



PEACE

A Quarterly Journal of Peace and Illumination

Founder : H.H. Sri Swami Omkar

Editor : Secretary, Sri Shanti Ashram

Vol. 91. SEPTEMBER - 2017 No. 03

CONTENTS

1. Upanishad	—	2
2. Meditation	—	3
3. Prayer	—	4
4. Illusion of the delusion of ...	— Swami Omkarji Maharaj	5
5. Inner life	— Swami Omkarji Maharaj	7
6. Is God active or inactive?	— Swami Omkarji Maharaj	9
7. Is it possible to remember God ceaselessly?	— Swami Omkarji Maharaj	10
8. Is man free or bound?	— Swami Omkarji Maharaj	12
9. Waste not this rare human birth	— Swami Sivananda Maharaj	13
10. A time for intense introspection	— Swami Chidananda	16
11. Kaivalyopaniṣat	— Swami Tattvavidananda Saraswati	20
12. It is all He	— Swami Omkarji Maharaj	22
13. It is criminal to be sick	— Swami Omkarji Maharaj	24
14. Just an Hour	— Swami Omkarji Maharaj	26
15. Let God's work come first	— Swami Omkarji Maharaj	28
16. Medhā Sūktam	— Swami Tattvavidananda Saraswati	30
17. Yoga can change your Life	— Swami Jyotirmayananda	32
18. Spiritual life	— Swami Satchidananda	38
19. God is His own Devotee	— Swami Ramdas	39
20. An Appeal	—	40

Kaivalyopaniṣat

एतस्माज्जायते प्राणो मनस्सर्वेन्द्रियाणि च ।

खं वायुर्ज्योतिरापः पृथिवी विश्वस्यधारिणी ॥

१५

etasmājjāyate prāṇo manassarvendriyāṇi ca,

kham vāyurjyotirāpaḥ pṛthivī viśvasya dhāriṇī .. 15

etasmāt - from this; *prāṇaḥ* - life; *manaḥ* - mind; *ca* - and; *sarvendriyāṇi* - all organs; *kham* - space; *vāyuḥ* - wind; *jyotiḥ* - fire; *āpaḥ* - waters; *viśvasya* - of all; *dhāriṇī* - upholder; *pṛthivī* - earth; *jāyate* - emanates .

Life, mind, and all organs, space, wind, fire, waters, and the earth that upholds all, originate from This (creator).

The creator who is presented as *prāṇa*, the Cosmic Person, originated from this Supreme Reality called Brahman. The Cosmic Person further manifests as the Cosmic Intelligence, the five cosmic principles of sound, etc. and as the five subtle elements which further manifest as the five gross elements and elementals.

(*Tattava Prakāśikā* by Swami Tattavavidananda Saraswati)

THE READERS ARE REQUESTED TO VISIT THE WEBSITE OF SRI SANTIASHRAM UPLOADED RECENTLY ON 21-1-2017, ON THE OCCASSION OF THE CENTENARY CELEBRATIONS.

LOG ON TO : www.srisantiashram.org.in

MEDITATION

स्थिरचरजातयः स्युरजयोत्थनिमित्तयुजो
विहर उदीक्षया यदि परस्य विमुक्त ततः ।
नहि परमस्य कश्चिदपरो न परश्च भवेद्वियत
इवापदस्य तव शून्यतुलां दधतः ॥

*sthiracara jātayaḥ śyurajayotthanimittayujō
vihara udiḥṣayā yadi parasya vimukta tataḥ .
nahi paramasya kaścidaparo na paraśca bhavedvīyata
ivāpadasya tava śūnyatulāṃ dadhataḥ ..*

O infinite Lord, You are eternally free. When You appear to be united with *māyā*, the whole creation, consisting of the moving and non-moving species, and with all their dormant tendencies leap into life - at a mere glance or thought from You.

In Your presence, the beings live and move as iron filings before a magnet. In Your eyes, there is neither great nor small. You exist equally in all, pervading everywhere, like the sky. You are, indeed, incomparable.

- from *śṛtigitā* by Swakami Gabhirananda,
Advaita Ashram Publication)

When we come to this world we don't bring anything. When we leave this world we cannot take anything.

Everything enables us to live and everything that is needed, is provided to us by THAT POWER who is the "real owner", through two institutions... Mother Nature and Society.

- Swami Ramadas

PRAYER

मयि मेधां मयि प्रजां मय्यग्निस्तेजो दधातु
मयि मेधां मयि प्रजां मयिन्द्रइन्द्रियं दधातु ।
मयि मेधां मयि प्रजां
मयि सूर्यो भ्राजो दधातु ॥

*mayi medhāṃ mayi prajāṃ mayyagnistejo dadhātu
mayi medhāṃ mayi prajāṃ mayīndra, indriyaṃ dadhātu
mayi medhāṃ mayi prajāṃ
mayi sūryo bhrājo dadhātu ..*

५

5

agniḥ - the god of fire; *mayi* - on me; *medhām* - intelligence; *prajāṃ* - progeny; *tejaḥ* - bright appearance of the body (or courage); *dadhātu* - may bestow; *indraḥ* - the god of heavens; *indriyam* - virility; *sūryaḥ* - the Sun god; *bhrājaḥ* - brilliance.

May the god of fire bestow upon me intelligence, progeny, and the bright appearance of the body (or courage), the god of heavens, virility, and the Sun god, brilliance (in addition to the other two).

- from *Medha Sūktam, Vaidika Sūkta Mañjarī*; *Tattva Prakāśikā* by Swami Tattvavidananda Saraswati. Published by Brahma Vidya Kuteer, Secunderabad, Telangana State, India.

Spirituality reveals that we are not the owners of our objects, emotions and thoughts.

Then... who is the "real owner" ?

Nothing is yours; every thing is God's; do not forget this! You have come from God, and you are on your way to Him.

- Swami Ramdas

ILLUSION OF THE DELUSION OF FORGETFULNESS OF GOD

Swami Omkarji Maharaj

What a strange theme this is! This is an inspiring theme, that almost appears seemingly unbelievable to be true, yet how true it is when understood from the Highest State of Realisation.

It is a very deep, practical and helpful subject for the wise and devoted, especially for all those who are struggling to reach the Heights, to drink the nectar of immortality, not now and then but in each and every moment of their lives.

If God is Omnipresent how can you afford to forget Him? When He is interpenetrating the very cells of your being, how can He be ignored? When He is within and without throbbing in your heart and flowing in your very breath, how is it possible to deny Him?

Yet, half of the world, nay, 99% of the population in the world in both the East and the West, are under the deep and dark spell of the ILLUSION OF THE DELUSION OF FORGETFULNESS OF GOD.

Hence, no wonder man in every way is unhappy, discontented and miserable, chasing only the will o' the wisp and running after his own fleeting shadow, forgetting the Indwelling Light, the Eternal God within.

Can the Sun ever forget its inherent light, even amidst the thickest clouds though the storms shake earth and heaven? Similarly, O man, there is SOMETHING in you, which is Eternal, Infinite and Indivisible, that can never be dismissed or destroyed even at the destruction of the whole world.

Wherever you may be, whatever you may be doing, whoever you may be, it is time for you to recognise, to be aware of this Omnipresent, Omnipotent and Omniscient Spirit which is not somewhere in the far away Heaven or sky, but immanent within you,

now and awaiting only your recognition of awareness.

Behold the Indwelling Light in the very movement of the body as you move or walk! it is there, looking through your very eyes, it is flowing in your breath as inhalation and exhalation not only in your waking state but also even in your sleep.

INHALE AND EXHALE PEACE THY BIRTHRIGHT!

