realising it are achieved through being directly instructed by the teacher who is truly advanced in knowledge and has attained Self-perfection. The psychology of Gurukulavasa is inseparably connected with the science of self-discipline and Self-knowledge. It is not the mechanical education of the present-day that is meant by real education in the Gurukula, but the means of erasing out the propensities that cloud the awareness of truth, and controlling the distractive nature of the psyche.

Self-mastery is the effect of the protracted checking of the ego-sense and centering of it in the general God-Being which is egoless, free from the sense of separative existence. The religion, the philosophy, the code of ethical and social law of India are all universal in their character. Universality is the expression of the nature of the Reality. The highest universal science is the Vedanta in which are blended together the different views of aspiration towards perfection.

### **VEDANTA**

Vedanta is neither a sect, nor a creed, but the science of the Absolute Reality, the truly life-giving science, the real solace to the intelligent mankind. The boldest proclamation of Vedanta is that man is in essence Divine, that everyone is bound to succeed earlier or

later, that all are bound to rediscover themselves in the infinite Life Divine. The Ideal of Vedanta is not merely a universal brotherhood, nor merely living a united and happy social life in the world of differentiated individuals, but realising highest Divinity which is the life, source and axis of the universe.

Vedanta is the master-technique of transmuting the many into the undivided One. It means Experience-Whole and existing as the birthless and the deathless Infinite. This is the greatest heritage of India, the greatest treasure that is India's. and the greatest gift that India can offer to the world. This is the zenith of culture and civilisation, this is the highest knowledge that man can ever attempt to acquire, this the final fruition of the best of human aspirations.

### **BEDROCK OF INDIAN CULTURE**

The greatness of India rests mainly upon the bedrock of spiritual realisation, of a poised awareness of the Infinite here on earth, in this life, in the environment of the dance and the pageantry of finitude, relativity, objectivity. As the Mother of countless Rishis, sages, seers of God-vision, India enjoys a unique position. All the grand ideals of world's great religions that have moulded the characters of men, the loftiest tenets of ethics and morality that have raised human nature to the magnanimous height of saintliness, and all the sublime truths of spirituality that have made man divine and have shaped the spiritual life of nations and of the saviours of mankind, have found their expression in India, the spiritual land of those pioneering individuals who entered into the heart of the Reality and proclaimed all that are of eternal value.

With its spiritual horizons lit up with the deathless light of the Upanishadic wisdom, India is essentially a land of spiritual wealth, which is today in need of extensive utilisation. The goal of India is Self-realisation or the attainment of God-consciousness through the express manifestation of a spirit of renunciation and detachment and through a dynamic divine knowledge. That is not only the goal of India but of all mankind.

- From DLS Magazine January, 2002

## THE EASY SADHANA

-Swami Chidananda

Worshipful homage to the supreme, universal Spirit Divine, the at once all-pervading and all-transcending Cosmic Being. It is the one really behind and beyond and all religions, the Brahman of the Upanishads as well as the personal God taking many forms to meet the requirements, tastes and temperaments of devotees. To that Reality, the Supreme Reality of all religions, all faiths, all creeds, we offer worshipful homage.

Loving adorations to revered and beloved Holy Master Gurudev Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj who proclaimed the essential underlying oneness of all religions inspite of their apparent surface differences. May the message of this prophet of the unity of all religions be a factor to bring peace and harmony and oneness in today's divided world of warring factions –where religions, instead of becoming the source of peace, harmony, goodwill, friendship, oneness, having themselves been made the basis of violent wars, destruction and killing.

Referring to this ethically polluted age, the great Maharashtrian Saint Tukaram, who is a contemporary of Shivaji, the great Maharashtrian prince and warrior, and his Guru, the great *Tapasvi, jnani and bhakta*, Samardha Ramdas, has something significant and helpful to say: "Never fear. Our ancients have proclaimed that this iron age, Kali Yuga, is an age full of contrary conditions and adverse factors that makes it almost impossible to lead a good life, a life of goodness, *dharma* and *sadhana*. But at the same time they have said, "in this great ocean of adverse factors and conditions, there is one wonderful redeeming feature, and that is the chanting of the Divine Name of God. Done with the devotion it brings about a severance of all ties binding the individual soul to *samsara* and confers upon it liberation."

Addressing a king, an ancient sage had this to say: "*Kalau*

*dosha nidhau rajan asti eka mahan gunah, kirtanat eva kesavasya mukta sango bhavet puman.*" *Puman* means the human individual, man. "Chanting the Divine Name of God he becomes freed from his connection to this mundane, all deluding *samsaric* world."

Fully believing this truth, Tukaram followed this path as his main *sadhana*. Praising the Lord, chanting His name, glorifying Him, he attained the indescribable bliss of communion with God. And having established the truth of this great ancient saying by his own living experience, in his own personal life. Tukaram called upon his contemporary human bretheren and said, "Listen, O ye brothers of mine! Why do you not avail of this easy *sadhana*?

Gurudev used to say, "Chanting the Name of God, repeating His Name, is an easy, simple path to attain liberation." These are his words, "It is an easy, simple path to attain liberation."

Tukaram said, "this is an easy *sadhana*, O my brothers – *Nama sankirtan*, chanting of the Divine Name, singing of the Divine Name. it will burn up the accumulated sins of all your previous births – *Jalatila pape janmanthacha. Na kari sayas jaya vanantara* – You don't have to exert yourself, take great troubles or renounce hearth and home and family to perform this *sadhana*. Where you are, in your own place, at your own home, you can practice this. You can live where you are, do what you are doing and practice this *sadhana*. God will come to you in your own home and give *darshan* to you. You don't have to go somewhere. He will come to you."

Thus Tukaram sings: "*Nama sankirtana sadhana pai sope.*" In Marathi, *sope* means easy. It is a **sadhana** that is very easy. "*Sukhayeto ghara narayana* – Narayana will come to your own home, happily, and give you *darshan*." And once you get *darshan* of god you are liberated.

'Therefore, O man, avail of this easy path. Have faith in God's Name. Chant the Lord's Name. Sing the Lord's Name. Don't shy away from spiritual life saying, " It is very difficult" God has made it

easy, specially for this age, the penance, austerities, denials and mortification that one had to do in previous ages, *yugas*, are no more binding or demanded of the seeker in this age. The Name overcomes everything, it is so powerful.”

Thus too the Bavarian mystic, Jakob Bohme, said about the indescribable power of the Lord's Divine Name. “If you have sinned in your olden days – before taking to the spiritual life and dedicating yourself to chanting of the Lord's Name and these sins drive to hell, then the power of the Lord's Name will enter into hell and break hell to pieces in order to liberate you.” Such is the power of the Divine Name.

-From Divine Life Society Magazine, November 2002.

### **HINTS TO ASPIRANTS**

Through complete self-surrender, the mind becomes still, the ego-sense disappears, and the soul merges into the infinite silence of the Spirit. When this state is attained, a human being becomes one with God, and all his actions flow out in pure spontaneity. The background and basis of his manifest life is then this supreme Spirit which animates, activates and illumines his entire life and its movements. Just as a variety of pictures with different kinds of gestures and movements appear on a white and spotless screen, leaving no impress upon it, and as the pictures cannot be exhibited without the screen as the background, so all the phenomena of the universal manifestation and its playful activity are seen on the screen of the silent and still spirit of the Divine. Therefore, it is rightly said that the universe is not a creation, but a projection from the divine and immortal Reality. The aim is to realise our identity with this immortal Spirit and its manifestations. It is now that we think, speak and act as the divine power wills, in the perfect freedom of the Soul. We enjoy a peace and joy which is simply ineffable. This is the goal.

- from the book HINTS TO ASPIRANTS by Swami Ramdas,  
Anandashram publication, Kanhangad, Kerala

## **RESURGENT CULTURE**

- Swami Krishnananda

(Continued from December 2015)

### **METAPHYSICS OF THOUGHT AND ITS FUNCTIONS**

Every action, viewed in this light, becomes a symptom of the restlessness of the relative consciousness in any of the human sheaths in which it is enclosed. There is an unceasing attempt on its part to break boundaries, to overcome all limitations and to transcend itself at every step. The environment called life in which it finds itself is only an opportunity provided to it to seek and find what it wishes to have in order to exceed itself in experience in the different stages of evolution. The universe is a vast field of psychological experience of multitudinous centres of individuality for working out their deserts by way of objective experience. The universe is another name for experience by a cosmic mind, of which the relative minds are refractive aspects and parts. The desirable and the undesirable in life are nothing but certain consequences which logically follow the whimsical and unmethodical desires of the ignorant individuals who know not their own ultimate destination. What is desirable today need not be so tomorrow, and today's painful experience may be a blessing for the future. It does not mean that all that we want is always the good. We often grope in darkness and find a cup of poison which we avidly drink, while we are really in search of some soothing food to appease our hunger. There is no error in the world or the objects; it is in the painful fact that we have no knowledge of what is really good for us. It is not enough if a physician knows merely that a particular drug has the power to suppress a particular ailment, he has also to know what other reactions the drug will produce in the living organism. In our life, the mind has to act as its own physician, and in this work it has to exercise great vigilance born of right perception. No thought, feeling or willing can be said to be healthy when it is not in consonance with the health and peace of

the universe as a whole. That we are members of a single undivided family demands that we have to be mutually co-operative, and think and act in terms of mutual welfare, which, in the end, is the welfare of the whole. When this knowledge is not given to the mind, it acts blindly and errs with the idea that what appears to bring a temporary sensation of pleasure to it is the true and the good. When it does not learn the lesson of life by enlightened reason, it has to learn it by pain.