Even if you want to forget this Light of lights, which is the heart, Soul and Goal of your existence, you never forget it, for you are filled, surrounded and saturated with it. Can a bubble ever forget the Ocean in which it exists, whether it is day or night? Is not the bubble inseparably and eternally one with the Ocean, in the past, present and future? Wake up o Man! And realise now that you are eternally and indivisibly one with the Living Truth, the only Reality.

What else can be said in finite words? Here is some good and happy news for you; even when your mind wanders, do not be discouraged for it is only a reflection of the God-mind, and it wanders only within God, for He is Omnipresent. It is with the same basis of the same force of Divine energy that all movements are happening, physically, mentally or spiritually.

All volition is SHAKTHI. Motionlessness is PURUSHA or BRAHMAN. Let Shakti move, wander and express! What is that to you, who are ever complete both in the manifest and unmanifest?

Give a death-blow to the illusion of forgetfulness. Pray, give another death-blow to the delusion of remembrance. The Self-effulgent LIGHT is above the illusion and delusion of forgetfulness and remembrance. Therefore, recognise the One Indivisible Light and be silent! Know this Living Truth and be a blessing to yourself, to your vocation and to the whole world!

Glory! Glory! Glory!

OM! OM! OM!

(16-10-1951, 8 AM, From Kailas Hills, Waltair)

INNER LIFE

Swami Omkarji Maharaj

Inner Life and Soham Life are not two but ONE. Wherever there is inner Life, there is outer life also, but they are two poles apart, like East and West. Very rare and few are they who walk on the Inner Life, for It is narrow and rugged; but there are multitudes who walk on the path of outer life, for its Way is broad and wide. Sometimes one feels that there is hardly one in a million who walk on the path of inner Life. Whether we take joy in walking in the path of Inner Life or the Path of outer life, the results, the goal is inescapable. The Inner Life leads to Heaven and the outer life leads to Hell or Hades, in the long run.

Hence, we should choose the life, inner or outer, considering the goal, the unavoidable results. In spite of the tests, trials and tribulations, blessed are the lovely souls who walk on the trying path of inner Life. We see only a blessed souls like Holy Christ, an Avatar like Loving Krishna and an Illuminated soul like Buddha and other sacred Mahatmas, walking on the lonely Inner Life. All Glory be unto them! Blessed are they who have the strength to walk in the Holy footsteps of such rare and precious Souls of enlightenment, who are the salt of the earth and the harbingers of Peace!

In the inner Life, the Mantram is *NIVRITTI*. Like the tortoise in the Gita, the soul draws his senses within, whenever there is danger of *Pravritti* in the contact of senses. He is always inhaling and exhaling Peace. Whereas in the outer life, the Mantram is *Pravritti*, his senses are always out-going. As Gita teaches, the man of *Pravritti* always thinks, "I have conquered this!"

In the inner Life, there is nothing to see outside, for all is God. There is nothing to hear from outside, for his senses are drawn inside. There is nothing to speak or talk, for all is silence and it is One

without a second. There is nothing to think too, for thinking is possible only in duality. When there are two one can think of the other, but when there is One, how can One think of anything? It is Peace that passeth all understanding. In the Inner Life, the heart, goal and soul in a nut-shell is *BE DEAD THAT YE MAY LIVE*. Death in life is needed, freedom or emancipation. No short cuts or easy and soft paths!

It is a matter of crushing the ego, the little "I". It is complete annihilation or destruction of the ego which is most essential for the realisation of the LIGHT within, in the Inner Life. No man however learned or intellectual can serve two masters. *IMPOSSIBLE TO SERVE BOTH GOD AND MAMMON*. Swami is dead on the outer path Omkar is alive on the inner Path.

Dear Loving Readers of Peace in the East and the West, may Omkar be privileged to be alive in you!

MAY PEACE BE UNTO ALL!

LET DOGS BARK

Swami Omkarji Maharaj

Everyone is working and doing all things according to their own nature. How really impossible it is to change the nature within! Let dogs bark as per their nature to quarrel. As per your nature, be thou the elephant of strength and forbearance. Thou art That always. Remember thy nature which is Omnipresence, Omnipotence and Omniscience,

Meditate deeply on your real nature and cling to That. When God is within, why look out side? Feel Him in the very cells of your being, from the toes to top of the head. Feel His Indwelling Presence ceaselessly, Now and Always. Follow SOHAM ceaselessly. Thou art That even in forgetfulness!

OM TAT SAT OM!

IS GOD ACTIVE OR INACTIVE?

Swami Omkarji Maharaj

God is both active and inactive. The man of Wisdom says GOD DOES NOTHING and the man of Action says GOD DOES EVERYTHING. Who is right?

Both of them are right, from their particular angle of view and understanding. In the Gita, the Song Celestial, the Lord says that there are two states or conditions in the Spiritual Plane.

1. The Unmanifest

2. The Manifest

Sri Krishna continues to say in the Gita that it is difficult to comprehend the incomprehensible even for the wise. But it is not so with the manifested as the manifested is with form and name, any lay man can comprehend and meditate on it.

But alas, man in his grossness, through thick MAYA and because of the false identification with the body, the bundle of blood and flesh, is ignoring and denying both the manifest and the unmanifest in his daily life.

Yet, Peace Profound and Eternal belongs only to those rare and precious souls who can recognise the same Indivisible Light, both in the manifest, the seen and unmanifest, the unseen.

Verily, GOD DOES EVERYTHING, for He is all in all. Indeed GOD DOES NOTHING, for He is ever complete, the One without a Second. May our adorations be unto the Unmanifest through the manifest!

MAY PEACE BE UNTO ALL

OMI OM! OM!

IS IT POSSIBLE TO REMEMBER GOD CEASELESSLY?

Swami Omkarji Maharaj

Is it possible to remember God without a break unceasingly? The answer to this sublime query lies in the conception that you have a God. If your God is away, aloof and separate from you, with all your deep love and devotion towards Him, it is not possible to remember Him unceasingly. You are apt to forget Him amidst your busy work, while talking, eating etc. It is natural to forget God in the sleeping state when you feel that you are separate from God. But when you feel that God is never separate from you, that He is inseparably and eternally one with you, nay, God and you are never two but One, there is not the least possibility of forgetting Him.

How Can you forget yourself? You are there, even in the sleeping state. There is something in you that never sleeps.

YOU ARE THAT, TAT TWAM ASI, THOU ART THAT.

Forgetfulness is possible in duality. Where is forgetfulness in unity, in the One without a second? In ignorance, it is Impossible to remember God ceaselessly; but in wisdom it is more than possible to remember Him unceasingly. Even the forgetfulness and remembrance of God are only mental conditions. God is above forgetfulness and remembrance. He is all Light. In the all Light the Self-effulgent Light, the Splendour of Millions of Suns, there is neither forgetfulness nor remembrance.

Where is the moment when God is separate, away or aloof from you? There is never a moment of separation from the Infinite and Eternal Light either the past, present or future. The richest treasure is thyself. All Homage be unto thee!

Now coming into the practical side of our theme, it is easy to remember God in the company of sages and saints. It is easy to remember Him while engaged in spiritual study. It is easy to remember Him while in temples and shrines. It is easy to remember

Him while offering prayers and during meditation. Just repeat the PEACE PRAYER once, and see for yourself how helpful it is to feel God's presence, even while repeating it. The ADORABLE Presence, is within, without, above, below and all around, nay, pervading and permeating the very cells of your being.

God is the Eye of your eye; Ear of your ear, Mind of your mind, Heart of your heart and the Breath of your breath. He is there, ever repeating SOHAM, with each and every breath. Soham is being repeated even in your sleep; Soham is above birth and death too, Identify with Soham, follow Soham ceaselessly, without the least break. Soham leads you to perfection, Soham gives you freedom.