The mind, in the Vedanta philosophy, is conceived not as any independent entity opposed to matter, as is the case in several systems of Western philosophy, but is understood to be an aspect of the material principle itself appearing in a more rarefied form. The psychology of the Vedanta is a highly scientific methodology evolved out of the fundamental concept that the supreme reality is Absolute Consciousness and anything that may seem to be opposed to it can only be a phase of itself. The fivefold base of objective perception, viz., sound, touch, form, taste and smell, is found to be inseparable from and reciprocally related to the senses of knowledge working under the direction of the mind. The theory of the Vedanta is that the mind, constituting mainly the functions of understanding, thinking, feeling, remembering and willing, is the resultant of the collective totality of the purified forms of the essences of the five substrata of sensations enumerated above. The sympathy that is observed between sensations and their objects is thus explained by the fact that the cause of the appearances of the two are essentially the same. Not only this. There is the presupposition of the greater truth that at the background of the mind, the senses and their objects, there is the Absolute itself as their very reality. The Vedanta psychology is a direct consequence of its basic metaphysics which lays down that existence is non-dual. It is on this foundation of the ultimate inseparability of the knower and the known that we have to envisage the law governing the universe and regulating individual and social life.

The highest law is accordingly conceived as Dharma based

on Rita and Satya. Rita and Satya are two terms that occur originally in the Vedas, signifying the eternal cosmic order and the same as manifest in the diversified world. Dharma is nothing but one's duty as an individual stationed in the cosmos, as its integral part. This at once explains by implication one's duty as an individual stationed in the cosmos, as its integral part. This at once explains by implication one's duty towards family, society, the nation and the world at large. The fulfilment of this Dharma is expected to be achieved not in a slipshod way or by leaps and bounds, but in a gradual manner following closely the evolutionary process of the cosmos. Material welfare, the enjoyment of desires and relations to society are given due consideration and are equally regulated by Dharma which, at the same time, works with Moksha or the ultimate realisation of the infinite as its aim. Dharma is the ethical value, Artha the material and the economic value, Kama the vital value and Moksha the infinite value of life. As the infinite included all the finites, the aspiration for Moksha naturally implies the fulfilment of the ends of the other desires and the execution of all other duties in life. This sublime aspiration arises in the mind when it has an inherent feeling of 'enough' with the things of the world. This is the 'divine discontent' which acts as a forerunner of the struggle of the spirit to grasp and know itself in the Absolute. It is here that true knowledge dawns.

Ordinary psychological experience is usually marked off from a life of spiritual insight. The path of the pleasant is differentiated from the way of the good. What the senses report to us need not necessarily be the true or the good. Often they give us false intimations and involve us in tantalizing mirages which recede from us as we try to approach them. It is because of this unfortunate predicament that we go on experimenting with one object after another, seeking final satisfaction, but do not find it anywhere. This fruitless pursuit continues until thinking of benefit in terms of separateness discovers its own futility and gives way to a search for peace in terms of more and more integrated realms of being. The individual expands to the family, the family to the community, the

community to a wider society or the nation, the nation to the whole world, and the world to the cosmos, wherein the process of expansion finds its limit and begins to turn inward into the centre of experience which, in the end, is recognised to be identical with the Supreme Being. Bearing this in mind, the sage of the Upanishad warns us with the great rule of life that everything shall desert us if we consider it to be different from our own essential self. As we have already noticed, nothing in this world can be considered to be merely a means to the satisfaction of another, for in this mutually-determined whole there are only ends, not means. The Bhagavad-Gita states that all pleasures that are born of the contact of the mind and the senses with the external are wombs of pain, for outward contact is not the way of contacting reality. The dissatisfying consequence of sense-gratifications, the fear that usually attends upon them, the chances of getting addicted to the habits and impressions produced by such pleasures, and the inevitability of the rise of further desires and greater distractions, in addition to the wearing out of the senses, should rouse in the man of discrimination a consciousness of the higher life.

### **SECRET OF RIGHT ACTION**

No action is seen to fully bring to us the intended result, because it is bound up with several factors not under the control of the actor. It is meaningless to think that a divine way of living is not the usual way and that it is some mystic segregation and introversion not normally connected with life. This misconception arises on account of a misunderstanding of what spiritual life is and the aim of life should mean to us. When every type of action is visualised as a process of the universal activity of God, or the Absolute, individual and personal agency drops out from the scene altogether. Behold the soul-stirring dictum of the Bhagavad-Gita, that the wise one should always maintain the feeling that the agent, the process and the result of action are only modes in the universal design. Here becomes explicit the truth of the saying that we are to regard ourselves as only instruments and not the real doers of any action. This is Karma-

Yoga, that master technique of converting every work into duty and a veritable self-sacrifice, self-dedication and self-consecration in the beatitude of God. And Karma-Yoga is said to be based on Buddhi-Yoga or the art of right understanding, the understanding that man is ever in a state of attunement with God. Even the springs of instinctive action are found ultimately to be rooted in a distortion of the desire for self-possession in the completeness of the Divine. Only, instinctive action suffers and labours under the ignorance that the body and the mind have an existence isolated from other bodies and minds. This misery is Samsara, the aberration of the soul from itself, and the searching for itself in the not-self, the phantom and the imagination.

The reason why we think and feel as we do or act as we are accustomed to, lies in the why and how of individual existence itself. The body and the mind receive a universal sustenance, they are not only maintained but even constituted by an ocean of force which appears to manifest itself in spatio-temporal configurations. Our central urge is to overcome spatial limitations and temporal restrictions in an experience which is self-dependent, self-determined and perfect in itself. This state is referred to in the Upanishad as the Plenum of Felicity, where one sees nothing else, hears nothing else and understands nothing else. It is also said that should be considered transient and paltry in which one sees something else, hears something else and understands something else than the Self. Under these circumstances it would be mere vanity and a futile attempt to try to arrogate reality to any personality or individuality. This self-arrogation is termed selfishness, and is a folly.

In this mysterious cosmos, which is more like a reverberating chamber where every little sound is loudly heard everywhere and in which there can be no such thing as privacy, every thought, however feeble it may be, announces itself spontaneously and gets recorded in the subtle realms, never gets destroyed, and is repaid in a befitting manner. Every thought is a tiny ripple, a wave in the sea of existence, and has a claim to exist and be evaluated as any other thing existent

or conceivable. Everyone of us, therefore, has at his background infinite support, infinite help, infinite sympathy, if only we would be careful enough to evoke it, by being aware of it. The unity of religions, the concord of philosophical thought, the meaning of universal brotherhood and the necessity for universal love in life is here explained, and we are now able to recognise it not as a fancy, a dogma, a creed or a tenet, but as the one law of life, the rule of individual and social survival, the principle and significance of our very existence.

Every bit of thing in the world, from the lowest to the highest, every little thought, feeling and action has to be viewed, judged and evaluated in the light of the unitary law that we have thus discovered as relentlessly operating within us and also outside us. True morality is the determination of the lower by the higher, the envisaging of every step that we take as a necessary precondition of the next step. Life in the world is a means which, when it evolves itself completely, takes the shape of the end, and the end is already present at every stage of the developing process of the means. The world is thus teleological and not mechanical. We, individuals inhabiting this universe, are held together not as pebbles or stones forming a heap but as organic parts which are inseparably related to a living whole that cannot be cut or divided without being mutilated and destroyed. Our social relations, which have a deeper meaning than is seen on the surface, should apprise us of the existence of a universal Self, and of our duty to it in all the strata of life. In our perceptions we perceive it, in our feelings we feel it, and in our actions we stumble upon it every moment, though we, at the present state of ours, are not endowed with an adequate knowledge of it. Human psychology is a study of the mental behaviour of the human individuality, and this individuality is, as we have observed above, a conglomeration of certain involuntary urges that seek satisfaction in things they know not. The only saving factor is the higher reason which sometimes points to a higher life above them. We cannot be profound psychologists possessed of an understanding of the hidden

implications of our behavior unless we have patience enough to listen attentively to and intelligently sympathise with the clamouring cries that are heard from within ourselves. We cannot cure our illness without knowing why we have fallen ill, and psychology as it is understood in the present Western sense of the term has not the requisite apparatus to fathom the depths of the human personality, it being confined to observed phenomena that are presented to the intellect which often merely plays second fiddle to the ignorant senses. Reason should also be able to know its limitations, and also the reason why it should be so limited. Our present-day psychological analyses cannot be the last word in the field of inner research, for we have other means of knowledge than mere sensation. The mind, when it is disturbed by the revolting noise of the senses, cannot properly reflect in itself the true state of affairs. When the five senses of knowledge stand fixed together with the understanding and the faculty of thinking, and the intellect does not oscillate, that, they say, is the supreme state, declares the Kathopanishad. That, again, is called the condition of Yoga wherein the consciousness does not get objectified through the avenues of the senses, and the mind rests in itself. Yoga is at-one-ment with the Infinite. No science of the mind or study of the inner behaviour of the human being can be exact and meaningful when this mighty truth is lost sight of, and the endeavours at right knowledge are confined to the belief that what we see with our eyes is the all. Far from this is the goal we are seeking, and we require an altogether different education to be able to appreciate this point of view.

to be continued.....

*-from the book Resurgent Culture, a Divine Life Society Publication, Rishikesh, Uttarakhand, Himalayas.*

## SAINT IS GOD HIMSELF

-Swami Ramdas

A woman who had lost her only child was utterly disconsolate and grief-stricken. She approached physicians and temples and pious men and prayed to them to bring her child back to life. Having received no help in any direction, she at last went to a devotee of a Mahatma living in the nearby forest.

The devotee advised her to go the Mahatma and pray to him for the fulfillment of her wish. Accordingly, she went to the place where the Mahatma lived and requested him to pray to God for the revival of her dead child.

The Mahatma came to the house of the sorrow-stricken woman and, before a large crowd which had gathered hearing of the visit of the Mahatma, prayed thrice for the revival of the dead child. But it was of no avail. All were astonished that in spite of the Mahatma's prayer the child did not return to life. The mother was greatly disappointed and began to cry aloud. Seeing the pitiable condition of the woman and feeling great compassion for her, the Mahatma looked at the dead body of the child and said "I command you to get up." To the joyous surprise of the mother and all the assembled people the child got up as if from the sleep and rushed to the mother.

The moral is – saints are the very embodiments of God. There is no meaning in asking them to pray to God for their sake. Pray to them for blessings and grace.

Om Om Om

## IGNORANCE IS LIKE THE DUST IN THE EYE

To realize God is to know the Self which is our real and eternal nature. We are always That but through ignorance we come to believe we are perishable bodies and changing individual souls only. What is needed is to remove the veil of ignorance and reveal our inherent divine Self. Here is an instance.

A man travelling in the train when peeping outside the window got coal dust into his eyes. Irritation in the eyes started and the man

became restless and unhappy – his eyes reddened. He tried to remove the dust by rubbing the eyes with his handkerchief but the speck of the dust could not be dislodged. Soon after he got down from the train and reached home he asked his mother to remove the dust by pouring oil into the affected eye. When the mother did so the coal dust came off and irritation stopped. Now the man exclaimed "Oh! How happy I am!"

The question now is – after the removal of the foreign matter from the eyes did he get any new happiness or did he only recover the happiness that he had lost for the time being? It is certainly the latter. But when he was relieved of the irritation he felt at first as though he had got a new happiness.

So in the case of an ignorant soul the removal of ignorance means recovering of Divine Consciousness which he had lost being obsessed by illusion. We are eternally one with God and the false sense of separation must go.

-from the stories as told by Swami Ramdas, Anandashram Publication, Kanhangad, Kerala.

## FREEDOM FROM FOREIGN MATTERS

Let your mind stand still and be calm,  
your desire is vanished and gone.  
Saturate the mind with truth,  
freedom you have won.

It is days since I took food or water. I feel weak but at the same time I feel free and light. Really, contemplation is possible only when the mind runs not after this and that affair, and the body craves not for food and raiment. When the mind stands still, undisturbed and calm, it is saturated with truth. *Yogah chittavritti nirodhah*. No prayer or meditation is necessary. No effort is needed. Sit thou still calm and pure. It is to the pure and childlike that Heaven belongs.

Om Tat Sat Om!

- from Cosmic Flashes by Swami Omkar

## DEPEND ON INNER SATSANG

-Swami Satchidananda

All of you have come here because you feel benefited in your Sadhana by such programmes. Benefited in the sense that they help you to be in tune with God at least as long as you are attending such programmes and in some cases for a much longer time. So what is needed for Sadhana is more of such occasions that can help us to commune with God more and more and ultimately commune with Him constantly.

Before one has God-vision one has to remain in constant communion with God. Though such Satsang programmes help us we cannot have them always. We can have them only once in a way. We are then unhappy when we do not get more of such occasions as our happiness depends upon the external programmes. We have to therefore devise ways and means to remember God without any external aids. Even when we are attending such programmes, unless we train our minds to commune with God, it will not help us very much. There may be so many unfavourable conditions we may have to face in our daily lives. As soon as we leave this place, we have to face the heavy traffic and lot of noise outside. Not only do they not help us to easily commune with God but also they prove a disturbing factor. So, the first thing we have to do is to train the mind to commune with God – at first under favourable conditions like Bhajans etc. and gradually in all conditions. The saints, our stipulated guides, have told us again and again that there is none but God in this world. The whole world is Himself. God alone is. This is the Mahavakya. When God alone is, why are we then not able to see Him, feel Him? There is something standing between us and God. Though God is all-pervading and He is never away from us, we feel that we are separate from God. We don't feel His presence. It is to feel His presence that the Mahatmas have given us the holy and all-powerful Mantra, the constant repetition of which can gradually purify our mind of all the dirt that causes the

disturbance. Only in a pure and still mind God reveals Himself. So, the Sadhakas effort should be to purify the mind and make it still. That stillness by purification comes by God remembrance. *Satsang* helps to commune with God and gives us an impetus in our *Sadhana*. There may be occasions when *Satsang* is not available. Then, we have to repose complete faith in the *Mahavakya* and train our mind to see God in everything, to see everything as the manifestation of God. This practice must go on constantly.

May the almighty God bless you all with success in your Sadhana and lead you to the supreme goal of realization of your oneness with Him resulting in eternal happiness.

- From Points to Ponder, Anandashram publication.

### SUNDAY, THE DAY OF SUNSHINE

Sunday – the day of the sun !

Let the Sun of the Soul too shine bright.

Let the clouds be always dispelled.

Be established forever in light!

Today Sunday, the day of the Sun of Lights, resplendent. I am always happy on Sundays, for it is day of rest and relaxation. It is the day on which worldly affairs are put aside.

But why have Sunday once a week only? Why not let every day be Sunday, a day of light, prayer and peace, a day of rest and relaxation? Let the Sun of the Soul shine forth, let the clouds that veil the sun, be dispelled. "*Tatvam pushan apavarunu satyadharmaya dhrishtaye.*" May we be established and centered in the Sun for ever !

-from Cosmic Flashes, Swami Omkar

## OVERCOMING FEAR

-Swami Jyotirmayananda

Fear is one of the most destructive emotions that an aspirant must conquer if he wishes to advance on the spiritual path. Fear saps one's mental and physical vitality, bringing about many changes in mind and body. In the extreme cases of fear, a person may have his hair turn gray overnight.

Every fearful thought creates an imbalance in the flow of pranas (vital forces), which in turn causes disharmony in the body. This results in the accumulation of toxins in the physical system. Manifold fears that are sustained over time may express themselves as physical diseases.

Further, fear is like a magnet, drawing negative circumstances. You draw to yourself what you are most afraid of. Fear forces you to think of an object repeatedly, and the act of doing so becomes a kind of mental invocation. You mentally invite what you fear by constantly thinking about it. By fearing an object, you invest it with a certain psychic power, thereby giving greater strength and validity to it.

Fear is not as simple as it seems, for its repercussions are seen to affect many areas of one's life. If you become inclined to fear you will commit every kind of negative deed, because fear is the source of all evils. A fearful person loses his willpower. Clarity of intellect and fear cannot coexist; therefore, though a person may seem passive, he gradually becomes a perpetrator of many evil deeds under the pressure of fear.

You must understand that the object you are afraid of is not really the cause of your fear. Fear arises out of one's imagination and is rooted in a negative karma. Suppose for example, that you died in an automobile accident or an airplane crash in a previous life, you will very likely have an extraordinary fear of automobiles or airplanes in this present birth. In addition, fear of today may have its

roots in your childhood.

Because people are pulled by different karmas, they are fearful in different ways. There are common forms of fear that unite everyone. All of us are afraid of death; no one wants to be hurt; no one likes to be criticized; no one wishes to fail in business, to be poor, to be friendless.

Some people have abnormal fears that seem highly irrational. A soldier may fight on the battlefield with apparent immense courage, but when the doctor is ready to give him an injection he is terrified at the sight of the hypodermic needle! Fear may also express itself in various phobias and perversions. Some people are terribly afraid to touch anything, lest they contaminate themselves with the disease germs that they believe are swarming on every surface. Some people see spiders, scorpions and lizards everywhere and are terrified. Others dread the night that brings nightmares, imagining that the moment they close their eyes, a hideous vampire will arise from a corner of their unconscious and frighten them to death. Thus you see that fear looms no matter where you turn; there is really no escaping it unless you tread the spiritual path.