What is needed is personal experience. It is the Awareness of God, your inseparable and eternal Oneness with Him, that makes perpetual awareness of God possible. In the scriptures we read that concentration should be ceaseless like pouring oil from one vessel into another vessel, *Taila Dhara*. Then alone one can express God in all the tests, trials and tribulations of life.

The sun is ever there, giving out Light amidst the darkest clouds. Similarly, the Self-effulgent Light is ever present in the waking, dreaming and sleeping states, nay, it is above all states and conditions, God or Light alone is above time, space and causation.

It is possible to remember God ceaselessly? It is possible to remember Him ceaselessly even from the cross, for He is the only Reality, the Changeless Reality in all the world of changes. It is possible and becomes natural to remember God, nay, to be aware of His Interpenetrating Presence when one has risen above body, mind and world, when one is blessed with *Aparokshanubhuthi*, Intuition, wisdom, personal experience of the Indwelling Light, the Interpenetrating Presence. Bless us dear God, to be aware of Thy Presence Now and Here! May there be Peace in East and West, North and South. May Peace and goodwill abide among individuals as well as nations, is our earnest prayer.

HARI OM TAT SAT OM!

IS MAN FREE OR BOUND?

Swami Omkarji Maharaj

Man is free and bound; as Soul he is free and as a body he is bound.

Question: Is he the body or the soul?

Answer: Man is never the body, for the body is only the outer sheath that has come yesterday and that is bound to go tomorrow. He is the soul in the body.

Hence, as the Eternal, living soul he is ever free. As Soul he is never bound. The man who is blessed with personal Experience of the Soul or God consciousness realises that freedom and bondage are the imaginations of one's own mind. In the soul there is neither freedom nor bondage. It is the Splendour of Millions of Suns. It is above duality of every kind, for it is One without a second.

The intricate question whether man is free or bound is so easily solved once and for all, by realising freedom belongs to the soul and bondage to the body. As such, sooner one rises above the body, the better it is for the individual. MAN KNOW THYSELF, is the criterion of all religions. If MAN KNOWS HIMSELF, what else does he need? His self is all LIGHT, within, without, above, below and all around. There is neither within or without in that ONE INDIVISIBLE SELF.

Rising above the plane of finite words, let man rejoice in the eternal freedom of his INFINITE SOUL. Bound if you think, bound you are. If you cling to your body, considering it as your all in all, you are bound. FREE IF YOU THINK, FREE YOU ARE, if you can identify with the soul, you are free. How true are these words expressing the Freedom of the soul.

May we ever abide in the SOUL FREEDOM, which is the only Changeless Reality in the imaginary world of endless changes! May all Homage be to the FREE MAN, the fragrant flower of Humanity.

MAY PEACE BE UNTO ALL!

OM! OM! OM!

WASTE NOT THIS RARE HUMAN BIRTH

Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj

Salutations again and again at the Holy Feet of the great Sage, Sri Vyasa Bhagavan Sri Krishna-Dwaipayana, who edited the Vedas, Composed the Brahmasutras, and wrote Mahabharata and the eighteen Puranas including the Srimad-Bhagavata; salutations to (he Brahma vidya Gurus, Saints and Sages of the present day.

Jagad-guru, Sri Sankaracharya, who was an Avatara of Lord Siva, delved into the precious wisdom of the Upanishads and brought out the most rare gem in the form of the unparalleled Advaita philosophy or the Monistic idealism which gives you, in a nutshell, the glorious truth that you are in essence Divine beings, ever perfect, free, full and blissful. This idea is contained in his famous memorable Sloka: "*Slokardhena Pravakshyami Yaduktam Granthakotibhih; Brahma Satyam Jaganmithya. Jivo Brahmaiva Naparah*" This gives the very essence of all spiritual wisdom, and it is the last word in the transcendental realization expressed in the form of this famous Sloka. Bliss is to be found in the spiritual Reality which is within you. Realise this and be free.

Now this ultimate declaration has been given - well and good. But how to attain it? Because you know that in your actual experience of worldly pleasures, your mental impressions are, unfortunately, gathered through the instruments of the mind and the senses. So, when your entire experience of pleasure gives you a perception of *Asat*, *Achit* and *Duhkha*, how can you find the *Satchidananda Atman*? Everything in this world is fleeting in character. You do not find *Chit* (consciousness) anywhere but only *Jada* (insentient.) everywhere. '*Sarvam Duhkham Vivekinah*' - according to this declaration there is only pain to be experienced in this world. If pain is constantly experienced by you, how can you find *Ananda* or *Bliss*? And in answer to this, Seers and Sages of yore have shown the way by which we have to reach our goal, Step by step.

In the Vivekachudamani, there is a Sloka which runs as follows:

'Durlabham Trayamevaitat Daivanugraha hetukam; Manushyatvam Mumukshutvam Maha-purushasamsrayah.'

Three things are very difficult to obtain. Only through the grace of God the *Jivas* obtain them. To be born as a human being is no small privilege. It is a very precious gift given by God to the *Jiva*. Having a human birth, to have an aspiration for liberation is the next difficult thing to obtain. So, if one obtains both these, one is indeed doubly blessed. But having been born as a being, if you do not want to know, and yet even after knowing that, if you do not know the way, you are not fully blessed. Therefore, if you get the shelter of *Mahapurusha*, one who has known what has to be attained and one who is in a position to show you the way, you can admit that you are thrice blessed. This unique blessing has to be remembered always. Then alone will you be careful not to waste the opportunity. When you know the real value of a thing, you take proper care of it, and not otherwise.

The only thing that stands in the way of your spiritual realisation is your own mind, the ego, or call it by any name you like. It is precisely in order to see that this obstacle is removed and one gets at the ultimate goal of human life that one goes to the preceptor or Guru. The Guru has destroyed the limiting mind and he knows the method as to how one has to destroy it. Let us suppose that a man who is desirous of leading a spiritual life goes to a Guru and asks for his advice and guidance; and the Guru tells him, "Be good, lead a virtuous life, serve selflessly, love all, share with others what you have, purify the mind, meditate with one-pointed mind, etc." But, if the man does not sincerely strive to follow the Guru's advice, what benefit will he thereby derive? Absolutely nothing. He will be in no way better than what he was. It seems that one does not want to practise anything, but there is only the expectation of the result. What a sad state of affairs!

This life on earth is a halting place on the way to the achievement of the Goal of life. Earthly life is transitory, for it is seen that everything that is born dies. Death is not the end of life, since without a continuation of life therefrom the value of the deeds and experiences in this life would be rendered nugatory. There were births and deaths in the past, there will be births and deaths in the future, too, until Self-

realisation is attained. Life is a long chain of which the recurring births, planetary lives and deaths are links.

Birth is caused by desires and actions, and birth becomes the cause of further desires and actions. This present life is, therefore, meant to train the individual to qualify himself for a higher life, viz., to stop births and deaths ultimately. This life is not the goal or the end, even as the path is not the same as the destination. If earthly life were the final goal, none would have died here, there would not have been mutation, pain and sorrow, and there would be no sense of imperfection and no further urge or aspiration to transcend the present condition. The ever-changing world proves the existence of an unchanging imperishable Being.

Remember that you came alone to this world and also you will pass away alone from this world. None will help you except what you have done here in this life. Your deeds will search you out and follow you as calves follow their mothers even in the midst of a big herd.

Your life is short and there are many obstacles to get over. Therefore, exert now with earnestness. Waste not precious time, but utilize every moment for the noblest of causes. Finish your journey quickly by practising right *Sadhana* (spiritual endeavour) with the guidance of a Guru or preceptor. Great shall be your glory and glorious shall be your success. May peace be with you on your spiritual path. May blessedness wait upon you in all your pursuits. May the Supreme Master, the Lord of all, shower His blessings upon you all!

- from the *Divine Life Society Magazine*, July 1999, published by DLS, Rishikesh, Uttarakhand, India.

Air to breathe, water to drink, earth to exist, space to move about, the body temperature to keep us alive, all gases, metals, minerals, vitamins... are provided by Mother Nature.

- Swami Ramdas

A TIME FOR INTENSE INTROSPECTION

Swami Chidananda

As we approach the conclusion of the Hindu sacred year and the auspicious commencement portion of the new religious calendar year, we should consider the desirability of making this fourteen day period a period of retrospection, of self- study, of self-correction. It should, in fact, be a period used to begin a full year of vigorous spiritual practice based upon constant daily introspection and self-correction,

Thus, through these processes of self-analysis and self-correction, you will be enabled to move slowly but steadily from your present state of being into an ever-progressive, ever-better state of spirituality and aspiration, improving and rendering more spiritual, more dharmic, more *daivi* or divine, your thoughts, sentiments, attitudes towards others, behaviour towards others and your relationships with the entire world around you.

Let the coming year thus be a period of steadily improving and enhancing the spiritual and divine quality of not only your subjective feelings, thoughts and sentiments, but also objectively - in the field of your relationship with the world around you and in the field of your relationship with other people who are similarly present in that setup - so that your presence becomes a plus and a positive factor in the field of your outer life as well as becoming a positive factor in terms of your own spiritual life and evolution.

Let the entire year also be a twelve month period when you consciously and purposefully engage yourself in positively utilising your sacred power of Goddess Sarasvati as speech or *vak* or *vani*. Are you presently utilising it for sublime objectives, in a lofty, noble manner, or are you dragging it down to a very small, petty level? In your life, is the sacred *sakti* of Bhagavati Sarasvati, as speech, being properly understood, appraised and revered and being used in a positive, uplifting manner? Is it being used to give respect to the *vyaktitva* (personality) of others?

You have your own personality, individuality, *vyaktitva*. And just

as you have your own *vyaktitva*, so do your fellow *sadhakas*. An emperor has his own *vyaktitva*. A child has its own *vyaktitva*. So does the porter who lifts your baggage, and the sweeper who cleans the toilet. The sweeper is a husband to his wife and a father to his children. His wife too may be very humble, but she also has a *vyaktitva*. No matter how humble her abode, it is her household. In her world she is something.

We have to understand this with a deep, rare spiritual sympathy. We cannot afford, as spiritual people, to ignore the dignity of the individuality of each and every person whom God, in His graciousness, brings us into contact with for our spiritual evolution. We must see this, and, therefore, use the sacred power of speech or *vak* or *vani* to use noble words, words giving respect to others, words pleasing to others.

Gurudev said: "Speak little. Speak softly. Speak sweetly." These are Gurudev's instructions to us. We are living in his Ashram, and we are expected to walk the path which he walked. He never uttered a disrespectful word to anyone. He never taunted anyone or uttered a hurtful or sarcastic word to anyone. He had no irony in his speech. He had humour but no irony or sarcasm. He always used his speech to express his illumined divine nature. If you are not illumined and divine, at least you are awakened and spiritual. So you must make use of your *vani* express your awakened spiritual nature, so that out of it comes happiness to others, a sense of dignity, not a sense of being degraded or made to feel uncomfortable.

In so many ways our scriptures and ancients repeat to us that this world is pervaded by the Lord; this world is God in manifestation. He must be seen shining in and through His creation. The Gita says that one day or another this world must be realised as *vasudeva sarvam iti* (All this is the Lord). That is the ideal; that is the goal. So, unless you make efforts to move towards that ideal and goal, how do you expect the Lord to reveal Himself in everything? Unless you make special *sadhana* to prepare yourself to perceive this truth, how do you expect this truth to reveal itself to you one day?

Part of God is in each one of us, and each one feels their

individuality to be something. So we must recognise that sympathetically, with spiritual sympathy and insight, and be nobly considerate towards the individuality of each and every being. We may think that a person is a non-entity, a zero, or even worse - that even their proximity is to be avoided, it will pollute us; we are so sacred and holy and pure and sanctified that even their proximity will pollute us - we may think.

We avoid criminals, we avoid prostitutes, we avoid people who we think to be sinners, who practise *adharma*. But even inside the sinner the *sarva antaryamin* (inner ruler of all) is not absent. The spiritual view is to see the *sarva antaryamin* and not the sinner. The sinner may be a sinner in the eyes of the law and, in the eyes of society, but that is not your business. You are neither the law nor the police nor society. You are a seeker, you are a spiritual aspirant. You must learn the spiritual way of sensitively perceiving the dignity of each and every person of giving respect and reverence to each and every person.

So, therefore, why not make this fourteen day period - the last five days of the Hindu religious year and the first nine days of the new year - a continuous period of your own inner, personal *sadhana*, as a preparation for a year-long period of daily introspection and impartial self-examination. Do it without wanting to justify anything you find to be wrong inside of you, without adducing reasons for not seeing it to be what it is.

Mind can always give arguments in favour of any rotten thing. Mind can always give arguments in favour of any stinking thing and say, "No, no, it is full of fragrance, it is necessary." The tendency of the mind is to make wrong into right, sin into Virtue, because one is in love with oneself more than with anyone else in this whole world.

But there should be no such partiality, no such self-love, no such self-justification in a *sadhaka*. It is the greatest danger that exists in the inner spiritual realm of *sadhana* and spiritual life, and illumination. Self-justification is the greatest danger. If you are not awake, if you are not alert, if you are not perceptive, self-justification becomes so pleasing; it is so very comfortable and pleasant. It is like

feeling sleepy and falling pleasantly asleep with your head on a rail-way track.

When discrimination is not active when the consciousness of your sadhaka-hood is not awake and alert, then you sleep the sleep of complacency, justifying everything that is unspiritual and undivine. In doing this you are not to be condemned, you are to be pitied, because you don't see it as unspiritual, as undivine. Your perception is so completely blinded by self-approval, by partiality and self-love that you do not see the *asuric* as *asuric*.

Therefore, we have to invoke within ourselves the spirit of the Upanishad and say "uttishthata jagrata prapya varan nibodhata (Arise, awake, having reached the wise become enlightened)," and be willing to sacrifice anything within ourselves, so that our inner perception may be characterised by clarity, so that we may see ourselves clearly, very clearly.

Thus, make at least the next fourteen days a period for getting rid of all preconceived notions. Say to yourself: "I am in the throes of a new birth. I am to be born again. Therefore I shall think no effort to be too great. I shall eschew all self-partiality in coming to terms with the truth about myself, no matter how uncomplimentary it may be, how shameful it may be. It does not matter. I will face myself, and that will be the turning point in my life."

We are thinking that we are going up, up, up, while we are going down, down, down. Can there be a grater tragedy than this? We cannot afford to do that. We have come here to go up, up, up. Spiritual life is an ascent unto Divinity. I want that that should be so in your case.

When they think it is possible for hardened criminals in jail to take to the ascending path and become changed human beings, should it not be possible in an environment filled with spirituality, in the presence of other seekers and sages? It is possible! Therefore, do it, and do it now!

- from the Divine Life Society, the Sivananda Publications League. Shivanandanagar, Rhishikesh, Uttarakhand, India.