From an advanced point of view, fear does not exist. If you were to analyze your mind you would find that fear is not real, but rather it is like darkness. Just as darkness results from the absence of light, fear is caused by the absence of knowledge. Instead of fighting it, then, you need to gain an insight into its cause, which is ignorance. When you bring the light of spiritual knowledge, fear disappears.

One of the most important ways of impressing upon your mind the importance of removing fear is to reflect seriously on how fear limits you. A terrible consequence of fear is that it diminishes one's mental power over the course of time. Even though you may not be aware that you are afraid, many fearful impressions still remain in your unconscious, and those impressions keep your mental powers at a low ebb, dampening your talents.

The average person uses only a fraction of his mind because much of it is terrorized by the dragon of fear. If that fear were not there, the human personality would be unimaginably dynamic and amazingly radiant.

One of the most crippling and debilitating forms of fear is the instinctive fear of death that dominates everyone. Raja Yoga says that whether you are learned or illiterate, you have an instinctive fear of death.

You may recall the parable about the parrot that was taught to say the name of Rama. For a long time, hour after hour it repeated "Rama, Rama. Yet one day a cat approached its cage, and the parrot forgot the name and started screeching. Similarly, you may intellectually convince yourself that you may have no fear and constantly assert, "I am fearless *Brahman*. I am *Atman*" —but again until the cat of death comes. If you really could remain fearless in such a situation it would be wonderful, for you would discover that your personality has changed. If you are not afraid of death, you are well on the way to inner expansion and immense strength and joy; you are on the road to Self-Realization.

## **METHODS FOR OVERCOMING FEAR**

### **Face the Situations That Evoke Fear**

In trying to overcome fear, you must learn to look into the eyes of the situation that provokes it. Avoiding difficult situations becomes the immediate cause of fear. This is seen even in the most trifling of instances. For example, suppose a dog runs after you as you walk down the street, if you show fear, the dog smells that fear, so to speak, and becomes more encouraged. On the other hand, if you keep your mind composed and do not radiate any fear to the animal it will probably back down. It may even retire without causing any hurt at all. But if you show fear and run you will be chased, because these actions encourage the dog.

The same strategy applies to other circumstances in life. Try to look into every condition that seems to instill fear. To look into the very eyes of a problem implies that you maintain a balanced mind with patience, mantra (any divine name), and inwardly affirm that nothing can harm you. You must not run away from an unpleasant situation, for if you do so it will take on a fearful aspect by and by. Frightening situations are like paper giants, fearful from a distance yet harmless when you see them for what they really are.

### **Control Negative Imagination and Memory**

Another important point in trying to avoid fear is that one ought not to rehearse a calamity. Suppose your mind tells you that something bad is going to happen. You then allow your imagination to run wild as you rehearse the calamity, and soon you feel miserable, imagining that all your teeth are smashed, your legs broken, and your fingers twisted. When you misuse your imagination in this fashion, the result is usually worse than the actual calamity. Human beings are superb at rehearsing disasters. On the real stage of life things are much lesser. If you have a strong mind you will realize that ninety percent of fearful thoughts arise out of imagination, not out of reality.

With regard to this, there is a parable about a journalist who met the spirit of cholera and asked, "Where are you going?" And the spirit said, I am going to Egypt where I intend to destroy five hundred persons

A few months later the journalist met him again and said, " You lied, great spirit of cholera. You said you were going to destroy five hundred persons, but five thousand were destroyed. The spirit then responded, I destroyed only five hundred; the rest simply died of fright!"

Thus, learn the art of controlling imagination about the future as well as memory about the past. Do not dwell on the memories of the negative events that have taken place in your life. Though you Ought to learn valuable lessons from them, you should not keep the

vivid images of painful, fearful experiences before your mind.

### **Change the Unconscious**

The real key to solving the problem of fear lies in changing one's unconscious and filling it with dynamic impressions. To do this, you should first see that you are not leaving your mind idle to gather fearful impressions, and this can be done if you have a plan that fills your daily life with useful activity.

You should also consider the association you keep. Do you keep yourself surrounded by people, movies and TV programs that are negative? If you continually keep yourself in wrong association, then your unconscious becomes filled with negative impressions that incline you towards fear.

According to Vedanta, fear is the characteristic of ether element blended with the earth element. When you are afraid, you lose your body-idea to a certain extent; and you become oblivious of your body; and at the same time your body becomes rooted in one place, as if paralyzed. Since fear belongs to the ether element, which is the subtlest element that goes to constitute your subtle body, its eradication cannot be worked out superficially by ordinary means. You must take recourse to a method that goes deep into your unconscious to remove it.

### **Pratipaksha Bhavana**

Rajayoga prescribes the method known as *Pratipaksha Bhavana* for dealing with negative thoughts. This is practiced in three Stages: 1. Detach from the negative thought 2. Substitute a positive thought 3. Bring about sublimation of the negative thought.

In your dealings in life, try to be a witness to thoughts of fear. Do not fight a negative thought, but simply allow thinking to override it. Think of those good qualities that are directly opposed to fear: courage, heroism, dynamic strength, boldness, and self-assurance. Think of those sons who possess or possessed these wonderful

qualities. Go on asserting day by day: "I am growing in fearlessness. Nothing can harm me."

Try to understand that any affirmation you make should not be sentimental; it must be based upon understanding. Develop a deep-rooted understanding that "Because I am Eternal Spirit, nothing can destroy me. Fire cannot burn me. The wind cannot blow me away. The Ocean cannot drown me. Swords cannot cut me. Praise and censure cannot affect me. I am the Self." If you continue in this vein you will realize that fear simply dissipates. By practicing Pratipaksha Bhavana you can overcome fear; and when fear is overcome positive energy is generated within you

### **Surrender to God**

Another effective method for overcoming fearfulness is surrender to God. Develop an inward sense of absolute surrender, an awareness that the world is guided by an immense intelligence. Feel that if you approach the Divine Self, who's hand guides all, no calamity can affect you in any way. You must develop this kind of immense faith.

In the Valmiki Ramayana, Rama says, "Whoever says that he has taken refuge in Me, I will help him no matter what his situation may be. I will protect him no matter what danger may confront him." There are similar affirmations in all scriptures of the world's religions. If a devotee turns to God, immense strength will save him from any fearful situation he may be in.

Think of Moses when he was leading the Israelites out of bondage in Egypt with Pharaoh and his chariots in pursuit. There he was at the edge of the Red Sea, not knowing how he was going to lead all those people across it, but he wasn't anxious. He simply trusted in the Lord. and then the waters miraculously divided and a road emerged. Much in the same manner, if you are pursuing what is right you do not care how things happen, because you are infused with a faith that can work miracles.

## Vedantic Enquiry

Then there is the Vedantic method of spiritual enquiry by which one reflects, "Who am I?" By faithful practice of this spiritual discipline, one comes to have a profound understanding of the Upanishadic truth that fear arises out of duality. There can be no fear where there is non-duality.

As long as you consider yourself an individual placed in a world with many other individuals each having a different karmic personality—there will be fear for you. You will always feel that whatever you desire is desired by everyone else too. If you develop dispassion, however, then the road toward fearlessness will be opened up to you. Fear and attachment go together. The number of attachments you have is directly proportional to the intensity of fear that you feel in life; so, from a mathematical point of view, if you lessen your attachments fear will gradually diminish. Thus, if you are practicing dispassion, gaining an insight into the fact that objects are illusory and, further, asserting within yourself that you are the all-pervading Self, not this personality, then there will be no fear at all; fear will be cut at its very root.

The Self is called *Abhaya Brahman*, *Brahman* who is fearless. If you are meditating upon that Self and asserting, "I am fearless *Brahman*," you are bound to overcome all fear and become the embodiment of all that is Divine.

*"Because I am the Eternal spirit, nothing can destroy me. Fire cannot burn me. The wind cannot blow me away. The ocean cannot drown me. Swords cannot cut me. Praise and censure cannot affect me. I am the Self."*

-from International Yoga Guide, May 2013.

## PRACTICE OR LIVE THE LIFE

- Edited by Sista Subba Rao

continued from December 2015

### SYMPATHY

Sympathy should not be confounded with that maudlin and superficial sentiment which like a pretty flower without root, presently perishes and leaves behind neither seed nor fruit. To fall into hysterical weeping when parting with a friend or on hearing of some suffering abroad is not sympathy. Neither are out-bursts of violent indignation against the cruelties and injustices of others, any indication of a sympathetic mind. If one is cruel at home, if he badgers his wife or beats his children, or abuses his servants, or stabs his neighbours with shafts of sarcasm, what hypocrisy is in his profession of love for suffering people who are outside the immediate range of his influence! What shallow sentiment informs his bursts of indignation against the injustices and hard-heartedness in the world around him !