KAIVALYOPANISHAD

Swami Tattvavidananda Saraswati

एतस्माज्जायते प्राणो मनस्सर्वेन्द्रियाणि च ।

खं वायुर्ज्योतिरापः पृथिवी विश्वस्यधारिणी ॥

१५

etasmājjāyate prāṇo manassarvendriyāṇi ca,

khaṁ vāyurjyotirāpaḥ pṛthivī viśvasya dhāriṇī .. 15

The creator who is presented as *prāna*, the Cosmic Person, originated from this Supreme Reality called Brahman. The Cosmic Person further manifests as the Cosmic Intelligence, the five cosmic principles of sound, etc. and as the five subtle elements which further manifest as the five gross elements and elementals.

The description applies equally to the microcosm also. I am a living being, and a conscious being. I have two powers, *kriyā śakti*, the power of mobility and action, and *jñāna śakti*, the power of cognizing. The power of action manifests in the organs of action like hands, legs, speech, etc. The power of cognition manifests in the sense organs, namely, eyes, ears, nose, taste, and the skin, and the mind and the intellect. The physical body is the medium for the expression of these powers. The origin of these powers is *Atman*.

When I inhale and exhale, it is not the ego that is conducting these operations. *Madhye vāmanamāśīnam* (*Kāthopaniṣat*, 2-2-3), It is the Infinite, reflecting as the dwarf in the finite body, sitting in the heart and commanding the entire physiology and psychology. Brahman first becomes *Trivikrama*, the one pervading the three worlds *bhūḥ*, *bhuvah*, and *svah*. He then reflects in the body as the life making it alive. Conditioned by the medium *Parameśvara* appears as *vāmana*, and when the conditioning is rejected by knowledge, *vāmana* manifests as *Parameśvara*. This is the symbology associated with the story of the *Vāmana avatāra*.

We take ourselves as a body in which dwells a mind and in the body-mind dwells *Atman*. The truth is the opposite. *Sūkṣma*, the subtle, manifests and upholds the *sthūla*, the gross. The body is an idea or an abstraction in the mind, which originates from the *cidābhāsa*, the reflection of the universal Awareness, as 'I am'. From that reflection originates the power of life. I am not the body-mind; I am the Infinite reflecting in the body-mind.

Body-mind is like a wave in the ocean of Existence- Awareness- Absolute. The sense organs are not the anatomy. The function of the senses is possible only when the mind reflects in the anatomy. Therefore, they have their existence in the mind. Body is an idea that the mind throws up as a result of integration of the sensations received from the sense organs, notably, eye sight and the sense of touch. The physical body made up of the five elements is at the lower rung of the ladder of cause and effect. This cognitive discrimination is an essential prerequisite for Self-knowledge.

-from *Kaivalyopanisat with the commentary and Tattava Prakāṣikā* by Swami Tattavavidananda Saraswati, a publication of Brhmavidya Kuteer, Diamond Point, Secunderabad -500009, Telangana, India

WHY DO I WRITE, INSTEAD OF BEING SILENT?

Swami Omkar

In the hours of Silence why do I write, instead of being silent? Why do I write, these finite thoughts? I write, because they come in the Hours of Silence. I write because they give me joy and inspiration as I write and express them. Often I write my messages, only with the thought, that they give the same joy and strength to some inspiring soul, somewhere, sometime or the other, the same joy and inspiration that these beautiful thoughts give to me.

Thoughts are things. May these thoughts of peace or Light from silence go to all the seekers of peace in the East and the West and be their strength and happiness. This is my prayer.

OM! OM! OM!

- from "In the Hours of Silence"

IT IS ALL HE

Swami Omkarji Maharaj

Scriptures teach us that there is but One Truth or Reality and nothing else exists besides IT. Sages in every religion have repeated that which exists is one and many have called it by many names. Whether we call the Reality by the name of GOD or PEACE, LOVE or SILENCE, nay, even by the name of HE, YOU, or I; it is all ONE AND THE SAME. What we need now is the Personal Experience of the existence of the Reality, rather the AWARENESS of the living Presence NOW and HERE. Then alone life will be complete and brimful, over flowing with Life Eternal, Light Infinite and Love Universal.

This morning after a long and tough tug of war between the lower self and the Higher self, the Truth flashed that one should recognise only GOD in little things as well as in big things, in both the visible and invisible. Unless and until you lose yourself in THAT, completely forgetting the little self, there is no PEACE or FREEDOM for you. Recognise each and every moment of your life and thus be happy, facing Him both within and without.

For instance, it is He who is the motion in the hand, even as I write and He is the Source of the very thought. It is He that thinks, dreams and works in you, in me and in one and all. It is He that lifts you when you fall in the depths and also helps you to walk towards the Heights. Learn to face Him in your dearest ones and recognise Him in the so called bitterest foes, who try to hurt or insult you. How can the Truth which is Indivisible be hurt or insulted when It is all One, and when there is nothing else besides it?

Man's freedom or hope lies only in clinging to God or in identifying with the living Truth, which is One without a second. Some may call this by the name of Self-surrender or complete self-resignation or the assertion of Truth or Godhead. Whatever name you may like to give to the Only Realty, it is all He. In the even pulse of the hand, in the silent beat of the heart and in the rhythmic breath of the life, it is all He. It is high time to recognise Him in the Very cells of your being.

Verily, IT IS ALL HE from the tiniest atom to the biggest planet.

May all Glory be unto Him in activity as well as in silence, in both Vyaktam and the Avyaktam, manifest and unmanifest.

MAY PEACE BE UNTO ALL

OM! OM! OM!

LAUGHTER IS LONGEVITY

Swami Omkarji Maharaj

There was a certain recent incident that makes me Laugh, whenever I think of it. The other day some devotees and friends came from Madras. We had prayers, meditations and silence too. After our prayers, etc., Br. Murthyji wanted to be alone with me for a few minutes.

Then I made a sign to our Manager Sri Chaitanya, showing my hand towards the town and all the harbour lights, to take the visitors out and to show them the sparkling and beautiful lights.

Instead of taking them out and showing the Lights out side, as he did not understand my wish, he was asking the devotees to see inside towards the wall - where it was written in bold red letters - SWAMI IS DEAD. I too began to look at it.

This makes me laugh whenever I think of it. Verily laughter gives health for it brings longevity. Blessed are they who can laugh at every experience in life, be it sweet or bitter big or small. The way to be happy and healthy is always to look at the sunny side - the bright side of life.

MAY PEACE BE UNTO ALL

OM! OM! OM!

IT IS CRIMINAL TO BE SICK

Swami Omkarji Maharaj

Startling as it may sound, especially to the ears of a sick man, it is true that it is criminal to be sick. Man - the true image of God, his highest Image - has no right to fall sick and loll and roll in the bed, awaiting the prediction of death by the finite doctors.

If the wise doctor says to the patient: "YOU WILL LIVE", the patient is happy and he continues to live, as per the judgement of the doctor. If the foolish and unwise doctor says. "YOU WILL DIE", the poor patient loses all hope and prepares to die, as per the suggestion and advise of the doctor.

How sad and forlorn is the hopeless and helpless condition of the sick in bed, being the living Images of God the embodiments of health, strength and power. Where are Omnipresence, Omnipotence and Omniscience, the attributes of God, in man, the child of the Almighty? The tables have been turned upside down. The Real has become unreal and the unreal Real. Man has become bond slave of every known and unknown disease through wrong suggestion from outside and sickly imagination inside.

One is reminded of the children's story of Pandora, how she mischievously opened the forbidden box and let out the germs of all diseases to the four corners of the world.

Nowadays, it is rare and difficult to see a HEALTHY MAN, healthy in every sense of the word. No one is free from some sickness or the other. Each one has a sickness of his own, be it chronic or old, fresh or new. We cater to the whims of the sick. We have learnt to look at the sick with awe and reverence, respecting their ailments and sympathising in their sickness. The more sad we are when we visit the sick, the more sympathetic we are considered. If we shed a few genuine crocodile tears of sorrow, it is all the better for the patient and the visitor. Both are united In sorrow. They understand each other in ignorance, better than ever.

Why should man, the perfect image of health, fall sick in the

first place? Who is the cause of the sickness? Is it the Pandora's Box or any other outside influence? It is the high time to know the real cause, the very core of the sickness.

The cause is not outside but it is within oneself. In ninety per-cent of the cases. it is due to over-eating the wrong diet, late meals etc. In some cases the sickness may be due to over work, sleepless nights, wilful starvation and the learned doctors call the sickness by various names such as blood pressure, heart palpitation etc. The foreign matter within accumulates through wrong and heavy diet and wrong thinking and comes out in the form and name of fancy dis-eases, such as Typhoid, eczema, Lumbago, Nervousness, Head-ache, Heartache, dizziness, Rheumatism, Heart pain, Poor appe-tite, diabetes and a hundred other plagues or diseases of every kind.

Then the body is entrusted to the all-knowing doctor and the soul to the Satan of depression. The doctor begins to work from the outside with pills, tablets, lotions, injections using all the old and lat-est methods tried and untried. And the SATAN begins to work from inside with wrong imagination of sorrow, weakness, dejection, de-pression, loss of appetite, loss of memory and finally death in oblivion.

O Man! The living Image of God, be ashamed of your present helpless plight of ignorance. Wake up from your deep slumbers of lethargy and sickness. Take up your bed and walk towards health and Light, which are your real Heritage.

Play no more the game of foolish sickness. Time is too pre-cious to be wasted, lying in bed swallowing pills and tablets, injecting more foreign matter into the helpless body.

It is not yet too late, if you can only take a firm hold of your Birthright, the Divine Heritage of the Sun of suns.

Fill yourself no longer with medicines and injections but with God's Light, Life and Love! Give a death blow to your physician by leaving your sickness in the sick bed of the Hospital and walk out towards LIGHT, the Soul of your life and the Goal of your health.

OM! OM! OM!

JUST AN HOUR

Swami Omkarji Maharaj

(NEW YORK)

O Child of God
Did you ever listen
To the sacred voice
Of the Blessed Lord
Repeating in pathetic words
"Can you not
Watch and pray with me
Just for an hour?"

Perhaps you are too busy
In the outer life of senses
To listen to His sweet words.
But He is there, ever repeating
Both is silence and activity
Asking us to stand by Him
Just for an hour.

What is this
Long weary life
Of years and years for
If we cannot spend
Even a single hour
For the service of God
Just for an hour.

Just an hour
Is not too much
But it is not as easy
As it seems
To stand by the Lord
Even for a single hour.

You should note, friend dear,
That an hour contains

Sixty long minutes
And every minute
Consists of
Sixty Short seconds,
Can you stand still
By the Blessed Lord
For a long hour?

Did you ever give yourself
Unto the Blessed One
Even for a single hour
In all your life of
Long years and months?
Be true and honest
My sweet Brother or Sister
With the Inner Self
Whom no one
Can ever deceive.

Repent ye, my helpless one
The Kingdom of Heaven
Is near at hand
Watch and pray
Even for a single hour
In the name of God
Who is dwelling in
Thy sacred heart
Awaiting to embrace you
Just for an hour.

OM! OM! OM!

LET GOD'S WORK COME FIRST

Swami Omkarji Maharaj

Blessed are they who allow God's work to come first, middle and last! But alas! How rare and few are such precious souls. In this restless world of present day hustle and bustle, we see around that everything passing and temporal comes first, but not God and His work. To many God and service to the sick and poor come last.

There are also some people perhaps many people in whose lives God and His service does not count at all. What they count is only themselves, their self-interests, their family, children and name and fame for their personality.

Let nothing come in the way between God and yourself. Who so ever stands in your way to the realisation of God, even if he is your Guru, father, relative or friend, such a one is truly your real foe. He who gives us an opportunity to serve God's children, to be alone with God and helps us to disentangle ourselves from the snares of the world is our real friend and well-wisher. Blessed are they unto whom God's work is their all in all.

To understand this message we have to classify people in the world into three sections.

1. Those in whose lives God and His service do not play any part
2. Those in whose lives God Comes last
3. Those in whose lives God comes first

How sad is the deplorable state of the people who belong to the first category! They cannot be called even human beings. By mistake they were given human forms; or perhaps they have come fresh from the animal kingdom, for they are full of animal instincts and selfish interests. Their life is centred around the motto, "Marry, multiply, live in ignorance and die in bondage". What is the difference between

such persons and animals, except in the number of legs? Hence sages have called a man who is devoid of Love of God and service to His children a two-legged animal.

Now comes the average man of the world in whose life God comes last. He longs to be a devotee, but his devotion is to the extent of fulfilment of his family needs. He is more concerned with the comforts of himself, his wife and children, than with the thought of Providence or God. He offers his all-in all to his business or work, though he is a worshipper in many a temple and subscriber to many a charitable work. But he does not have time to pray or meditate or to visit spiritual places and Ashrams. When he does not have any work he does not have a mind to pay an occasional visit to a temple or Ashram, but sits in silence, musing only over his business or goes to sleep getting drowsy. Only his body is here but his mind, heart and soul are hovering over his business.

Last comes the God-man to whom nothing exists except God and service to His children. He wakes up with God, works for God and sleeps in God. Unto such, the day begins with God, continues filled with His Presence and the day ends in God. God alone is the only Reality, in spite of all the changes in life and the world, and He is all-in-all to him. Such ones are the true Images of God. They sacrifice to God. They are the flowers of humanity and all others are a mere burden to the Mother Earth. May all Homage be unto such Godly Souls! May God's work come first to us always.

MAY PEACE BE UNTO ALL!

OM! OM! OM!

Medhā Sūktam

Swami Tattvavidananda Saraswati

mayi medhām mayi prajāṃ mayyagnistejo dadhātu

mayi medhām mayi prajāṃ mayīndra indriyaṃ dadhātu

mayi medhām mayi prajāṃ mayi sūryo bhrājo dadhātu .. 5

May the god of fire bestow upon me intelligence, progeny, and the bright appearance of the body (or courage), the god of heavens, virility, and the Sun god, brilliance (in addition to the other two).

In the Vedic hymns, we encounter many *devatās*, each *devatā* being an aspect of *īśvara* who manifests as this universe. Of these, three are most important; they are *Agni*, *Indra* and *Sūrya*. *Agni* is not only present in the form of the digestive fire, but also presides over the faculty of speech. *Indra* is the *devatā* responsible for physical strength and is the presiding deity of the faculty of the hands. *Sūrya* is the *devatā* of the faculty of vision and also the one who inspires our thoughts and the intellect. We seek the blessings of all the three *devatās*, because good digestion, good speech, good vision, and good physical strength are indispensable in the process of a seeker's growth. A person is as good as is his intelligence, not his body! Everything culminates in the faculty of the intellect.

Tejaḥ is brilliance. Brilliance can be of two kinds; brilliance of the body and brilliance of the mind. The prayer is that, by the blessing of *Agni*, one may have the courage of one's convictions and the ability to face the vicissitudes of life. It seeks His help in emerging victorious in all pursuits.

ओं शान्तिः शान्तिः शान्तिः ॥ *om śāntiḥ śāntiḥ śāntiḥ*

Om, peace, peace, peace.