Sympathy leads us to the hearts of all men, so that we become spiritually united to them, and when they suffer, we feel the pain, when they are glad we rejoice with them, when they are despised and persecuted we spiritually descent with them into the depths and take into our hearts their humiliation and distress, and he who has this binding uniting spirit of sympathy can never be cynical and condemnatory; can never pass thoughtless and cruel judgments upon his fellows; because in his tenderness of heart he is ever with them in their pain.

But to have reached this ripened sympathy it must need be that he has loved much, suffered much and sounded the dark depths of sorrow. It springs from acquaintance with the profoundest experiences, so that a man has had conceit, thoughtlessness, and selfishness burnt out of his heart.

Sympathy is not required towards those who are purer and

more enlightened than one's self, as the purer one lives above the necessity for it. In such a case reverence should be exercised with a striving to lift one's self up to the purer level and so enter into possession of the larger life. Nor can a man fully understand one who is wiser than himself, and before condemning he should earnestly ask himself whether he is, after all, better than the man whom he has singled out as the object of his bitterness. If he is, let him bestow sympathy. If he is not, let him exercise reverence.

## **GENTLENESS**

Let a man beware of greed, of meanness, of envy, of jealousy, of suspicion, for these things if harboured, will rob him of all that is best in life, aye even all that is best in material things as well as all that is best in character and happiness. Let him be liberal of heart and generous of hand, magnanimous and trusting, not only giving cheerfully and often of his substance but allowing his friends and fellow-men freedom of thought and action. Let him be thus, and honour, plenty and prosperity will come knocking at his door for admittance as his friends and guests.

The man who has perfected himself in gentleness never quarrels. He never returns the hard word, he leaves it alone or meets it with a gentle word which is far more powerful than wrath, gentleness is wedded to wisdom and a wise man has overcome all anger in himself, and so understands, how to overcome it in others. The gentleman is saved from most of the disturbances and turmoils with which uncontrolled men afflict themselves. While they are wearing themselves out with wasteful and needless strain, he is quiet and composed and such quietness and composure are strong to win the battle of life.

## **BROTHER-HOOD**

Brother-hood as a human organization cannot exist so long as any degree of self-seeking reigns in the hearts of men and women who band themselves together for any purpose. As such self-seeking

must eventually rend the seamless boat of loving unity. But although organized brother-hood has so largely failed, any man may realise brother-hood in its perfection, and know it in all its beauty and completion if he will make himself a wise, pure, loving spirit removing from his mind every element of strife, and learning to practise those divine qualities without which brother-hood is but a mere theory, opinion, or illusive dream.

From the spirit of humility proceed meakness and peacefulness, from self-surrender come patience, wisdom and true judgment, from love spring kindness, joy, harmony and from compassion proceed gentleness and forgiveness.

He who has brought himself into harmony with these four qualities is divinely enlightened, he sees whence the actions of men proceed and whither they tend, and therefore can no longer live in the exercise of the dark tendencies. He has realised brother-hood in its completion a freedom from malice, from envy, from bitterness, from contention, from condemnation. All men are his brothers, those who live in the dark tendencies as well as those who live in the enlightening qualities. He has but one attitude of mind towards all, that of good will.

Theories and schemes for propagating Brother-hood are many, but brother-hood itself is one and unchangeable and consists in the complete cessation from egotism and strife and in practicing good will and peace; for Brother-hood is a practice and not a theory. Self surrender and goodwill are its guardian angels and peace is its habitation. Where two are determined to maintain an opposing opinion, the clinging of self and ill-will are there and Brother-hood is absent

Where two are prepared to sympathise with each other, to see no evil in each other, to serve and not to attack each other, the love of Truth and goodwill are there and Brother-hood is present.

The way of love is the way of life, immortal life- and the

beginning of that way consists in getting rid of our carpings, quarrellings, fault findings and suspicions. If these petty vices possess us, let us not deceive ourselves but let us confess that we have not love. To be thus honest with ourselves is to be prepared to find love, but to be self-deceived is to be shut out from love. If we are to grow in love, we must begin at the beginning and remove from our minds all mean and suspicious thoughts about our fellow-workers and fellow-men. We must learn to treat them with large-hearted freedom and to perceive the right reason for their actions to excuse them on grounds of personal right and personal freedom when their opinions, methods or actions are contrary to us, thus shall we come at last to love them with that love of which St. Paul speaks a love that is a permanent principle.

Whatever others may say of you, whatever they may do to you, never take offence. Do not return hatred with hatred. If another hates you perhaps you have consciously or unconsciously failed somewhere in your conduct, or there may be some misunderstanding which the exercise of a little gentleness and reason may remove but under all circumstances, "Father forgive them" is infinitely better than "I will have nothing more to do with them." Hatred is so small and poor, so blind and wretched, love is so great and rich, so far-seeing and blissful.

## GENERAL

There is that outburst of passion which is called "righteous indignation" and it appears to be righteous but looked at from a higher conception of conduct it is seen to be not righteous. There is a certain stamp of nobility about indignation at wrong or injustice, and it is certainly far higher and nobler than indifference. But there is a loftier nobility still by which it is seen that indignation is never necessary and where love and gentleness take its place, they overcome the wrong much more effectually. A person that is apparently wronged requires our pity, but the one who wrongs requires still more our compassion, for he is ignorantly laying up for

himself a store of suffering. He must reap the wrong he is sowing.

Man's life is actual, his thoughts are actual, his deeds are actual. To occupy ourselves with the investigation of things that are, is the way of wisdom. Man considered as above, beyond and separate from mind and thought, is speculative and not actual and to occupy ourselves with the study of things that are not is the way of folly. Man cannot be separated from his mind, his life cannot be separated from his thoughts. Mind, thought and life are as inseparable as light, radiance and colour. The facts are all sufficient, and contain within themselves the ground-work of all knowledge concerning them.

The purification of the heart, the thinking of right thoughts, and the doing of good deeds, what are they but calls to a higher, nobler mode of thought, - energizing forces urging men to effort, in the choosing of thoughts which shall lift them into realms of greater power, greater good, greater bliss?

Aspiration, meditation, and devotion these are the chief means which men in all ages employ to reach up to a higher modes of thought, wider airs of peace, vaster realms of Knowledge, for "as he thinketh in his heart, so is he". He is saved from himself-from his own folly and suffering-by creating within, new habits of thought; by becoming a new thinker, a new man.

The multitudes unenlightened concerning their spiritual nature are the slaves of thought, but the sage is the master of thought. They follow blindly, he chooses intelligently. They obey the impulse of the moment, thinking of their immediate pleasure and happiness; he commands and subdues impulse resting upon that which is permanently right. They, obeying blind impulses violate the law of righteousness; he, conquering impulse, obeys the law of righteousness. The sage stands face to face with the facts of life. He knows the nature of thought. He understands and obeys the law of his being.

In the hour of temptation do not depart from the right path. Avoid excitement when the mind would wander, bring it to rest on higher things. Do not think. "I can get Truth from the Teacher or from the books", You can acquire Truth only by practice. The Teacher and the books can do no more than give instructions and you must apply them. Those only who practise faithfully the rules and lessons given and rely entirely upon their own efforts will become enlightened. The Truth must be earned. Do not be led away by phenomenal appearances, or seek communications with spirits or the dead, but attain to virtue, wisdom and knowledge of the supreme Law by the practice of Truth-Trust the Law; trust the path of Righteousness.

Consider the man whose mind is suspicious, covetous, envious. How small and mean and dreary, every thing appears to him. Having no grandeur in himself, he sees no grandeur any-where, being ignoble himself he is incapable of seeing nobility in any being; selfish as he himself is, he sees in the most exalted acts of unselfishness, only motives that are mean and base.

Consider again the man whose mind is unsuspecting, generous, magnanimous. How wonderful and beautiful is his world! He sees men as true, and to him they are true. In his presence the meanest forget their nature, and for the moment become like himself getting a glimpse, albeit confused, in that temporary upliftment, of a higher order of things, of an immeasurably nobler and happier life.

The inner informs the outer. The greater embraces the lesser. Matter is the counterpart of mind. Events are streams of thoughts-circumstances are combinations of thought and the outer conditions and actions of others in which each man is involved are intimately related to his own mental needs and development. Man is a part of his surroundings. He is not separate from his fellows but is bound closely to them by the peculiar intimacy and interaction of deeds and by those fundamental laws of thought which are the roots of human society.

One cannot alter external things to suit his passing whims and

wishes, but he can set aside his whims and wishes, he can so alter his attitude of mind towards externals, that they will assume a different aspect. He cannot mould the actions of others towards him, but he can rightly fashion his actions towards them.

Think of your servants with kindness, consider their happiness and comfort and never demand of them that extremity of service which you yourself would not care to perform, were you in their place. Rare and beautiful is that humility of soul by which a servant entirely forgets himself in his master's good, but far rarer and more beautiful with a divine beauty is that nobility of soul by which a man forgetting his own happiness seeks the happiness of those who are under his authority and who depend upon him for their bodily sustenance. And such a man's happiness is increased tenfold; nor does he need to complain of those whom he employs. Said a well-known and extensive employer of labour who never needs to dismiss and employee, "I have always had the happiest relations with my work people. If you ask me how it is to be accounted for, I can only say that it has been my aim from the first to do to them as I would wish to be done by."