Sānti means quietude of mind. That is what we are really seeking in life, a total freedom from all manner of disturbance. The troubles of life that come in the way of our gaining the knowledge are three-fold: *ādhyātmika*, *ādhibhautika*, and *ādhidaivika*. Hence, we repeat the word *Sānti* thrice. *Adhyātmika* problems are disturbances that are associated with the health of the physical body, like a fever or a headache etc. *Ādhibhautika* problems are associated with the environment around us, like individuals we interact with, noise disturbances, burglaries, etc. over which we have little control. And, finally, *ādhidaivika* problems are calamities caused by the will of the gods, such as a flood or a tsunami, hurricanes, earth quakes etc. We seek the grace of the Lord to help us overcome the three-fold calamities, so that we can pursue the knowledge of the Self in peace.

May we all enjoy the grace and blessing of goddess *Medhā* and proceed to gain the knowledge.

हरिः ओम्, तत्सत् श्रीकृष्णार्पणमस्तु ।।

hariḥ om, tatsat śrīkṛṣṇārpanamastu.

Behold Divinity in every aspect of this world-Lila. Verily, it is He at Play in all beings and creatures.

To love all is the true Bhakti of God and to serve all is the real worship of God.

-Swami Ramdas

YOGA CAN CHANGE YOUR LIFE

Swami Jyotirmayananda

(continued from June 2017)

Infinite Capacity for Change

The Upanishads declare, "*Manaevamanushyanam karanam bandha mokshayoh.*" It means, "Mind is the cause of bondage and release." The English proverb is, "As you think, so you become." Therefore, the possibilities for change are endless. Despite this spiritual fact, you will hear people say, "How could I ever hope to change my life? The moment of my birth was not auspicious because the planets and stars weren't in the right position. And since *Saturn* still glares at me with frowning eyes, how could I ever hope to change?"

This is the idea that everyone is somehow dependent upon a certain destiny- and if destiny controls the lot of every human being, what is the use of thinking about change or doing anything at all for that matter? Yoga philosophy boldly proclaims that though the study of astrology correctly asserts that there are relationships between external circumstances and the things that happen to human beings, yet these relationships are brought about by the *karma* that every human being creates. Even though you have created a kind of *karma* that seems like destiny now, you do have endless possibilities for changing the course of your destiny. The art of accomplishing this lies in gradually changing the way you think and feel.

If you make your mind more relaxed each day, if you think of things that are joyous, if your feelings are not constantly depressed; if your mental atmosphere is not crowded by negative, degrading sentiments like jealousy, hatred, greed and hissing egotism; and if your mind were to become a garden, blooming with flowers of gentle and lovely qualities - then you would change significantly. And not only would you change yourself, but you would also change the world around you, because you would become the master of matter, which is a projection of mind. You weave the circumstances of your destiny according to your thoughts.

Glimpsing Your Essential Identity

As you enter into meditation and touch upon the deeper basis of your personality, you find that the concepts that have been illusory dissolve and that your mind becomes transformed and purified. Through that mind you discover that deep within you are not the individual that your mind and ego interpret you to be. What you think yourself to be is nothing but a bundle of concepts. Changing these mental concepts with the light of reason therefore becomes the basis of your evolution.

A truly purified mind is born of *samadhi*, or the sublime state of super-consciousness. *Samadhi* is a very advanced concept in *Yoga* philosophy. It is a stage in which the mind, through the medium of meditation, becomes filled with intuitional light. If you experience it, you will change permanently.

Through *samadhi* you develop a special kind of double consciousness; on the one side you see yourself as an individual beset with all the practical realities; on the other side you feel that you are the Universal Self and that you are therefore not caught in your individuality. You feel that you are like a bird that is perched on a burning, trembling twig; even though the twig is on fire, the bird is not afraid because it knows it is not restricted to the tree and that it can fly away if it wants to. Much in the same way, in the state of Self-realization, you sit upon the little twig of your individual life, yet you are not dependent upon it because you realize you do not belong to it. You are ever-rooted in the awareness, "I am the Universal Self."

This is the great teaching of one of the voluminous scriptures of India known as *Yoga Vasistha*. It declares that the soul is essentially the Absolute Self, universal and nondual. The Absolute Self or *Brahman* has no problems because, being indivisible, it is beyond the three bodies. How can there be many infinities underlying the universe? There is but one substratum, the Divine Self, just as behind the waves there is one ocean. That oceanlike Self is the essential reality in every human being.

Experiencing Oneness with the Self

As your individuality gradually disperses with the exhaustion of *karma*, you become one with the Universal Self, which is the goal of *Yoga*. *Yoga* proclaims that you can do this because there are endless possibilities in your heart. Nothing is impossible because you are the architect of your destiny. The mind holds the key to your advancement, and when that mind becomes transformed through meditation and *samadhi*, you attain Self-realization.

You discover you are not the physical body, nor the astral body—both of which are constantly changing. You discover you are not the causal body either. You are the Divine Self, beyond these three. With this intuitional discovery, you enter the Kingdom of Heaven and belong to God.

Saints and Sages have been adored through the ages because they have become living temples of God. It is through their personalities that you receive the Divine message that you are not the body of flesh and bone, but the Immortal Spirit. You are made in the image of God. You are essentially the Divine Self. This is the goal you must work for.

Adopting a Plan for Change

If you are wholly convinced that the changes brought about by *Yogic* understanding are in harmony with your deeper aspirations, and you do want to change, the one thing you should not do is become too hasty in bringing about change. Rather, adopt a plan of moderation. Here are some practical points that you should pursue for bringing about a profound change within yourself:

Seek Good Association: The first thing you should do is keep your mind in good association or *satsanga*. You must understand that if you keep your mind in a negative state, you are creating negative *karma*. Therefore, seek the association of people who can teach you the secrets of *Yoga* and who can inspire you by their example. If you can't find such people, then turn to the great work of Sages and Saints and hold them as your ideal. Be inspired by those who have achieved greatness through control of the mind and senses.

Awaken Early: As you turn to *satsanga*, there are certain things you can do in your daily life to ensure success in your practice of *sadhana* (spiritual discipline). For example, you can wake up early in the morning. Getting up early is a splendid way to keep your mind free of lethargy. Of course, you will need to go to bed a little earlier, but soon you will look forward to enjoying the serenity of those early morning hours.

Exercise Regularly: Whenever it is most convenient during the day, shake off lethargy by practicing *Yoga* exercises that can make your body quick and vigorous. If you have not learned any of these exercises yet, just do any exercise of your choice. However, try to learn *Yoga* exercises as well.

If you already know some *Yoga* exercises, then expand your repertoire and learn some highly effective exercises like the head stand and shoulder stand. The head stand happens to be a refreshing tonic for the brain. Many great leaders have practiced *Yoga* exercises. You may be surprised to learn that Soviet leader Joseph Stalin as well as Pandit Jawaharal Nehru, the late Prime Minister of India, both practiced the head stand faithfully.

Even when you are confined to an office all day, you can practice stretching your spine up and down. This is a simple but effective way to keep it limber.

Whatever exercise program you choose, practice it with enthusiasm. Whenever you run, run as if you are going to dig up a treasure chest! There is much to accomplish in life, much to face. Shake off inertia and become strong!

Eat Well and Shun Drugs for a Healthy Nervous System: In regard to food, learn to eat things that are more soothing to your nerves and that promote a stronger nervous system. Refrain from the bad influence of drugs and do not be lured by any quick method for keeping yourself stimulated, such as drinking too much coffee, tea or cocoa. Avoid things that excite your nervous system in an artificial manner.

Practice Breathing Exercises: Try to promote a stronger

nervous system by practicing pranayamas or breathing exercises whenever possible. You can practice breathing exercises at any time. When you are merely sitting and waiting for something to happen is a particularly good time to watch your breath.

Develop Devotion to God: Learn to surrender to the Divine Hand that is guiding your life. Repeat your mantra (a mystic formula or a Divine Name) when you are driving, working in the garden, cooking, or doing household chores, and fill yourself with the idea that a most loving Divinity is ever-present within you.

Practice Meditation Daily: Be sure to practice meditation every day. Enjoy the kind of relaxation that comes when your mind harbors no worries. Enjoy the breeze of expansion in your mind. See it free from hate and anger. Try to develop the strength to realize that you are not a helpless slave to your senses.

Learn to Serve God in Others: *Karma Yoga* is the *Yoga* of serving God in mankind. You must seize every opportunity to help create courage in others when they are afraid, joy when they are sad. The practice of *Karma Yoga* allows you to become magnanimous, for you give something to humanity- not so much in terms of money or material possessions, but in the form of joy, peace, and good counsel. Just radiating peace about you is a charitable service. If you sit morose and melancholy in your room, you are unwittingly distributing sorrow in the world, and because of this, you will receive sorrow in return. Therefore, it is very important to learn the art of serving God in mankind.

Sage Kabira sang: "*Ghat ghat me hai sai ramata, katuk bachan mat bol re.*" This means, "The great, beloved Lord dwells in every heart; therefore do not utter sharp words." You may think that a certain person is your enemy, but when you develop mystical insight, you realize that it is God Who is operating through that person. It is God Who abides in every heart. Do not hurt anyone, for you will only be hurting yourself.

Tread the Path of Wisdom: All practices of *Yoga* that I have described culminate in *Jnana Yoga*. Through pure understanding you

discover who you are and what the world is. You then realise that none of the problems that seemed to plague you were ever real. It is like waking up from a dream. When you wake up and realize that the incredible things you experienced were just part of a dream, you are no longer concerned about them; you quickly forget the whole thing.

Jnana Yoga gives you the art of understanding yourself in the light of intuition, and it is promoted by listening, reflection, meditation and enquiry into "Who am I?" It is so profound that even the slightest understanding of it will change your life miraculously. Understanding is a source of abundant willpower. *Jnana* is the magic that can transform your personality in to the Divine reality. The process of change, therefore, culminates in *Jnana Yoga*.

Thus, I have given you a brief outline of how *Yoga* can change your life. Naturally, it is impossible to bring before your view in a short time all the grandeur of *Yoga* and what it can do for you. There is no solution to the increasing complexities and problems of modern life more effective than that of *Yoga*, because it allows you to transform yourself. And as you do this, you transform other human beings too.

There is no other way except through the way of the heart that an individual and society as a whole can change for the better. And may God bless you all with that aspiration to change, to overcome the defects of personality, to overcome pain and misery, to be one with the Divine Self, and to become a fountain source of all that is joyous and wonderful in life.

- from *International Yoga Guide*, May 2012.

The Liberation and peace of the individual is surely based upon his or her contribution towards the collective human happiness and harmony.

- Swami Ramdas

SPIRITUAL LIFE

Swami Satchidananda

Real spiritual life means 'Living in God'. When everything is God, and there is nothing else, are we not already living in God? Yes, we are living in God already, but we are not conscious of it. So we should say that real spiritual life means "to be conscious that we are living in God". The consciousness that we are living in God will naturally bring us peace and bliss of the Eternal as that is the nature of God Himself, and that also is our true nature. So to "LIVE IN GOD" will also mean "ABIDING IN OUR OWN SELF".

The way to this has been shown to us by saints and sages from ancient days. One way is to chant any Name of God constantly, bringing to our mind the attributes of God with all love and devotion. This practice will gradually free the mind of its impurities, which are thoughts of various kinds, desires, Vasanas, etc. and make it still. Then comes the experience that we are not the perishable body with which we have been identifying ourselves so long, but we are the deathless Spirit pervading everywhere and appearing as the whole universe of names and forms, ever changing and looking real.

To remain in this Consciousness, is the goal of human life. Anything less than that will not free us from ignorance and the cycle of birth and death and the consequent sorrow. So, having been born as human beings and having come in contact with divine and illumined personalities, let us aspire only for the highest goal of Self-realisation.

- from *Points to Ponder*, Anandashram Publication, Kanhangad, Kerala, India.

GOD IS HIS OWN DEVOTEE

Swami Ramdas

In the Bhagavad Gita, it is said that a devotee who has attained *Jnana* or liberation is verily God Himself. Lord Krishna showed the world how he venerated those who had reached this blessed state. His humble devotee, Sudama, went to have His *Darshan* in Dwaraka. As soon as He saw Sudama, He received him, placed him on His throne and worshipped him.

On another occasion, when Narada went for the Darshan of Krishna in Dwaraka, he was told, at the entrance of the palace of Krishna, that Krishna was not then available for *Darshan*.

When asked for the reason, Narada was told that the Lord was engaged in His usual worship. Narada was surprised to hear this and wondered whom Krishna worshipped, He Himself being the Supreme God. So he went inside quietly and peeped into the room where Krishna was sitting for worship. He saw Krishna busy worshipping the images of Prahlada, Ambarisha, Draupadi, Valmiki, Narada and others. Narada went inside and asked Krishna what He was doing. Then Krishna said, "I am worshipping these devotees who are the images of my God."

-from Stories as told Swami Ramdas, Anandashram Publication, Kanhangad, Kerala, India.

Take His name for a long time and then sit for meditation. Meditation will then become very easy. You will find that the mind disappears in no time; you will forget the body and become conscious that you are the Atman.

-Swami Ramdas

AN APPEAL

The members who have contributed for the Peace Journal for life with Rs. 500/- long ago are requested now to renew their membership since the Printing cost has increased considerably. The other members who have contributed for one or two years are requested to renew with the new tariff. This is the Journal started by Pujya Omkar Swamiji Maharaj 90 years ago and still continuing with the blessings and stewardship of Pujya Jnaneswari Mataji. It is our responsibility as the disciples of Pujya Swami Omkarji Maharaj to contribute to the Peace Journal by renewing the membership in the form of life membership.

The readers are requested to visit the website of Sri Santi Ashram uploaded recently on 21-1-2017, on the occasion of the Centenary Celebrations for the detailed information about the Ashram.

Log on to : www.srisantiashram.org.in

Your contributions and support:

1. Annadanam : a) Permanent- Rs. 5,000/-, Rs. 10,000/- Rs. 20,000/-, 25,000/- (Meals) b) One day -Rs. 500/-, 1000/-, 2000/-, 2,500/-
2. Education Development Fund
3. Children's Welfare Fund
4. Old Age Welfare Fund
5. Library Fund
6. Peace Journal Subscription Fund :
a) India b) Annual - Rs. 100/- Life - Rs. 1000/-
Abroad Annual - Rs. 750/-
7. General Maintenance Fund
8. Publication Fund
9. Teachers' Remuneration Fund (accepted each May) Rs. 3,000 per month or Rs. 36,000 per year
10. Gosamrakshana (Cow Protection) Fund; Go-grasam Fund

Donations can be addressed to :

The Secretary, Sri Shanti Ashram, (via) Sankhavaram ,
E.G. Dist., A. P. India - 533 446, (D.D. can be sent on Indian Bank, Kakinada)
email : srishantiashram@gmail.com; Phone: 7382009962
FAX : 08868-244220, Thotapalli; FAX : 0891 - 2712025, Visakhapatnam

Donors IT exemption under Sec. - 80 G.