As you think, you travel; as you love you attract. You are to-day where your thoughts have brought you. You will be tomorrow where your thoughts take you. You cannot escape the results of your thought, but you can endure and learn, can accept and be glad.

You will always come to the place where your love (your most abiding and intense thought) can receive its measure of gratification. If your love be base, you will come to a base place; if it be beautiful, you will come to a beautiful place.

You can alter your thoughts and so alter your conditions. You are powerful, not powerless.

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

श्रीगणेशाय नमः  
श्रीमच्छङ्करभगवत्पादाचार्य विरचितं

माया पञ्चकम्  
*Śrī Śaṅkarācārya's*  
*Māyā pañcakam*

-Swami Tattvavidananda Saraswati

(Continued from December 2015)

VERSE 3

सुखचिदखण्डविबोधमद्वितीयं वियदनलादिविनिर्मिते नियोज्य ।  
भ्रमयति भवसागरे नितान्तं त्वघटितघटनापटीयसी माया ॥ ३

*sukhacidakhaṇḍavibodhamadvitīyaṃ*  
*viyadanalādivinirmite niyojya,*  
*bhramayati bhavasāgare nitāntaṃ*  
*tvaghaṭitaghaṭanāpaṭīyasī māyā.* 3

अघटितघटनापटीयसी *aghaṭitaghaṭanāpaṭīyasī* = capable of making the impossible possible; माया *māyā* = illusion; तु *tu* = indeed; सुखचिदखण्डविबोधम् *sukhacidakhaṇḍavibodham* = Bliss, Awareness, and undifferentiated Knowledge; अद्वितीयम् *advitīyam* = one-without-a-second; वियदनलादिविनिर्मिते *viyadanalādivinirmite* = in the construct of space, fire etc.; नियोज्य *niyojya* = having embedded (through identification); भवसागरे *bhavasāgare* = in the ocean of worldliness; नितान्तम् *nitāntam* = relentlessly; भ्रमयति *bhramayati* = encircles.

*Māyā* is capable of making the impossible possible. It causes Atman, which is Bliss, Awareness, and undifferentiated Knowledge, to identify with the construct of space, fire etc. (the physical body), thereby relentlessly encircling it in the ocean of worldliness.

The reality is such and such, but it is mistaken for something else that is altogether its opposite. Not an iota of the true nature of reality remains in what it is finally understood to be. Brahman is *kevala*, one-without-a-second. It is in fact the locus of the multitudinous world that is but an appearance though taken as real. Similarly, there is total misconception about the nature of oneself. What are we? Happiness or Bliss is our essential nature, just as sweetness is the essential nature of sugar. This happiness manifests as the awareness that is the being. However, in mistaking the happiness to lie outside, in the various objects of the world, one remains a wanting person within. Can you imagine that one expects the fullness and the joy to come from the outside? What a travesty of the truth it is! There cannot be a worse distortion of judgment.

It is thought that the being is present on the outside and that we are ourselves only of the nature of knowing. For example, we see that the physical object, say the pot, exists outside, while the knowledge of the pot obtains within; sat, being, and cit, awareness, are understood to be divided thus. The truth is that in the very being is the knowing; it is the being that shines as the knowing. They are not removed from each other. The anomaly of divorcing the being from the knowing cannot be resolved as long as one assumes that such a thing as a 'pot' exists outside. The *Chandogyopaniṣat* declares, *vācārambhaṇaṃ vikāro nāmadheyaṃ mṛttiketyeva satyam*, the effect (pot) has its origin in speech and is just a name; the clay alone is real (6-1-4).

We believe that the pot has its *ārambha*, birth, in clay. But the pot is not born outside. Nothing is ever born outside. The matter of which the pot is made in the present is clay, it was clay in the past, and it will continue to be clay even in the future. Satyam means that which was the same in the past as it is in the present, and will remain so in the future. The truth of the pot is, therefore, clay. The 'object-pot' thus has its origin in speech alone. It is but a name or word that originates as an idea in the mind. Indeed, there is no pot other than the idea of the pot; the effect has no existence independent of its cause. When this is understood, the division between the being and the knowing is resolved. The being alone shines as the knowing and

it is of the nature of love, peace, and harmony. One has to experience or know this for oneself by abiding in the silence of pure being.

The mind creates division where there is none. If one drops the mental effort that this involves and abides in the thought-free state of simply being, all division will cease to be. Once the Reality is known, it does not matter whether or not thoughts arise. You know that the sky is never blue in spite of it appearing blue. You know that the earth is spherical, and it does not matter that it appears flat. None of the divisions projected by the mind exist in the being. They appear in the substratum in which they are not; the entire world that is created by the mind is an appearance in the *saccit Atman* in which it is not present.

We live under the constant tyranny of *māyā*; it determines and directs our thoughts and as though drags us by the nose. Brahman is made to identify with the physical body and is powerless to resist. What a downfall! And what is this physical body? It is not even an entity. The body is an idea, an idea in the mind. When we are not thinking of the body, it is not there. It is only when you think of the body that it is present. When you are not mindful of it, there is no body. You can see how this method of *anvaya-niṣedha* establishes that the physical body is but an idea in the mind. The same scheme applies to the entire world around us. *Saccidānanda Atman* is brought down to the level of the body through sheer identification. What is the physical body after all? It is nothing but a conglomerate of the five elements of space, air, heat, the waters, and earth.

Before we can make any progress on the path to Self-realization, however, we have to resolve the issue of identification with the body-mind. Even to live in comfort and peace for as long as we are alive, it is imperative that we resolutely dis-identify with the body-mind complex. This aspect cannot be neglected or dodged. You disregard it at your own peril. For instance, it appears as if people accord extraordinary significance to owning insurance policies. Of course, one has to buy insurance; I am not against it or questioning the wisdom of doing so. I am only wondering why insurance is considered to be so important. Will it lengthen life? No. But it is seen to offer a degree of security that makes life easy and relaxed. Well, if

your motive is to ensure that life is easy and relaxed, I would contend that you would do better to work at giving up identification with the body-mind instead. It is a very simple motive with a very mundane goal. One has to correct one's attitude towards the body. We need not and should not punish the body, but we should also not pamper it. Feed it, clothe it, and leave it alone. Do not identify with it.

I once met a great saint, who, during our *satsaṅga*, made an observation that struck me as very profound. He said that while in the present day people study texts of Vedanta, like the Upanishads etc., and there is also wide dissemination of the knowledge of Vedanta, there is, however, no attention paid to *ācārā samhitā*, the code of conduct, and tapas, austere living. He remarked that even though these ethics are described here and there in the Bhagavatam, it was unfortunate that as principles to live by, today, they are very inconvenient and difficult to adhere to. Indeed, it is true that the practice of tapas has declined gravely in the lives of people. In living a life of tapas, physical discomfort is voluntarily and deliberately endured. Without there being a certain degree of tapas, body-identification cannot be negated, and without it being negated, all the study of the lofty scriptures is just so much oblation poured in the dust. The pampering of the physical body works against the realization of the truth.

If one acts on the belief that one is the body and the mind, he or she is guilty of the greatest disservice against one's own real nature. As a result of such identification, Atman the Absolute is buffeted up and down in the cycle of births and deaths. *Jāyasva mriyasva*, take birth and die, says the *Chandogyopaniṣat* (5-10-8). Having taken birth, die; having died, take birth again. Even within a given span of life, the inexorable cycle of pleasure and pain is ever present. We seem to always live on the verge of sorrow. Just consider our essential nature and observe our lot: We resemble the beggar begging with a golden bowl in his hands; if he were only to look at his begging bowl properly, he would know that he is a millionaire! Yet how did this happen to us? Are we such dull people? Do we have no true worth? How ever could this have happened? The only answer has to be, *aghaṭitaghaṭanāpaṭīyasī māyā*.

In this context, I am reminded of a dialogue between the Buddha and his disciples that took place in Sarnath and is very pertinent here: 'Is the material form permanent or impermanent?' 'Impermanent, revered Sir.' 'Is that which is impermanent of the nature of suffering or happiness?' 'Suffering, revered Sir.' 'Is it proper to regard that which is impermanent and of the nature of suffering as mine or as myself?' 'No, indeed, revered Sir.' 'Is sensation permanent, and is perception permanent?' 'No Sir.' The Buddha then proceeds to tell his disciples, 'Regarding them thus, and indifferent to material form, indifferent to sensation, indifferent to perception, and indifferent to the mind, one becomes free from desire; through desirelessness alone is one liberated.' The Buddha, Sri Sankara, and Sri Krishna are three glorious saints, who have emphasized desirelessness as a precondition for liberation. They are among the greatest preceptors of all time.

All the projections of the mind are based on identification with the body, and desire is the product of such identification. We are confused because we believe that we are born in this world. The truth is the exact opposite: You are not the body; the physical body is but an idea in the mind, and the mind is itself but a movement in consciousness. You are the Self, the very source of that waking consciousness. You are thus neither the body nor of this world. As long as you imagine that you were born at a certain place and time and remain identified with the body and a name and status, the calamity of *samsāra* will not cease.

The single cause of suffering is *māyā*, delusion born of ignorance. There is only one way to overcome it; surrender to God and practice intense motiveless devotion. In the Gita, Sri Krishna declares, *māmeva ye prapadyante māyāmetāṃ taranti te*, those who surrender to Me alone cross this delusion (7-14).

#### VERSE 4

अपगतगुणवर्णजातिभेदे सुखचिति विप्रविडाद्यहङ्कृतिं च ।

स्फुटयति सुतदारगेहमोहं त्वघटितघटनापटीयसी माया ॥ ४

*apagataguṇavarṇajātibhede  
sukhaciti vipraṇiḍādyahanḥkṛtiṃ ca,  
sphuṭayati sutadāragehamohaṃ  
tvaghaṭitaghaṭanāpaṭīyasī māyā.* 4

अघटितघटनापटीयसी *aghaṭitaghaṭanāpaṭīyasī* = capable of making the impossible possible; माया *māyā* = illusion; अपगतगुणवर्णजातिभेदे *apagataguṇavarṇajātibhede* = devoid of qualities, caste appellations and divisions based on birth; सुखचिति *sukhaciti* = in the blissful Awareness; विप्रविडाद्यहङ्कृतिम् *vipraṇiḍādyahanḥkṛtim* = the egotism of brahminhood, merchanthood, etc.; च *ca* = and; सुतदारगेहमोहम् *sutadāragehamohaṃ* = the delusion of son, wife, and home; तु *tu* = indeed; स्फुटयति *sphuṭayati* = makes shine.

The illusion, capable of making the impossible possible, indeed makes the egotism of brahminhood, merchanthood, etc. appear in the blissful awareness, which is devoid of qualities, caste appellations and divisions based on birth.

*Māyā* causes logically impossible thing to happen; something that is not possible, that cannot happen or should not happen, appears to be brought about. The concept of *māyā* is often viewed as a theory. However, the fact is that it is not a theory, such as that of armchair-philosophers speculating upon some utopian concepts; it is a statement of fact regarding this universe. As we move about in life, we encounter tremendous contradictions. There should be no such contradictions, but they are present nonetheless. It is also not possible to surmount or ignore these contradictions. For example, we seek out good, but wherever there is good, there is also evil. Where there is life, death is present right alongside. Everyone who smiles has also to weep, just as everyone who weeps will eventually smile. Logic cannot help put these contradictions in the right perspective; they just cannot be explained away. The contention of some of the dualists that *māyā* has been posited on philosophy by *Śrī*

*Śaṅkara* is therefore neither correct nor acceptable.

There is indeed a Being, a higher power, called *Īśvara*, who is beyond all these contradictions; *Īśvara* is the divine magician who wields *māyā*, while He is Himself free from its contradictions. All the souls are like the audience watching the magic show, spellbound. Anyone that knows the truth of the Self to be *Īśvara* is identical to that higher Being; *jñānī tvātmaiva me matam* (Gita, 7-18). *Māyā* does not bind the enlightened soul. Excepting the enlightened, nobody can overcome the affliction of ignorance, however intelligent, powerful, or rich. Every object that we perceive with the senses or conceive as an idea in the mind comes under the purview of *māyā*. Everything that is bound by the laws of space, time, and causality falls within the domain of *māyā*. This shows that the subject-object division based on perception and conception is itself unreal.

One's essential nature is *sukhacit*, the happiness, which is the awareness. *Śrī Śaṅkara* often describes happiness as *upalabdhi*, awareness. It is the knowledge of form, taste, etc. that makes us happy. Generally, people do not have the right understanding of happiness. In their folly, they associate happiness with physical objects. No insentient object can possess the attribute of happiness. People generally mistake the sense gratification derived by the contact of the sense organs with the sense objects for happiness. It is the glory of advaita that it unifies the fact of existence with awareness and happiness. It describes Atman that is Brahman as *saccidānanda*.

to be continued.....

- from the book *Māyā pañcakam*, Published by Brahm Vidya Kuteer, Flat No. 501, Deccan Corner Building, Diamomd Point, Sikh Village, Secunderabad - 500 009, Telangana State, India.

## ASHRAM NEWS

### Centenary Celebrations of Sri Santiashram and 122<sup>nd</sup> Birthday Celebrations of Swami Omkarji

**Date : 20-01-2016**

**7.00 am - 8.30 am**

The beautiful and auspicious day began with the chanting of Omkar and Peace Prayer. In the holy presence of Paramapujya Jnaneswari Mataji, Swami Medhanandapuri of Kailash Ashram, Rishikesh and other swamies, invited guests and the inmates of the Ashram, Lord Ganesh was invoked and worshipped so that the Proceedings of the two days function will go on smoothly without any obstacles and hindrances. After the Ganesh Puja the Omkar flag was hoisted amidst sonorous chanting of Omkar.

**9.30 – 10.30 am**

### SHIKHARA KALASHAM INSTALLATION CEREMONY

At the Sri Vishwanath Mandir at the top of the hill in the Northern side of the Ashram, where Siva Linga was installed by Paramapujya Swami Omkarji, after renovation of the temple, Kalasam was installed. The temple inauguration and the Kalasapuja were performed by Swami Padmanabhanandji Maharaj, General Secretary of Divine Life Society, Rishikesh amidst chanting of Om Namassivaya, Arunachala Siva and Siva stotras. The programme was concluded with Peace Prayer and chanting of Om.

**5.30 pm.** The evening session began with the lighting of the lamp. Paramapujya Sri Jnaneswari Mataji, Pujya Sri Padmanabhananda Saraswatiji, Pujya Sri Medhanandapuriji lighted the lamp.

A small book in Telugu "Santi Doota Swami Omar" the biography of Swami Omkar written by Brahmacharini Vasaviji was released by Swami Padmanabhanandaji. This book is written in very simple Telugu language so that it can be read, understood and appreciated by

children as well as elders. Smt. Sharada, an inmate of the Ashram, with her generous donation got the book published. Smt Suguna sang the prayer song “Guruvandanam”. This was followed by the cultural programme. The school children of the Ashram performed dance to the rendering of Annamacharya Kruties. Students of 5<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> classes recited the 15<sup>th</sup> chapter of Srimad Bhagavadgita. All the participants were encouraged, appreciated and given prizes by Pujya Jnaneswari Mataji. The evening’s programme was concluded with Peace Prayer.

## **21-01-2016 THE HOLY BIRTHDAY OF SRI SWAMI OMKARJI**

### **5.00 am to 6.00 am.**

The auspicious day began with chanting of Omkar and meditation in Sri Omkar Mandir.

### **6.00 am**

**Puja and offering of flowers at Santi Ganapati Mandir and Santi Stupa.** Sri Samba Murthy performed the Puja. The Chebrolu Bhakta Mandali of Mallavaram conducted the Nagarasankirtana. The procession started from the Prayer hall down the hill and came up to the Omkar Mandir. After the Sankirtan the Akhanda Keertan of Hare Rama Nama Mantra began. This kirtan was concluded the next day i.e., on 22<sup>nd</sup> at Omkar Mandir at 9.00 am. Pujya Sri Mataji honoured all the participants by giving them clothes, fruits and sweets.

**7.00 am.** Padukapuja of Sri Swami Omkar was performed by Pujya Sri Swami Padmanabhanadaji. After the Puja, Pujya Sri Jnaneswari Mataji gave the birth day message. In her message she said that Swamiji’s birthday is every one’s birthday. When we celebrate birthday we should realize that one more year in our life is gone. Keeping this in mind we should utilize our time, make our lives sublime and realize the goal of life viz., liberation. She then read the message of Swami Omkarji. Swamiji in his message said that though we see millions of people living, actually they are as good as not living. Those who have realized themselves alone are the truly living people. The rest of them are seemingly alive but

actually dead. Swamiji wished that all of us should not fritter away this precious human life but lead an ideal life of universal brotherhood. We should not live like frogs in the well but realize ourself, enjoy the bliss within and strive towards the promotion of world peace. This should be the motto for which all of us should live.

Addressing the gathering Pujya Swami Padmanabhananda Sarswati said, “It is not only swamiji’s birthday but it is our birthday too. The thousands of people that come from all the nearby villages, from Vishakha pattanam and Vijayanagaram and other towns and cities create a festive atmosphere. Dressed in colourful new clothes they visit all the places in the Ashram, enjoy the feast given by the Ashram, participate in the fair held outside the gates of the Ashram, all in a joyous mood of celebration. Just as we celebrate the birthday of Lord Krishna we celebrate Swami Omkarji’s birthday too. God is present in every one therefore the birthday of God is also the birthday of the devotees.

“There are two types of devotees, those who love God and those who are loved by God. There are innumerable stories about those two types of devotees in Bhaktavijayam. But I shall give an example from the west. This is the story of Abu Ben Adam. Once he had a dream and he saw an angel writing something in a book of gold. He approached the angel and asked her what she was writing. The angel replied that she was writing the names of all those who love God. Abu wanted to know whether his name was also included in the list. The angel replied in the negative and disappeared. Abu was grief stricken. The next night too he had a dream and once again he saw the angel writing something in her book of gold. Abu ben Adam very hesitantly approached the Angel. This time she was preparing the list of names whom God loved. And lo! to Abu Ben’s surprise his name headed the list. Therefore, we should all lead such lives that God should love us. In the 12<sup>th</sup> chapter of the Bhagavad Gita Lord Krishna enumerates 35 qualities of a devotee who is dear to Him, in the last eight slokas of the chapter. It is also called the Amruta Ashtaka: “Adveshta Sarvabhootanam, Maitri, Karuna etc., “

“If we cultivate and develop these qualities we become dear to Bhagavan. “Yo Madbhaktaha Samepriyaha...”

After his “Anugraha Bhashana” Swami Padmanabhananda Saraswati released the Autobiography of Sri Omkar in Telugu “Santi Pradata Sri Omkar Swami Atmakatha.” The English version was translated into Telugu by Smt. Boppana Aruna Devi.

Swami Tattvavidananda Saraswari of Arsha Vidya Gurukulam, reviewing the book, mentioned that it was a beautiful paperback with no printing errors, with appropriate pictures for the important events described in the text. He also commented on the language which is neither too scholarly and bookish nor too colloquial but simple language “Sista Vyavaharika Bhasha” which would be understood and appreciated by one and all.

Similarly, Swami Medhanandapuri appreciated the way in which Smt Boppana Aruna Devi described the noble qualities of love, compassion, generosity of Swamiji in simple Telugu making Swamiji’s English Autobiography available for the non-English knowing public. Responding to the appreciation of both the Swamijies Smt Boppana Aruna Devi described the joy she experienced while she translated the book. The morning session was concluded with Arati and Peace Prayer.

**10.00 am.** “Laksha Bilvarchana” was performed at the Viswanath Mandir, on top of the hill, clothes were given to Sadhus and Mahatmas.

**10.30 am.** Santi Jnana Guha where Swami Omkarji performed penance was rebuilt and was inaugurated by Swami Padmanabhanandaji.

### **EVENING SESSION 5-30 pm**

After garlanding the Swamies on the dias four books were released. 1. Swami Omkar’s Personal letter, both in English and Telugu, 2. Life and Teachings of Swami Omkar, 3. Omkaraswami Jeevita Viseshalu (Telugu) and 4. Sri Sri Sri Omkaraswami Stotram

by Swami Nirvishayananda (Telugu) by Swami Padmanabhananda Saraswati, Swami Tattvavidananda Saraswati, Swami Medhananda Puri and Sri Ramaswami of Ramanashram, Rachapalli respectively.

The discourse session began with the Veena recital by Smt Rukmini.

Swami Padmanabhananda Saraswati in his speech said that we have all chosen the path of spirituality by the grace of God. Having decided to seek God, we have to observe certain discipline. The seeker should lead a dharmic life. Both the Shastras and Gurus emphasize on leading a righteous life. Adharma and spirituality do not go together. What is Dharma? Removal of the negative aspects of the mind. Introspect, find the negative qualities and make the effort to get rid of them. The major negative qualities also called the six enemies, Arishad Vargas are Kama, Krodha, Lobha, Moha, Mada, Matsarya (desire, anger, miserliness, infatuation, arrogance and envy). This is one aspect. The second aspect is to cultivate positive qualities. What are the positive qualities that a sadhaka should develop? Lord Krishna had enumerated 35 qualities in the 12<sup>th</sup> chapter of the Bhagavadgita, which an ideal devotee who wishes to be dear to God, should develop. Adveshta sarvabhootanam etc. in the Vasishta Ramayanam, it is said that Rama is the one who greeted everyone first without waiting to be greeted, though he is king. That is the state of egolessness. Where there is no ego there is only love and kindness. Of course this is not so easy. But all this is possible by the grace of God. Therefore, eradication of vices, cultivation of virtues, devotion to God through prayer, meditation is the process a devotee has to adopt. Prayer and meditation should be done at a fixed time and a fixed place. But this is the early stage, but later prayer should be constant. Get up in the morning with a prayer with the divine thought. End the day with a prayer, with the thought of God. Fill the day with the thought of God, through all your routine activities of life. That is the way to God. Before you sleep go over the day’s activities, analyse and introspect. When you tread the path of Dharma the whole world will support you.

## Swami Tattvavidananda Saraswati

Today is a holy day. This Ashram is as holy a pilgrim place as Kashi or Rameswaram. We usually feel that if we are contemporary to a Saint, if we live in the close proximity with a Saint, we understand the Saint better. If we do not have personal contact with a Saint, we have not understood his philosophy properly; but it is not possible. We cannot be contemporaries of Adi Shankaracharya, Swami Rama Tirtha. But if we develop “Darshinika Drishti” we can make the effort to understand the spirit or essence of his teachings. Then there is no need to think about Desa and Kala i.e., the place and the time of the existence of the Saint. The bond will be that of mental attachment – “Mansika Anubandham”. This is the closest relationship because the inspiration comes from the heart. So, though I am not a contemporary of Adi Shankaracharya or Rama Tirtha, the two great saints that have inspired me, with them, I feel a close bond. Similarly when I make a study of the works of Swami Omkar with love, I feel that Swami Omkar and Swami Rama Tirtha have been my source of inspiration. They are very close to my heart.

All the Gurus and Ashrams teach only Dvaita. They propagate only an attitude of separation, difference and division (Bheda Drushti). That is, they always depict you and God as separate; you are different from God. You are two not one. But in actuality there is no difference between you and God. Not only is He present in the entire universe, in the animate as well as inanimate but he is present in your heart as Iswara. This is advaita.

Those who bestow this knowledge of Advaita are very few. After Adishankaracharya we find Rama Tirtha and Swami Omkar as great Advaitins. Rama Tirtha was Swaniji's inspiration.

When you are ignorant – you think that Iswara and you are different – two different entities. But when you do Atma Vichara you realize you are not two but one. When I conduct guided meditation classes Swamiji's book “Maunapu Ghadiyalu – The Hours of Silence” has been of immense help to me.

We have to experience God as our own self. We visit temples

for worship. There are many idols of God in one temple, the main deity be it Siva or Vishnu, other Devi Devatas, like Durga, Hanuman, Sai Baba, Nava Grahas etc. are also present. When we have the darshan of these Gods we should look upon them as the form of Omkar, for there is nothing beyond Omkar. It is like looking at the essence of everything, behind the innumerable names and forms. For example we have so many different ornaments, necklaces, bangles, rings, waist belts, armlets etc. As ornaments they have different names and forms but in the ultimate analysis, the essence is only gold. Similarly, behind all names and forms is the Omkar.

We have to be rid of the idea of duality (Dvaita Buddhi). The Iswara that is present outside is the same iswara present in me too. But how does one experience this. There is not much use of scholarship. Only through meditation and by observing silence one can have this Advaitic experience. This is the most important message Swami Omkar has given us. Observing mauna does not mean just not speaking. It is mental silence. Bhagavad Gita describes Tapas (Penance) of two different kinds: Manh Prasada Saumyatvam Maunam Atmavinigraha

One should control the wandering mind, put a check on the innumerable thoughts that crowd the mind. This is observing internal silence.

When we analyse there are two things. One is God the other is the world, I and mine. You have to cajole the mind not to wander. One need not ponder over God thought because God is the essence ‘spirit’ tattva. And to think about the world is a waste. Similarly one should be rid of the thought of ‘I and mine’. In this silence one experiences Iswara. The mind merging in the satvaguna is Mauna. This is not a negative state of ‘Sunya’. But it is a state where there is awareness. ‘Nissabdo Brahma’. To observe Mauna also is worship of Iswara. This is the best form of worship. “Atma Teertham Param Teertham”, in this worship of Iswara, ‘Mauna Aradhana’ the silent worship is the supreme worship. So Just be.

## Medahnanda Puri

In his message he said that Sanatan Dharma declares, “You don't have to go any where. You don't have to worship God, because everything is within you. There are only two things in the world. One is Chaitanya (consciousness) and the other Jada (inert). Worship of consciousness – observe consciousness everywhere. God is within you. Hanuman says ‘Atmabudhya Tvamevham’. We experience immense joy during deep sleep. That should become the experience during wakeful state too. Don't pamper the ego. Destroy it. Try to look for God in everything and every place. Develop Nishkama Buddhi and perform Nishkama Seva.”

**Ramaswami of Ramanashram, Rachapalli** described in his talk about the terrible conditions when Swami Omkar first came to Totapalli. It was a deep jungle full of wild animals. He filled it with Omkara. He then recited a poem composed by himself as homage to Swamiji.

Smt Suguna sang the ‘Guruvandanam’. The evening session came to a close with Peace Prayer and chanting of Omkar.

Om Om Om

## FORM IV

### (SEE RULE 8)

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